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## Spring 2009 Farquhar Forum

Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences

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FARQUHAR

# FORUM

FARQUHAR COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Somy Ali, '02  
NSU's Alumna of the Year



**Inside:**  
**Making a Difference**

**Changing Lives**  
Biology major travels to Austria to shadow a surgical transplant team

**Back to School**  
History professor returns to student life during fellowship at the Holocaust Education Foundation

**Teaching Abroad**  
Graduate travels to Spain with Fulbright scholarship





Research plays a pivotal role in how students make a difference at the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences.

**“MAKING A DIFFERENCE”** means different things to different people. It’s a phrase we’ve heard many times in many places, but what exactly does it mean to us?

At the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences, we make a difference by strengthening our commitment to higher education and fostering critical analysis, creative thinking, knowledge of diverse cultures, and community involvement. By doing so, we encourage our students to appreciate the value of a quality liberal arts education and its link to the broader world of professional and civic engagement, cultural awareness, and community service.

This academic year has been one of growth and opportunity. We have a vibrant undergraduate community. We are developing partnerships with local institutions as well as student internship programs and faculty fellowships, here and abroad. We continue to serve as a valuable resource for academic discovery and critical research. As the circle grows outward, the college affirms its mission to contribute locally, globally, and academically in ways both big and small.

In this issue of the *Farquhar Forum*, you’ll learn of college students, alumni, and faculty members whose academic, professional, and personal endeavors are truly making a difference.

Somy Ali, alumna of the Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences, has started a nonprofit organization that serves victims of domestic violence.

Carlos Haderspock, biology major in the Division of Math, Science, and Technology, spent a summer internship abroad, shadowing a surgical transplant team in Austria. Haderspock returned to campus determined to pursue a career in medicine and help those in need.

Gary Gershman, J.D., Ph.D., associate professor in the Division of Humanities, was awarded a fellowship at the Holocaust Education Foundation. Gershman studied with renowned scholars there and returned to NSU to share his experience with his students.

And Kristina Christoph, a 2008 alumna whose undergraduate career at NSU defined excellence, is giving back by teaching English to school children in Spain as part of a Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship.

As you read this issue, I hope you will come to appreciate their efforts and contributions. They remind us that engagement can begin with a single student, an alumna, or a professor who uses his or her college experience to make life better for others. And that is the calling of higher education.

**Don Rosenblum, Ph.D.**  
Dean, Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences





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**FORUM**  
MAGAZINE

FARQUHAR COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

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Alumna Somy Ali models one of the T-shirts from her clothing line that promotes messages of tolerance, equality, world peace, and human rights.

Cover image by Bob Eighmie



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“THEY’RE SO LARGE;  
THEY’RE SO GENTLE,  
AND RIGHT NOW,  
I THINK THAT THEIR  
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IN HUMAN HANDS.”

—EILEEN SMITH-CAVROS, PH.D.  
associate professor in the Division  
of Social and Behavioral Sciences

# Recording the Manatee’s Story:

## Biology and Sociology Team Up in Expedition to Mexico

By Roger Morton

WITH ALMOST A DECADE of experience doing field studies of manatees in Mexico, Edward O. Keith, Ph.D., associate professor in the Division of Math, Science, and Technology, has a track record for conducting valuable biological research and helping with manatee protection efforts there. “Specifically, I’ve been working in central Veracruz, in the Alvarado Lagoon system, for about eight years on different things,” Keith said. However, when it comes to learning about the role of manatees in their native environment, sometimes even a decade of research only scratches the surface.

In some areas, observational research alone has been difficult because of site conditions or the time required to search for manatees, Keith explained. Field studies are slowed by sporadic sightings and murky conditions. “Even if there is a manatee there, you wouldn’t see it unless it was right on the surface.”

This is why efforts to explore and reveal local historical knowledge have become increasingly valuable. “Sometimes,” Keith said, “the only way to find out about manatees is to interview the people who live there.”

Keith is now teaming up with sociologist Eileen Smith-Cavros, Ph.D., associate professor in the Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences, to connect with that knowledge. Together, they are setting out on a project to interview inhabitants and research the local knowledge of manatees within the El Manati region in southern Veracruz.

“I’m an environmental sociologist and anthropologist,” Smith-Cavros said. “That means that I study people in nature.”

Although manatees have not been sighted in the area for more than 50 years, the region’s name suggests that they once played a significant role in the area’s culture and history. “We hope to not only get biological information,” Keith said, “but also historical, archeological, and long-term cultural information.”

For Smith-Cavros, communicating with the local people is especially intriguing. And because some inhabitants of the area are elderly, she hopes to document their knowledge before it is lost. “For me, the important thing [for this project] is the knowledge gained about the manatees and the culture of the people living there now,” she said.



El Manati, Veracruz, Mexico

The team’s research interviews will focus on several aspects. What direct contact have the residents of El Manati had with manatees? What, indirectly, have they heard of manatees? What practical uses did the manatee serve in the region? Were there specific religious and cultural uses?

“Sometimes, you learn some of your best information in between the questions. That’s why open-ended questions are really important,” Smith-Cavros said. “An important byproduct of the research is not just the literal information we gather, but the fact that the people in the area benefit from it as well.”

Combining biology and ecology with social sciences to explore local ecological knowledge—also referred to as traditional or indigenous knowledge—is part of the evolution of ways that scientists have been approaching the research process, especially when it comes to ecological research in less developed areas of Africa, Asia, and Central and South America.

“For a long time, indigenous systems of knowledge were kind of ignored,” Smith-Cavros said. “Western science was heralded as being the one answer. I think that we have complementary things to learn from indigenous systems. I enjoy the fact that this project involves an interchange of information with the people involved.” In this way, the project connects indigenous groups in Mexico with people in the United States and elsewhere concerned with manatee conservation throughout North America.

“The manatee, in particular, is a very charismatic species,” Smith-Cavros said. “In a lot of ways, it’s probably a pretty good indicator of our ability to steward the planet—or not to steward it. They’re so large; they’re so gentle, and right now, I think that their future is very much in human hands.”





By Kathleen Kernicky

# Retired LLI Member Writes the Next Chapter in His Life

*One year and 489 pages later...*

**L**EE SACKS had written nothing more than a business letter in 50 years when he decided to take the plunge into writing a novel. One year and 489 pages later, the novice writer completed *The Incredible Life of Pinnie Lavan*, the story of a Polish tailor whose success as an immigrant in America in the mid-1900s is set against a backdrop of historical fiction. Finishing a novel was a personal accomplishment for Sacks, 74, who said that he is in a “renewal process” rather than retirement.

His journey into writing began almost by accident after attending an open house at the Lifelong Learning Institute (LLI), part of the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences at Nova Southeastern University. A few years ago, Sacks happened to discover the LLI after he parked outside its office while waiting for a shuttle bus to the main NSU campus. Intrigued, he attended one of the institute’s monthly writers’ workshops, in which members read and critique each other’s work. “Instead of asking, ‘why,’ I’m a person who asks, ‘why not?’” he said.

Sacks began by writing a memoir about his grandfather. Soon, he was hooked on writing.

“I was encouraged by the other participants,” said Sacks, who was the key speaker at a recent LLI program, where he discussed his work. Other LLI members—like Ruth Lazarus, Don Siegendorf, Albert Solomon, and Betty Hill—have also published their work, including short stories, memoirs, essays, and poetry. “I would write a chapter,” Sacks explained, “and [the other members] would be supportive of my work. None of this would have happened without LLI. For sure, I wouldn’t be working on a second novel.”

