SVSU celebrates library’s anniversary with visiting authors month

SVSU will host a visiting authors month during April to honor the 20th anniversary of the Melvin J. Zahnow Library and National Library Week.

Authors will visit SVSU on three consecutive weeks surrounding the Library’s anniversary, April 12, and National Library Week, April 15-21.

Writer Jeannette Walls will read from and discuss her memoir, “The Glass Castle,” Wednesday, April 25 at 1 p.m. in the Roberta Allen Reading Room, located on the fourth floor of Zahnow Library.

Walls begins the story of her chaotic, nomadic childhood with one of her earliest memories, cooking hot dogs at age 3 and catching her dress on fire. Prior to publishing her book, she hid the truth about her unusual past for two decades, carving out a successful career as a reporter for such publications as Esquire, USA Today, and MSNBC.com, where she is a regular contributor.

“The Glass Castle” is also the featured book for the “One Book, One Community” reading program sponsored by the Public Libraries of Saginaw. Students from Saginaw area high schools are scheduled to be brought to campus to hear Walls speak in the Ott Auditorium of SVSU’s Regional Education Center on April 25.

Preceding Walls will be M.L. Liebler & The Magic Poetry Band and writer Peter Ho Davies. Their appearances are sponsored in part by SVSU’s “Voices in the Valley” speaker series.

Liebler, the author of many books of poetry, including “The Moon a Box,” will perform some of his works alongside the Magic Poetry Band, which features internationally acclaimed jazz musicians Faruq Z. Bey, Ron English, Jef Reynolds, and Bill Hulet. The band will begin its set Wednesday, April 18 at 7:30 p.m. in the Allen Reading Room.

Davies, who is on the faculty of the M.F.A. Program in Creative Writing at the University of Michigan and the author of two award-winning short story collections, will begin his reading Tuesday, April 10 at 7:30 p.m. in the Allen Reading Room.

Admission to all events is free of charge.

The dedication of the Zahnow Library took place April 12, 1987 and marked the culmination of a major construction project that began with a ground-breaking in November 1983.

For more information on the month’s events, contact Linda Farynk, director of the Library, at ext. 4236 or lfarynk@svsu.edu.

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**All University Awards Banquet**

Friday, April 20 • Curtiss Hall Banquet Room
6 p.m., Reception • 6:45 p.m., Dinner • 7:45 p.m., Awards Program • 9 p.m., Door Prizes

Among this year’s door prizes are gift certificates from:

- Bier Garten
- Cardinal Deli
- China Restaurant
- Damon’s
- Forbidden City
- Krzysiak’s House
- Mulligan’s Pub
- Outback Steakhouse
- Stock Pot Restaurant
- Texan Restaurants
- Touch of Mexico
- Trep’s Bar & Grill
- Tony’s Fashion Square

In addition, the Great Lakes Loons donated a certificate for four lawn tickets to a Sun-Thurs 2007 game

Watch for your invitation in the mail!
Undivided attention. It is becoming a rare commodity. We talk on our cell phones, munch on a snack and change the radio station, all while driving a two-ton vehicle. What are the consequences and what is happening inside our brain? Marie Cassar is among those looking for answers.

“Today, as individuals, we insist on multi-tasking,” she said. “You’re doing all these different things at once. Those behaviors fall into the category of attention. How is it that we’re able to divide our attention?”

Splitting our focus comes at a cost, according to Cassar. “When you talk on the phone while driving your car, your driving performance deteriorates, bottom line.”

Cassar knows because she spent several years in the auto industry where her research played a role in designing collision-warning systems.

Now in academia, where she “always wanted to be,” Cassar is pleased to be teaching students and conducting research in SVSU’s new psychology lab. Among its features is specialized software that allows researchers to conduct high-speed reaction time experiments.

“Tracking reaction time gives us insights into the human processing system,” she explained. “In trying to solve the puzzle (of understanding attention), you’re breaking it down into many little pieces.”

The lab also is used for psychology courses and by many of Cassar’s colleagues. Up to 15 students can be conducting mock experiments and collecting data simultaneously.

“In terms of demonstrating experimental design and data analysis, it’s very useful,” she said.

Cassar includes students in her research team. “If I didn’t have students, it would be impossible,” she said. “They develop an appreciation for the research process and gain a level of maturity.”

More students may soon be involved, as Cassar has had conversations with engineering faculty about collaborating with engineering students.

“Human factors research is connected to engineering design. There’s a relationship there,” she explained. “Given our equipment, we could build cockpits or visual displays.”

The challenge rests in accounting for the wide diversity within our species.

“When you talk about human beings, it gets complicated, because thankfully we’re not all the same. If not for individual differences, psychologists would be out of business,” she said with a laugh.

Cassar is convinced that multi-tasking is here to stay, so she wonders how people can improve their performance.

“What can we handle,” she asked, “because in the meantime, we’re crashing into each other; bad things are happening.”

Until such questions are answered, drive with caution.
Pamela Clifford has found a successful approach to recruiting alumni: don’t wait until they graduate.

“Our future alumni are right here,” she said. Clifford has helped develop a charter membership program for new graduates, because it is key to grab alumni within their first five years of graduation.

“We find that the new graduates are still in touch with the students on campus, so they can spread the word of the activities they can participate in when they graduate,” Clifford explained.

Clifford attends many events and collaborates with many departments so that when she is recruiting, she is “knowledgeable about how this organization runs.

“If you were to come to my office any time during football season, I could tell you the score of the last game and who’s injured on the line,” she said.