His first book began as a short story and quickly grew. The novel is set in Sacks’s hometown of Philadelphia, where the protagonist Pinnie Lavan finds adventure as he rises to the

top of the men’s garment manufacturing business. Along the way, he confronts some of the atrocities of Nazi Germany during World War II.

Edward N. Aqua, D.Eng., director of the LLI, said the writers’ workshop is an example of one of the institute’s peer-led learning groups. Members engage in a discussion of open comment and criticism. “No one takes umbrage at it,” Aqua said. “It’s all done in the strong belief that they are there to learn. The program engenders trust among participants.”

As a new writer, Sacks also found it beneficial to work with a writing coach during various parts of the book. “I had about 10 chapters left when the coach encouraged me to write the last chapter,” Sacks said. “Writing the ending helped me stay on track.”

“Now, I get very upset with myself if I miss a day of writing,” he said. After a long career as a regional sales and marketing manager of a national banking equipment company, Sacks enjoyed his years as an independent insurance broker. But, “Writing is the creative pursuit I was always seeking,” he said.

“Several years ago, our rabbi gave a sermon about how important it is to explore your passions. At the time, I didn’t have any. All I had was work. Writing gives me the opportunity to feel creative. I’m writing to feed myself, to feed my soul. It’s a labor of love,” said Sacks.

What was this new author’s most difficult challenge? “I’m a two-finger typist,” admitted Sacks. “And, I got discouraged at times, particularly after reading Pat Conroy’s *Beach Music*. It made me feel humble and inept. But, I didn’t quit.”

Sacks donated two copies of his first book to Nova Southeastern University’s Alvin Sherman Library, Research, and Information Technology Center and a third to the LLI. **FF**

“I WOULD WRITE A CHAPTER AND [THE OTHER MEMBERS] WOULD BE SUPPORTIVE OF MY WORK. NONE OF THIS WOULD HAVE HAPPENED WITHOUT LLI. FOR SURE, I WOULDN’T BE WORKING ON A SECOND NOVEL.”

—LEE SACKS





# Making Fashion a Statement:

## Alumna Weaves Social Awareness into Her Designs

SOMY ALI IS AN ENTREPRENEUR, FILMMAKER, AND ADVOCATE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. OCCASIONALLY, SHE SPEAKS TO TEENAGE GIRLS WHO ARE AT RISK OF DROPPING OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL, WHICH CAUSES HER TO REFLECT ON JUST HOW FAR SHE HERSELF HAS TRAVELED.

By Kathleen Kernicky

“**I** THOUGHT IT WAS IRONIC and strange, because I had dropped out, but didn’t have guidance at the time,” said Ali, who turned her life around when she enrolled in the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences. After overcoming personal and cultural obstacles, Ali earned a bachelor’s degree in psychology in 2002. This year, she was named Nova Southeastern University’s 2009 Alumnus of the Year during the annual Student Life Achievement Awards (STUEYS). Hosted by the Division of Student Affairs, these awards reflect the winners’ significant achievements and their contributions to the university community and beyond, according to Don Rosenblum, Ph.D., dean of the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences. Ali is also the college’s 2009 recipient of the Celebration of Excellence Distinguished Alumni Achievement Award, which recognizes alumni at NSU for their business achievements and contributions to the community.

Ali is the founder and president of her own clothing line, So-Me Designs, whose colorful T-shirt fashions make statements about everything from religious tolerance to world peace. She has produced documentaries about victims of abuse worldwide. She founded No More Tears, a nonprofit organization that focuses on domestic violence. And she visits university campuses to raise awareness of human rights issues.

Born in Pakistan, Ali moved to Fort Lauderdale with her family when she was nine. At 16, she dropped out of high school and moved from South Florida to India, where she pursued a career as a model and actress in Hindi films. Eventually, she grew tired of her “superficial” life as an actress.



She returned to South Florida and enrolled at NSU.

“I don’t have words to describe what a 180-degree turn I did once I got into the academic life,” Ali said. “I honestly believe that if it hadn’t been for the professors at NSU, I wouldn’t be where I am today. I can’t emphasize enough what a huge impact they had on my life.”

At NSU, Ali was director of community programming for Radio X, WNSU 88.5 FM. She was instrumental in forming the Gay Straight Student Alliance, and she served as a board member of Social Action Social Awareness. She was the first student-staff member groomed to host the on-air, campus radio program *Information Exchange*.

“She dove right in, and I helped her to come up with topics and issues, identify guests for the program, and then conduct on-air interviews,” said Kate Waites, Ph.D., professor in the Division of Humanities. “She was very conscientious, and it gave her a forum to help shed light on some serious issues at the time. This was shortly after 9/11, and we had frequent shows on terrorism, hatred of and intolerance of Muslims, and the pros and cons of the Iraq war.”

After leaving NSU, Ali served as public relations director for the Asian-American Network Against Abuse of Human Rights, for which she produced and edited short films.

Her first short film, *I Can Survive*, featured the story of Mukhtaran Mai, a Pakistani woman who suffered a gang rape ordered by tribesmen and who later used settlement money provided by the government to open an education center. Ali’s film was shown in August 2005 at an event honoring Mai’s work and attended by Hillary Clinton, who was senator of New York at the time.

“It was perhaps the most significant time of my life,” said Ali, who wrote, produced, edited, and narrated the short film. “Mukhtaran Mai is a true hero.”

In 2008, Ali opened So-Me Designs, whose clothes are inscribed with symbols and messages promoting religious and ethnic tolerance, world peace, and human rights. One of the T-shirts has the symbols of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and Hinduism intersecting.

She hopes her clothing line will raise awareness of social issues and counter sexist or demeaning messages sometimes found on women’s clothing. Ten percent of the net profit from So-Me Designs is reinvested in her nonprofit organization, No More Tears.

“I know I’m not going to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict with a shirt. But the idea is to raise awareness. At least I will plant the seed in people’s minds that there is a possibility that we’re all alike and that we can share the earth and live in peace.” <sup>FF</sup>

“Can you save the world one shirt at a time? Yes! By making choices that are good for the earth and its people, you can make a difference every day.”

—Somy Ali, *recipient of the Celebration of Excellence Distinguished Alumni Achievement Award*



Somy Ali models some of her T-shirt designs inscribed with symbols and messages promoting religious and ethnic tolerance, world peace, and human rights.



# Biology Intern Puts His Finger on the Pulse of His Career

*By Kathleen Kernicky*

**CARLOS HADERSPOCK** always thought about becoming a doctor. After an eight-week internship in Graz, Austria, where he assisted a team of transplant surgeons, he was certain that he wanted to pursue a medical career and help others.

Haderspock, 27, a junior biology major in the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences, spent last summer working at Landeskrankenhaus (LKH) hospital under the direction of Philipp Stiegler, M.D., an Austrian transplant surgeon.

“It strengthened my will power to become a doctor,” said Haderspock, whose goal is to become a doctor specializing in plastic and reconstructive surgery. “Until you see what they go through—not just the surgeries, but the hours that they work, the pain they feel if the patient dies—you can’t really say if you’re going to like this profession. Until you really stand in that world, you don’t have a sense of what it means to be a doctor. This helped me see what the real work is like.”

“[The internship] strengthened my will power to become a doctor. Until you see what they go through... you can’t really say if you’re going to like this profession. ...This helped me see what the real work is like.”

—Carlos Haderspock

*biology major, plans to pursue a career in medicine*

**THE HANDS-ON INTERNSHIP**, one of the first of its kind for an undergraduate student at Nova Southeastern University, was developed and coordinated by Mark Jaffe, D.P.M., assistant professor in the college’s Division of Math, Science, and Technology.

“Even second-year medical students don’t get a chance to do some of the procedures that Carlos was doing,” Jaffe said. Before leaving for Austria, Haderspock completed the training program required of NSU researchers working with human subjects. “I made sure he was prepared and understood what was expected of him in terms of maintaining a lab manual and continuing his primary research focus.”

During his first week on the job, Haderspock accompanied the transplant team on an emergency call after a 25-year-old organ donor was killed in an accident. Haderspock spent six hours in the operating room assisting surgeons as they removed the man’s vital organs, which were donated to recipient patients.

It was Haderspock’s first experience in the operating room.

“I was actually putting my hands inside the body, lifting up the organs or the intestines and moving them to the side to make sure that the surgeon didn’t cut something he wasn’t supposed to cut,” he said. “I assisted in the suturing and suction. I was constantly putting ice inside the body to keep the body temperature cold. I was there for the entire six-hour surgery with no break. It’s a very messy procedure. It was quite shocking.”




Carlos Haderspock

That didn’t discourage him.

“It motivated me more to want to become a doctor,” said Haderspock, who assisted in a total of five transplant operations and more than a dozen other surgeries during the internship. Those included open-heart, pacemaker, implantable cardioverter defibrillator, and plastic surgeries including a skin grafting and reconstructive surgery.

Haderspock also made daily clinical rounds at the hospital, where he saw about 20 pre-transplant and post-transplant patients and performed many of the same duties as a medical-school resident. That made this internship unique.

“This was an experience that you can only learn hands-on,” he said. “What will make me a better doctor is not just being book savvy, but having practical experience.”

Since returning to the United States, Haderspock is continuing his research under Jaffe’s supervision as part of an independent study course, BIOL 4990. That research includes a comparison of university clinics here and in Austria. He also has written a research paper about a liver transplant. 



# Today's Lessons of the Holocaust: *Professor Takes Notes from Premier Scholars*



Gary Gershman, J.D., Ph.D.

*By Kathleen Kernicky*

GARY GERSHMAN, J.D., Ph.D., had a taste of being a student again under the tutelage of some of the nation's premier scholars in Holocaust studies. Gershman, associate professor in the Division of Humanities at the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences, was awarded a fellowship last year by the Holocaust Education Foundation.

"IT WAS NICE TO BE A STUDENT AGAIN AND BE ABLE TO EXCHANGE IDEAS AND MATERIALS AND EXPLORE SUBJECTS LIKE LITERATURE AND PSYCHOLOGY. IT REACQUAINTED ME WITH A LOT OF THINGS THAT STUDENTS DO. I BLENDED RIGHT BACK INTO THAT LIFE AGAIN. AND I THINK IT MADE ME A BETTER TEACHER."

GARY GERSHMAN, J.D., PH.D.

*associate professor in the Division of Humanities, awarded a fellowship by the Holocaust Education Foundation*

**E**ACH YEAR, this private, nonprofit organization invites about two dozen professors and advanced graduate students to its Summer Institute on the Holocaust and Jewish Civilization at Northwestern University. Scholars and participants bring expertise in a variety of disciplines, including literature, history, politics, psychology, philosophy, film, and religion. The intensive two-week study course is designed to give these current and future educators a broader view of the Holocaust as well as ideas on how to incorporate that view into their teaching.

"This really changed my perspective. It enhanced my ability to teach the class," said Gershman, who has taught the history of the Holocaust (HIST 3140) at Nova Southeastern University for the past five years and has taken students to Europe to study genocide.

"We all approach [teaching the Holocaust] from slightly different angles. I tend to focus more on being a cultural and social historian. You have to pull in psychology, literature, philosophy, and film—together with the history. Psychology, especially, becomes an important role in trying to comprehend the Holocaust specifically and genocide generally.

"I already use a lot of these materials. [The institute] told me my gut was correct. I knew I was on the right track. But this gave me more nuances in my teaching. Before, I was very traditional about the way I taught the class."

For instance, Gershman was inspired by scholar Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern, Ph.D., a professor at Northwestern University and an expert in Jewish history and pre-modern and modern Eastern Europe. After studying with Petrovsky-Shtern, "I spent a lot more time in my class talking about the complexities of Jewish history and life in Eastern and Central Europe," Gershman said.

After listening to Sara Horowitz, Ph.D., professor of comparative literature and director of the Centre for Jewish

Studies at York University in Toronto, Gershman is reconsidering using fiction in his Holocaust course.

"I had read a lot of these books before, and I struggled with how to use them," Gershman said. "Using fiction in a Holocaust class is controversial to begin with. As a literature professor, Sara Horowitz explained how to use literature and fiction in a Holocaust class as effectively as I do in other classes. She broke it down."

Gershman was also influenced by the approach of another scholar, James Waller, Ph.D., psychology professor at Whitworth College and the author of *Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Can Commit Genocide and Mass Killing*. Waller stressed the importance of teaching the Holocaust within the context of other genocides of the past century.

In 2006, Gershman took a travel-study class to Europe. The group visited Auschwitz-Birkenau and traveled to Serbia and Kosovo to discuss the genocide in Bosnia and how such an event might have occurred in Kosovo. He hopes to make a similar trip in the spring of 2010.

As he explained, "We can talk about Poland in 1941. And then I'll ask a student, 'What can you do about Darfur?' The response is, 'What am I supposed to do?' I'll say, 'What should the Poles or other nations have done?' And the student will say, 'That's different.' This brings a certain realism to the class that the Holocaust is not just a piece of history."

During his stay at Northwestern University, Gershman got the chance to live "like a student again." He went to classes all day. He lived in a dormitory. He did his homework. "It was nice to be a student again and be able to exchange ideas and materials and explore subjects like literature and psychology. I don't get to spend much time there," he said. "It reacquainted me with a lot of things that students do. I blended right back into that life again. And I think it made me a better teacher." **FF**



# Clinic Program Encourages Students to Explore Career Options

By Amanda Nicole Brown

JESSICA BLANCO, a senior biology major, has always wanted to be a dentist. At the age of 17, she landed her first job as a dental office assistant. During the next four years, she worked her way up to oral surgery assistant. Blanco clearly has insight into the dentistry profession, but as an undergraduate looking ahead to a lifetime as a health care professional, she also wanted to experience many of the other fields available.

And she did, through the unique Clinic Exploration Program (CEP) sponsored by the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences in partnership with NSU's Health Professions Division. The Clinic Exploration Program puts students inside many of NSU's health clinics, where they shadow medical professionals, gain a broad perspective of various medical fields, and see their career options in a very practical, up-close way.

"I loved participating in CEP because I was able to experience different health care careers outside of what I had been used to," Blanco said. "It was interesting to see the different aspects of medicine and be able to ask questions to the doctors about their day-to-day schedules."