An SVSU alum herself, Clifford has spent the last year and a half in Alumni Relations, where she develops and manages “distinctive” programs and initiatives for alumni.

One such program involved “taking Alumni Relations on the road.” Last year, she organized an “after hours” event for Lansing-area alums. “They didn’t realize how many of them were in the Lansing area,” she said.

She also assists in planning larger events, such as the Alumni Celebration and the Alumni Family Fun Day. The two events have seen attendance increase by 200 to 300 percent in the last two years.

Clifford says that groups in Ohio and Texas have expressed interest in starting chapters in their area. She has found that out-of-state alumni stay in touch the most.

“They want to show the distinction of their degree,” she explained. “They want to show how they have used a degree from a smaller university in a larger global scope.”

Clifford says she and her two sons, Cameron and Stevie, are “beach bums” who enjoy discovering new sand. She takes pride in being the hostess and cooking large dinners for family gatherings, and rolls that over to how she communicates with alumni.

“I’m a firm believer in not compromising high touch for high tech,” she said. “Although we do a lot of communication by e-mail, I am the kind of person who will still write a note or make a phone call.”

Doing so has allowed Clifford to be effective at the most essential part of recruiting.

“My job is all about building relationships.”

With the alumni of today and tomorrow.
Professional Profile

• Frank Dane, Finkbeiner Endowed Chair in Ethics & Public Policy, published “Resuscitation in the Hospital: Circadian Variation of Cardiopulmonary Arrest” in The American Journal of Medicine. The article was co-authored by Jennifer L. Jones-Crawford, David C. Parish, and Betsy E. Smith, all of the Mercer University School of Medicine.

• Gladys A. Hernández, professor of modern foreign languages, presented at the Central States Conference March 8-10 in Kansas City, Mo. The topic was “Empresarios del Siglo XXI.”

• Abigail Jewkes, assistant professor of teacher education, was a featured speaker at the Michigan Reading Association Research Pre-Conference March 9 in Grand Rapids. The title of her presentation was “Pathways to Literacy: Making the Case for Individualization.”


• Richard E. Priehs, professor of criminal justice, along with directors from The Innocence Project at Cooley Law School, presented a program Feb. 11 at Adrian Prison before 120 inmates on the topic of “Wrongful Convictions and Appellate Review.” This was an historical first for the Michigan Department of Corrections.

Also, Priehs presented a paper titled “The Abuse of Character Evidence in Cases of Wrongful Conviction” at an international conference on Miscarriages of Justice Feb. 20 at the University of Central Missouri.

• Altaf UR Rahman, professor of electrical and computer engineering, attended a NSF / ONR / EPRI (National Science Foundation, Office of Naval Research, and Electric Power Research Institute) sponsored faculty workshop on “Reforming Electric Energy Systems Curriculum” Feb. 2-3 at Eldorado Hotel, in Santa Fe, NM. Rahman presented the Electric Energy Systems courses offered at SVSU at the workshop, and discussed the role of utility companies in supporting and developing electric energy systems education in the universities.

Transitions

For new faculty/staff office numbers, phone extensions, email addresses and other information, see www.svsu.edu/lookup.

NEW FACULTY

Jennifer Seifferly – Assistant Professor, TE Elementary Education

NEW STAFF

Kathie Bachleda – Valley Vanguard Advisor
Jennifer Dean – Head, Collection Development and Acquisitions
Karen Ervin – Administrative Secretary, Residential Life and Student Conduct Programs
Brett Fitzgerald – ITS Support Center Technology Specialist

Jason Frisch – Custodial Specialist
Geoffrey Haney – Assistant Registrar (Marshall M. Fredericks Sculpture Museum)
Linda Schmidt – Administrative Secretary, Diversity Programs/Government Relations
Susan Shaw – Placement Coordinator, Clinical Experiences
Brian Taylor – Custodial Specialist
Nicholas Wagner – Event Coordinator
Michael Watson – Athletic Director

PROMOTED/TRANSFERRED/TITLE CHANGE

Jill Allarduce – Assistant Director, Creative Services
Cynthia Bala – Interim Director, Staff Relations
Timothy Burke – Assistant Registrar
Ann Coburn-Collins – Interim Director, Office of Adjunct Faculty Support
Linda Schmidt – Administrative Secretary, Diversity Programs/Government Relations
Laurie Siminske – Senior Secretary, Campus Facilities
Craig Snook – Assistant Director, Creative Services

LEFT/LEAVING

Jill Gushow, Sandra Wilbanks

Condolences

• To Gary and Rose Lange, whose mother/mother-in-law, and to Dale Gough, whose mother-in-law, Buelahe E. Lange, passed away March 2.

• To Vicky Stewart, associate registrar, whose mother, Mildred Stewart, passed away Feb. 28.

Briefly Speaking

• SVSU Athletics is hosting Cardinal Cabaret, Saturday, April 28, from 6-10 p.m. in the Curtiss Hall Banquet Rooms. Show your support for athletic programs and enjoy an evening of live entertainment, a strolling dinner, raffle and silent & live auction. Guest appearances by SVSU NFL alumni and other special guests. All proceeds will benefit the student-athlete scholarship fund. For more information, call ext. 7306.

• Faculty and staff may present the Alumni Scroll to graduating members of their immediate family during the Commencement ceremony at 1:30 p.m., May 12. Call Norma Zivich at ext. 4075 to make arrangements.

• Faculty and staff are reminded to place regalia orders by March 30. Order forms are being distributed on campus. To request a form, contact Suzette Zimmerman at ext. 4384.

• The Flutee Concert on Sunday, April 15 will begin at 4 p.m.