Each participant has a different experience. Blanco, for instance, followed medical students and professionals in the internal medicine and audiology clinics, and she even participated in the athletic training clinic, the first CEP program outside of the Health Professions Division. Other clinic options available to CEP participants include dentistry, occupational therapy, optometry, and pediatrics.

The CEP started two years ago to allow undergraduates in any major to "experience something they would have never tried before," explained CEP coordinator Robin Sherman, Ph.D., associate professor and associate director in the Division of Math, Science, and Technology in the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences.

CEP students participate in one or two clinical rotations in a semester, and each rotation lasts three weeks, with a schedule of about two hours per week. Before they begin the program, participants

must complete special training related to safety and patient privacy. During their shifts, they wear blue lab jackets that are presented to them through a special college ceremony at the beginning of each academic year.

A key part of the program is that students do not choose which rotations they would like to shadow. Instead they're assigned to clinics. This is intentional, as the program "is about openness to experience, not resume building," Sherman said. "The program is about responsibility and curiosity, which is what education is all about. Many students go to the audiology clinic with no interest in that particular field. And [they] come back and say, 'that was so cool!'"

Biology major YASEMIN KANAR has participated in two CEP rotations. She took part in the internal medicine clinic and the osteopathic manipulative medicine (OMM) clinic, where she observed medical students working directly with patients.

Kanar said that she learned a lot about how doctors work on muscles and the spine in order to fix problems. "There was a patient there, an older man, who was having problems with his back," Kanar said. "I was able to see his spine before anything was done to it and then after. How they manipulated the spine and how they used certain techniques to twist his body were amazing!"

Students often recommend the program to their peers looking for new experiences and assistance in making career choices. Its popularity is building—in two years, the program has grown from 80 students to about 120.

"I think this program is especially helpful to students who know they love science and medicine, but are not completely sure which [graduate] program they want to enter," Blanco said. "I think it is also very helpful to incoming freshmen who might know what program they would like to enter, but do not have the volunteer experience or have no idea what the field is really about. It definitely helps in the final decision making." FF



Yasemin Kanar

**"THE PROGRAM IS ABOUT RESPONSIBILITY AND CURIOSITY, WHICH IS WHAT EDUCATION IS ALL ABOUT."**

**ROBIN SHERMAN, PH.D.**  
*associate professor and associate director in the Division of Math, Science, and Technology*



By Janissa Khal

# MAJOR INSIGHT:

## International Studies Prepares Students for Global Careers



**F**OR GENEVIEVE CHANTAL CEANT, getting a degree meant dusting off her passport. Ceant, an international studies major in the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences, spent eight weeks last summer absorbing the culture, language, and day-to-day life in the Dominican Republic.

The international studies major in the Division of Humanities prepares students for careers in a variety of fields, including international relations, politics, law, business, journalism, education, and government. Courses highlight the culture, history, law, literature, and government of various regions worldwide.

Part of the major's requirements is 6 credits of travel-study coursework. During her two months in the Dominican Republic, Ceant took three courses for a total of 9 credits at Pontificia Universidad Catolica Madre y Maestra (Pontifical Catholic University Mother and Teacher, also called PUCMM). She took two classes in Spanish at an advanced level and a class on Dominican and Caribbean culture. She also conducted research at the Dominican National Archives in Santo Domingo, preparing a paper on Haitian-Dominican relations.

"The program made a difference in my life, and I have a lot of traveling experience," said Ceant, who had visited the Dominican Republic as a tourist. Living in the island nation was a totally different experience, however, and one that expanded her understanding of the region as she pursues an international relations career with a specialty in the Caribbean.

"We had to do things the Dominican way," said Ceant, who lived in a local household where she ate Dominican food and watched Dominican television shows. She got around by riding the city buses. "If you go there as a tourist or on a business trip, you're there for yourself. You don't know the Dominican people until you are living in their world. Before, I was just meeting them."

Understanding people and their culture is important for students like Ceant who face the challenge of a global workforce that transcends geographic boundaries, requires multi-cultural communication, and demands an ability to converse in more than one language. During her travel-study, Ceant spoke, read, and wrote in Spanish. In addition to the travel-study requirement, students in the international studies major must immerse themselves in a foreign language, which, starting in 2009, will include courses in Chinese and Arabic.




International studies major Naida Alcime, shown here in Paris, spent five weeks studying French and attending classes at the University of Paris Sorbonne.

Genevieve Chantal Ceant spent two months absorbing the culture, Spanish language, and day-to-day life in the Dominican Republic.

While Ceant is focused on the Caribbean, fellow international studies major Naida Alcime spent five weeks in Paris studying French. Alcime attended classes at the University of Paris Sorbonne where she studied phonetics and French language. Besides her class work, she practiced her language skills with native French speakers.

"My French is so much better now," Alcime said. "While I was there, I got to practice. I got to hear the actual Parisian accent. That's different from when you're learning French in the United States. I got the speed and I got to hear their conjunctions. When I came back and I spoke French, it sounded much more Parisian."

Although her main focus was mastering the language, Alcime also gained self confidence by stepping outside her comfort zone and interacting with people from a different culture.

"Study abroad is one of the great assets of a university education. It is life changing," said David Kilroy, Ph.D., associate professor and faculty chair of the International Studies major. "Our intent is to make them prepared," Kilroy said of the students. "We've set up our curriculum in a way that's designed to give as broad as possible, but still fairly focused, introduction to international education. I think we have a pretty strong program here. By the time students complete it, they'll be ready." 



# LIFE and DEATH

## Distinguished Speakers Explore Matters of

**“Life and Death,”** the theme for the 2008–2009 academic year, was the focus of the Distinguished Speakers Series presented by the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences.

Five prominent speakers—whose expertise spans the fields of literature, research technology, medical pathology, and social ministry—discussed some of the ethical dilemmas, legal issues, and moral ambiguities surrounding matters of life and death.

Students had the opportunity to meet with each of the speakers, who answered questions and participated in lively discussions. The speakers also were recognized at private receptions with faculty and distinguished guests.

During the series, each college division hosted companion events to explore in depth some of the themes presented by the distinguished speakers. These supporting events included stage performances, lectures, piano recitals, and panel discussions on topics ranging from international birth and funeral customs to the legal ramifications of euthanasia.

The series was first established in 2003 to serve as a vehicle for academic exchange and discovery. This year’s dynamic subject of life and death sparked many provocative discussions among students and the NSU community, both inside and outside of the classroom.

“A university must serve as a forum for the exploration and expression of ideas, including those we may find troubling or with which we might disagree,” said Don Rosenblum, Ph.D., dean of the college. “As a college, we best serve our students and the community when we enable critical reflection and debate.” **FF**



### Andre **DUBUS III**

Award-winning novelist Andre Dubus III opened the Distinguished Speakers Series on September 2, 2008, as the keynote speaker at the 2008–2009 Undergraduate Convocation, the annual ceremony marking the start of the academic year.

Dubus is the author of a collection of short fiction, *The Cage Keeper and Other Stories*, and the novels *Bluesman* and *House of Sand and Fog*. His work has been included in *The Best American Essays of 1994*, *The Best Spiritual Writing of 1999*, and *The Best of Hope Magazine*.

His novel *House of Sand and Fog*, a *New York Times* bestseller, has been published in 25 countries. Dubus’s recent novel, *The Garden of Last Days*, was published in June 2008.

In addressing the topic of life and death, Dubus told the audience at the Miniaci Performing Arts Center about the last time he saw his father, just days before he died. Dubus and his brother, a carpenter, built their father’s coffin, dug his grave, and buried him themselves. Dubus called the time “one of the most beautiful and joyous experiences in my life.” His message: One must embrace grief and death to fully experience life.

After the convocation ceremony, the college hosted a reception, followed by a private dinner and discussion with Dubus for new undergraduate students involved in the college’s inaugural First-Year Reading Program. After reading *House of Sand and Fog*, the students had the opportunity to discuss the novel with the author.



### Ralph **MERKLE**

The Division of Math, Science, and Technology welcomed research scientist Ralph Merkle, Ph.D., to the Miniaci Performing Arts Center as part of the Distinguished Speakers Series on October 2, 2008.

A pioneer in computer science, Merkle spoke about “Life, Death, and Cryonics,” the controversial science of using ultra-cold temperatures to preserve human life. Cryonics challenges society’s definitions of death with the underlying assumption that patients declared dead by today’s doctors may be preserved and revived in the future when medical technology becomes available.

Merkle, who received a doctoral degree in electrical engineering from Stanford University, serves as a director of the Alcor Life Extension Foundation, a leading cryonics research organization. He has served as chair for several Alcor conferences covering cryobiology, tissue engineering, nanomedicine, and genetic engineering, among other topics. He also is a distinguished professor of computer science at the Georgia Institute of Technology.

According to the Alcor Life Extension Foundation, cryonics is a “speculative life support technology” that seeks to preserve human life in a state that will be treatable by future medicine, including mature nanotechnology and the ability to heal at the cellular and molecular levels.

On campus, panel discussions complemented Merkle’s visit, including “Over My Dead Body: Is a Body Necessary for Life?” hosted by the Division of Humanities. The panel discussed digital technology and the possibilities of achieving immortality by abandoning our bodies and continuing our lives as digital beings.



### Jack **KEVORKIAN**

Jack Kevorkian, M.D., who spent eight years in prison for his participation in the assisted suicide of a terminally ill patient, drew a crowd of more than 2,500 people to the arena at the Don Taft University Center on February 5, 2009.

Kevorkian was welcomed to the NSU campus by the Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences. Answering questions from an audience of students and members of the faculty, staff, and local community, Kevorkian discussed his controversial views on assisted suicide and terminally ill patients’ “right to die.”

Kevorkian began his career as a pathology specialist studying terminal disease. His experience with terminally ill patients led him to conclude that a doctor’s choice to aid a patient’s suicide could be considered an ethical one. Kevorkian later designed a machine that would allow patients to trigger an intravenous drip of an anesthetic to induce sleep and then coma, followed by an agent that would stop the patient’s heart.

*(continued on next page)*



Kevorkian's first assisted suicide was in 1990. In September 1998, Kevorkian videotaped an assisted suicide in which he, not the patient, pressed the switch to initiate his device's lethal intravenous drip. In March 1999, he was convicted of second-degree murder, served eight years in prison, and was released in June 2007.

During Kevorkian's visit, the college divisions hosted several companion events. Those included a faculty discussion of "Immortality: Science—Fact or Fiction," presented by the Division of Math, Science, and Technology. The discussion included four, 15-minute presentations ranging from a biological explanation of aging and its causes to the environmental, social, and legal implications of humans living longer.



### Sr. Helen PREJEAN

Sister Helen Prejean, CSJ, one of the nation's leading advocates of abolishing the death penalty, was welcomed to the Miniaci Performing Arts Center on April 16, 2009, by the Division of Humanities.

Born in 1939 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Prejean joined the Sisters of St. Joseph of Medaille in 1957. She began her prison ministry in 1981 when she became pen pals with Patrick Sonnier, a convicted murderer who was sentenced to die in the electric chair at Louisiana's Angola State Prison. Prejean often visited Sonnier as a spiritual adviser. She learned much about the Louisiana execution process.

The result was *Dead Man Walking: An Eyewitness Account of the Death Penalty in the United States*, a bestselling book written by Prejean in 1993 and later nominated for a Pulitzer Prize. *Dead Man Walking* was adapted into a 1996 film written and directed by Tim Robbins and starring Susan Sarandon as

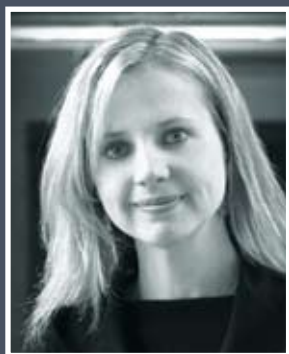
Prejean and Sean Penn as a death-row inmate.

In 2002, Robbins wrote a stage version as part of the Dead Man Walking School Theatre Project, an initiative of the Death Penalty Discourse Network. More than 170 high schools, colleges, and universities have produced the play as part of the project's mission to inspire education and discussion about the death penalty.

Prejean's visit to NSU was highlighted by the university's theater production premiere of *Dead Man Walking*, presented by the Division of Performing and Visual Arts, in the Black Box Theater at the Performing and Visual Arts Wing of the Don Taft University Center.

Prejean's second book, *The Death of Innocents: An Eyewitness Account of Wrongful Executions*, was published in 2004. She continues to educate the public about the death penalty by lecturing, organizing, and writing.

## Distinguished Speaker at the 2009 Undergraduate Commencement Exercises



### Samantha NUTT

Samantha Nutt, M.D., recognized internationally for her work on behalf of human rights and humanitarian aid to families living in war zones, was the scheduled distinguished speaker at the 2009 Undergraduate Commencement Exercises on Saturday, May 9, 2009, at the BankAtlantic Center in Sunrise, Florida.

Nutt is the founder and executive director of War Child Canada, a charity that raises money to help children affected by war. She spent more than a decade working with War Child Canada, the United Nations, and nongovernmental organizations in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, northern Uganda, and other locations.

As a medical doctor, Nutt is a specialist in maternal and child health, family medicine, public health, and women's health. She is on staff at Women's College Hospital, Sunnybrook, and the Women's Health Science Centre in Toronto. She is also an assistant professor at the University of Toronto.

A native of Toronto, Nutt holds undergraduate degrees in arts and science and in medicine from McMaster University. She earned postgraduate degrees in medicine and in public health from the University of Toronto and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Among her many honors and awards, Nutt is the recipient of the University of Toronto's Science for Peace Award and the CP Shaw Award for Excellence in Community Medicine Research and Publication.

Nutt was the last of the distinguished speakers scheduled to address Life and Death, this year's academic theme at the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences. The Board of Trustees has awarded her an honorary doctorate of humane letters.

# The Science of Self-Improvement: *New Book Looks at Myths of Sports Nutrition*

By Michael Bergbauer

**M**ANY PEOPLE enhance their diets and exercise routines with a variety of nutritional supplements—from energy-pumping Red Bull to the muscle-mass enhancing creatine.

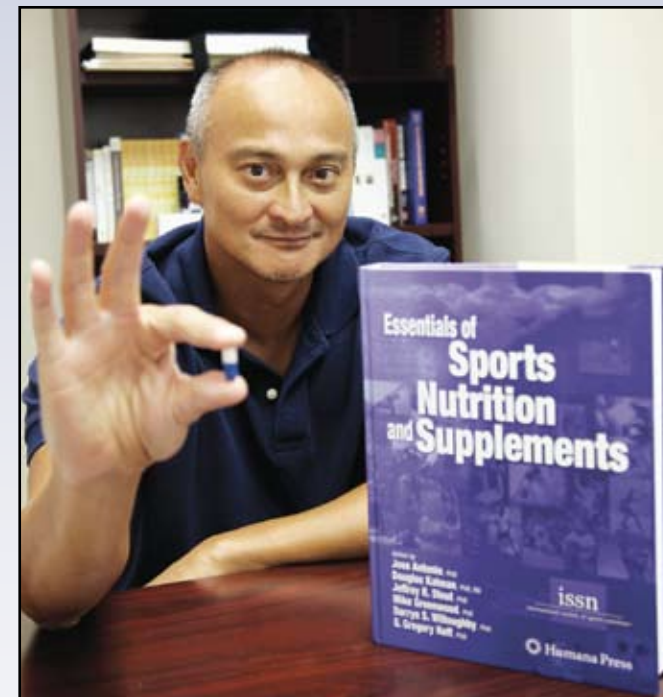
### BUT HOW SAFE ARE THEY?

There is a dearth of reliable information regarding the proper use and effects of nutritional supplements, said Jose Antonio, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Division of Math, Science, and Technology at the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences. And this has led to myths and misconceptions.

Tackling them is the purpose of *Essentials of Sports Nutrition and Supplements*, a new textbook published by Antonio in June 2008 with Humana Press. Antonio has spent much of his career studying human fitness performance and enhancement, and is the author of other sports-related books—*Fast Track: Training and Nutrition Secrets from America's Top Female Runner* and *Fit Kids for Life: A Parents' Guide to Optimal Nutrition and Training for Young Athletes*.


"There really are very few good books on sports nutrition or sports supplements," said Antonio, who is the lead editor and a contributor for the book. "I and the other contributors in this book felt that, as experts in the field, we could convey this information better than anybody. Nutrition and the category of sports supplements is really a vast category. It is growing, but the information is not readily available," Antonio said.

Antonio's new textbook is geared to both students and academics in the sports-health field, as well as general readers and athletes who want to take a closer look at athletic performance, what they eat, and how they exercise. "Without scientific information, many people are making their own assumptions about supplements and sports nutrition," said Antonio, whose goal was to establish authoritative facts to help readers make informed decisions. The book includes scientific references alongside points of contention. "If you see a controversial statement in the book such as 'eating high-protein diets can confer an advantage in gaining muscle mass,' it comes with references to other studies and information," Antonio explained.



Jose Antonio, Ph.D., assistant professor in the division of Math, Science, and Technology

The book presents information that debunks or confirms readers' assumptions about sports supplements. "A lot of people are willing to believe that many supplements are inherently bad for you, such as energy drinks," Antonio said. "But the fact of the matter is that if an energy drink like Red Bull can sell 3.5 billion cans worldwide each year, and they are *that* bad for you, then where is the data showing such harm? I always ask, 'where is the data?' What people need to do is actually look up the established facts and original research and determine if there is any truth in such claims."

"If you want to learn rudimentary medicine, you can go to WebMD," Antonio continued, referring to the popular consumer-health Web site. "But, there is not a corollary to that in sports nutrition or sports supplements. The information is scattered. What we tried to do is to compile that research so that it is in one palatable form." 



# Inspiring and Promoting Student Research:

## The Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences

By Kathleen Kernicky

Psychology major Tammy Saenz is assisting in a research project with Glenn Scheyd, Jr., Ph.D., assistant professor in the Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences.

“THERE IS A PERSONAL SATISFACTION IN HAVING AN IDEA, IMPLEMENTING A PROJECT, AND COMPLETING IT.”

—MICHAEL REITER, PH.D.,  
*interim director, Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences*

**L**OOKING AHEAD, Randy Denis’s plans include graduate school and counseling those in need at community outreach centers. For now, Denis hopes that a two-year research project in the Divisional Honors Program—studying the effect of academic stress on memory performance—will give him the competitive edge to reach those goals.

Denis, a psychology major, is working under the guidance of Jaime Tartar, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences. The Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences encourages undergraduate student research in several ways. An annual Undergraduate Student Symposium is a showcase for a range of scholarship prepared by students. In addition, students and faculty mentors can receive financial support for ongoing research projects that may also support an honors thesis or an independent study project. Many students serve as assistants to faculty members who are eager to share their enthusiasm for research.

Taking part in research is an exciting and challenging process that helps students develop critical thinking skills, establish collaborative relationships with faculty mentors, and present or publish their work at conferences and in journals.

All of the college’s academic divisions encourage this type of student scholarship with faculty mentorship. (This edition of the *Farquhar Forum*

is focused on the Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences.)

With majors in psychology, sociology, criminal justice, and paralegal studies, the Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences offers unique opportunities for student research. These include the Divisional Honors Program, independent study courses, or working with a professor as a research assistant. Unlike other divisions, research in social and behavioral sciences often includes human subjects. Such research requires that students receive special CITI training, such as a course on the protection of human subjects. All students in the division are required to take a course in research methodology.

“Research is extremely useful for our students,” said Michael Reiter, Ph.D., interim director of the division. “Being able to do research projects and present at a symposium helps them to recognize that they are contributing members of that field of knowledge. There is a personal satisfaction in having an idea, implementing a project, and completing it.”

Research offers an important competitive boost for undergraduate students vying for a limited number of seats in graduate schools, particularly if they publish or present their research at symposiums. Research is pivotal for students in majors such as psychology and sociology, particularly if their career goals include doctoral work.

*With majors in psychology, sociology, criminal justice, and paralegal studies, the Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences offers unique opportunities for student research.*





AT NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY, small class sizes allow for a more personal, interactive relationship between students and faculty members, encouraging students to explore ideas and take a comprehensive approach to the learning process. “Here, they get more one-on-one, hands-on opportunities,” Reiter said, citing a former student whose research was published in the *Farquhar Student Journal* and who is pursuing a doctoral degree.

Often, ideas for a project begin during class discussions. That was the case with Denis, who was taking a course taught by Tartar called Biological Bases of Behavior. “We were talking about stress and how [the stress hormone] cortisol can actually hinder memory,” Denis said. “I experience a lot of stress also during exams. Later on, I talked to other students and found that they also experience a lot of stress during exams. Could that maybe hinder our memory?”

Denis’s study measures and compares the levels of cortisol in student participants. He took samples three weeks before final exams as a baseline measure and again during exam week. Participants also were tested to measure short-term and long-term memory. His preliminary results revealed that stress has little impact on the participants’ short-term

memories, and their long-term memories slightly improve under moderate stress. According to Denis, these findings may indicate that acute levels of stress can enhance memory while chronic stress can hinder memory.

This student researcher hopes that his research efforts will help the community better understand the harmful effects of stress, including emotional disorders such as depression. His career goals include treating those in need at community health centers: “I feel there’s a huge need for psychologists to be in the field and work within the community, especially the minority community.”

Denis expects to complete his honors project in winter 2010. He acknowledges the value of having a mentor through this process. “Working closely with a professor is critical during a long-term project. And, [professors] here are very open-minded to research opportunities,” he said. “It’s important to figure out their interests, your interests, and find the right match.”

Finding a research topic to match her cross-disciplinary interests wasn’t difficult for biology major Kristen deAlmeida, who is participating in the Divisional Honors Program for social and behavioral sciences.

DEALMEIDA’S PROJECT will examine how one’s level of cognitive performance is influenced by related emotional processing. During her research, she will manipulate a subject’s emotional state through the use of emotionally negative or neutral pictures. She also will use electroencephalographic (EEG) event-related brain potentials (ERPs) as the primary index of the influence of emotional processing on cognitive functioning.

DeAlmeida’s project combines her interests in psychology, biology, and neurology.

“In both of my classes, she was really interested in understanding how the brain works,” said Tartar, deAlmeida’s adviser for the Divisional Honors Program. “After several conversations about her interests, she ended up working with me setting up EEG equipment for a project on cognition and emotion in HIV-positive women. She was actually so successful and interested in this that she proposed her own Divisional Honors project on HIV-negative student participants to complement the work on the HIV-positive women.”

DeAlmeida was also a co-author on a President’s Faculty Research and Development Grant awarded to Tartar last year.

Said deAlmeida, “There are a lot of opportunities here. You develop relationships with your teachers. If you go to them and you want to do research, they’ll work with you. It’s also a great experience. I actually enjoy it.”

PSYCHOLOGY MAJOR TAMMY SAENZ found her opportunity working with Glenn Scheyd, Jr., Ph.D., evolutionary psychologist and an assistant professor in the division.

Last year, Scheyd co-authored “*Physical Attractiveness: Signals of Phenotypic Quality and Beyond*,” a chapter in the 2008 textbook *Foundations of Evolutionary Psychology*. He has been exploring research that questions how we determine mate values and why certain people are attracted to certain others. He seeks to examine how men and women measure levels of attractiveness and determine whether those opinions can be manipulated. During this experiment, NSU student volunteers will be asked to view photographs of men, women, and couples and assess their attractiveness and mate value.

When Scheyd announced to his social psychology course that he was looking for a research assistant, Saenz was quick to volunteer.



“I was very interested in doing research,” said Saenz, who is conducting the research through an independent study course. “I work hands-on with Professor Scheyd. I throw out ideas, and he throws out ideas, and we work together. I’ll be assisting him in collecting the data and writing the manuscript. It’s wonderful to have this opportunity.”

Saenz’s curiosity about this particular research topic has prompted more questions, fueling her interest in this project. “I know many of us question why we choose the partners that we do,” she said. “We’re looking for a rational explanation or at least a personal understanding of why we’re attracted to certain people. ‘Why did I fall in love with this individual?’ ‘Why do I do these things even if this person isn’t the right individual for me?’”

This student researcher has learned that answers to questions like these could help us understand the choices that we make—a goal that often serves as the impetus for great research. ☕



**Kristen deAlmeida’s research in the Divisional Honors Program combines her interests in psychology, biology, and neurology.**



**Randy Denis is conducting a two-year research project in the Divisional Honors Program on the effect of academic stress on memory performance. His faculty mentor is Jaime Tartar, Ph.D., assistant professor in the division.**



# Write the Best Book That You Can

## *South Florida Novelist Speaks with Student Writers*

By Brandon Bielich



Photo by Maggie Evans Silverstein

IT TOOK MYSTERY-FICTION AUTHOR JAMES W. HALL more than 20 years and four unpublished novels before he finally got his big break in the publishing industry with *Under Cover of Daylight*. Fifteen published novels later, Hall is a humble author living in South Florida, enjoying his career as a writer and professor at Florida International University, where he is a semester away from retirement.

In the fall 2008 semester, Hall spoke to undergraduate English majors and students in the graduate writing program from the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences about his unusual pathway to publication, his inspirations, and his predictions on the future of the industry.

Hall's campus visit was one of many throughout the year from leading professionals and esteemed guest lecturers. The college sponsors these events to bring relevant, topical information from the field to students. These opportunities often inspire and enlighten students with representations of how to be successful in their chosen disciplines.

Hall answered students' questions and offered valuable advice for aspiring writers.

### Forum: *How did you get your first book published?*

My situation is fairly unusual. It's not a guideline on how you would do it these days because things are very different now than they were back then. I still think the right way to answer the question is "Write the best book that you can." That gives you the best possibility to get published. But in my case, I had published a story in a literary magazine and an agent in New York wrote me a letter.

But in this environment, no one sends books directly to publishers. You have to have a literary agent. You have to figure out, by looking at the marketplace, what's working in the world and what feels compatible to you, and let that be your guide.

### Forum: *What's the difference between your first four novels and the fifth one that got published?*

I ask myself that a lot. While cleaning out my office at the university in preparation for retirement, I've come across fragments of stories I've written that didn't publish and now I can see why they didn't publish. They were wretched! I didn't even remember how wretched they were, but they were terrible.

I tried four times and it didn't work out. So I said, "I'm going to give it one more shot, but this time, I'm going to do something because I like it—not because I think it's good or others will admire me."

### Forum: *Did you feel more pressure working on your follow-up books since someone else set the timeframe?*

It's actually just the reverse of that. I think one of the reasons I wrote at first—and why I believe a lot of people write—is to have people love me and have people say, "Oh, I love your characters, I love your book, and therefore, I love you, whoever you are who created this thing." After *Under Cover of Daylight* was published, they already "loved" me, so I was not trying to win them over at that point.

### Forum: *What inspires you to write and continue writing your stories?*

So many things go into that question. At any given moment, for one, the psychological issue that drives the story is biographically relevant to me at that point in my life. My mother died last year. So the topic of dealing with grief and losing a parent is a subject that's big enough to wrestle with while writing. I always say that I've got to have something psychologically and emotionally at stake.

I also have to have a nonfiction subject, something that I have to do research on to learn about. The way I know what that subject is, is when I start to get really excited and engaged about it.



James W. Hall, a South Florida novelist and mystery-fiction author, encouraged students to "write the best book" they can during a visit to campus in November 2008. Hall met with graduate and undergraduate writing students from the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences.

### Forum: *How do you write about South Florida in a way that's more interesting than maybe it actually is?*

Well, that's pretty hard to do [laughs]. I frequently watch the evening news, and I turn it off and say, "Oh man, I didn't work hard enough today," because there's stuff that's more extreme, more weird and bizarre and wonderful and wrenching than what I managed to come up with. So, in a way, South Florida sets a very high bar for any writer.

I think the right answer for each of you—and this is part of your job as writers to figure out—is that you have some unique knowledge set. You know stuff about South Florida and about your community, from your own viewpoint, that others don't know. Part of what learning to be a writer is about is learning what that unique perspective is. Some people call it your "voice." It's also the way you see things around the world.

### Forum: *You said you've tried to ignore the business side of writing, but you've probably seen a lot of changes in publishing during the last 20 years.*

There have been a lot, but the big one that probably affects you all more than anything else is the Internet. The "digital age" is hitting publishing. What is the way people are going to be reading their books in the next 20 years? I think it's [electronic devices like] the Kindle. I have a Kindle, and I love it. It's a great device. Being romantically connected to the book as a piece of paper and ink is irrelevant because the world is going to leave you behind.

### Forum: *What is your dream book to write?*

I'm happy doing what I'm doing. I'm very happy. I've reached my dream, really—and beyond that dream. I'm able to write.





**Paul Baldauf, Ph.D.**, associate professor in the Division of Math, Science, and Technology, judged science-fair projects for a competition at St. Gregory Catholic School in Plantation on March 3, 2009. The projects were created by the school's seventh- and eighth-grade students in preparation for county-wide competitions. Students' projects ranged from ideas about the best recipes for chocolate-chip cookies to the quality of bottled water.



**Maria Ballester, Ph.D.**, assistant professor in the Division of Math, Science, and Technology, has been working with South Florida middle school students to instill lifelong interest in the sciences. During the fall 2008 semester, Ballester participated in a science fair at the St. Gregory Catholic School in Plantation. She also helped middle school teachers in Plantation design science projects for their students. Ballester hopes to foster an appreciation for chemistry at an earlier education level. During the winter 2009 semester at NSU, Ballester worked with students to conduct research using the chemical compounds porphyrins.



**Diego Castano, Ph.D.**, associate professor in the Division of Math, Science, and Technology, helped bring distinguished physicist Maria Spiropulu, Ph.D., to the NSU campus in December 2008. Spiropulu is a professor at the California Institute of Technology who also works at the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) in Switzerland. Spiropulu spoke on "The Universe in Collisions: Discovery Physics at the LHC," as part of the Miami

2008 physics conference sponsored by the University of Miami. More than 100 participants from the physics conference attended the talk.



**Chetachi Egwu, Ph.D.**, assistant professor in the Division of Humanities, participated in the Black Executive Exchange Program (BEEP) as a visiting professor at Florida Memorial University in Miami Gardens in February 2009. This is Egwu's second year participating in the program. BEEP is a voluntary partnership among the National Urban League, American corporations, the U.S. government, nonprofit organizations, and other institutions that loan African American executives to participating colleges as "visiting professors." The professors lecture in credit-bearing courses and participate in other BEEP-related activities, such as networking sessions, workshops, and mock job interviews.



**Joshua Feingold, Ph.D.**, associate professor in the Division of Math, Science, and Technology, spent two years capturing close-up photographs of *Atala* butterflies on the NSU main campus in Davie along with NSU alumna Sandy Koi. A collection of their photos was featured at [www.butterfliesofamerica.com](http://www.butterfliesofamerica.com). The compilation showcased *Eumaeus atala* butterflies in nature and also featured photographs comparing their sizes with other objects.



**Christine Jackson, Ph.D.**, professor in the Division of Humanities, received an Honorable Mention in the AI Blanchard Short Story Contest in November 2008. Jackson, who writes mystery stories and fiction as part of her

professional development and teaches creative writing, received the award at "Crime Bake," a conference for the New England Chapter of the Mystery Writers of America, co-sponsored by Sisters in Crime.



**Mark Jaffe, D.P.M.**, assistant professor in the Division of Math, Science, and Technology, served as a faculty adviser for undergraduate honors student Alexandra Paroulek. Paroulek spent more than a year and a half researching the effects of the enzyme bromelain, which is found in pineapples, on breast cancer cells. The research was part of a student-initiated honors research project. In April 2009, Jaffe and Paroulek attended the Experimental Biology 2009 conference in New Orleans to present Paroulek's research findings. Jaffe and Paroulek also worked with Appu Rathinavelu, Ph.D., department chair for pharmaceutical and administration sciences at NSU's College of Pharmacy.



**Jose Lopez, Ph.D.**, associate professor in the Division of Math, Science, and Technology and molecular microbiologist at NSU's Oceanographic Center, conducted research with five undergraduate students during the winter 2009 semester at the Oceanographic Center. Research topics ranged from the molecular cloning of bacterial gene segments and amplifying uncultivable genomes to scanning marine samples for the presence of marine and human enteric viruses. To complete their research, students utilized molecular biotechnology, which analyzes DNA and RNA sequences through direct amplification and sequence database methods.



**Saeed Rajput, Ph.D.**, assistant director in the Division of Math, Science, and Technology, served as a faculty research adviser for undergraduate student Carolina Usbeck during the winter 2009 semester. Usbeck worked on two projects: one related to the emulation of a complete computer-networking laboratory on a single computer using virtualization, and the other involved the implementation of Web service in a virtualized environment. By using virtualization, Usbeck was able to reduce the amount of time that is typically required for implementation.



**Jennifer K. Reem, M.S.**, coordinator of the communication program in the Division of Humanities, spoke to students at Nova Middle School in Davie during a Career Day Forum in December 2008. Reem spoke about future career opportunities in media and communications.



**Michael Reiter, Ph.D.**, interim director and associate professor in the Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences, hosted a workshop at the Solution-Focused Brief Therapy Association Conference in Austin, Texas, held in November 2008. Reiter led a discussion-oriented workshop titled "Solution-Focused Marathon Sessions," which covered using solution-focused therapy in a marathon format ranging from two hours to an entire weekend. Reiter also offered ideas for timing and altering solution-focused therapy interventions before opening the workshop to further discussion.



**Eileen Smith-Cavros, Ph.D.**, associate professor in the Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences, presented a research paper, "Overtown: Neighborhood, Change, Challenge, and 'Invironment'," at the national conference of the American Anthropological Association (AAA) in San Francisco, in November 2008. The paper stems from her research, which led to the creation of a "visual sociology" photography exhibit at Florida International University during the summer. The exhibit featured photographs taken by residents in low-income neighborhoods in Overtown, Little Havana, and Homestead/Florida City.



**Valerie Starratt, Ph.D.**, visiting professor in the Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences, published two research articles in the February 2009 issue of the scientific journal *Personality and Individual Differences*. Starratt also gave four additional poster presentations at the Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP) Annual Conference in Tampa in February 2009. Starratt's work includes research on male interest in female partners, mate retention rates and males' perceived value of their mates, and the accuracy of male perceptions of partner infidelity.



**Elizabeth Swann, Ph.D., ATC, LAT**, program director of athletic training and associate professor in the Division of Math, Science, and Technology, contributed to a national consensus statement that impacts the entire profession and practice of athletic training. Swann co-researched and co-wrote the "Consensus Statement: Managing Prescriptions and Non-Prescription

Medication in the Athletic Training Facility," which was published in the January 2009 issue of the National Athletic Trainers' Association's national publication. The document details proper procedures and establishes national protocol for handling medications in the athletic training room and at medical clinics when dealing with athletics.



**Jaime Tartar, Ph.D.**, assistant professor in the Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences, contributed to three articles published in scientific journals. In September 2008, the international journal *Behavioral Brain Research* published Tartar's article finding that "Experimental sleep fragmentation and sleep deprivation in rats increases exploration in an open-field test of anxiety while increasing plasma corticosterone levels." An additional article that researched how sleep fragmentation impairs "ventilatory long-term facilitation via adenosine A1 receptors" was published in the *Journal of Physiology* in November 2008. Tartar also contributed to an article published in the *Journal of Sleep Research*.



**Fuzhen Zhang, Ph.D.**, professor in the Division of Math, Science, and Technology, attended the 2008 Robert C. Thompson Matrix Meeting held at the University of California—Santa Barbara, in October 2008. Zhang served as a member of the scientific committee and presented his research detailing "New Results on Hua Matrix Inequalities." Zhang also is the co-chair of the third International Workshop on Matrix Analysis and Applications, which will take place in July 2009, at Zhejiang Forestry University in Hangzhou, China.





## ALUMNA PROFILE | *Class of '08*

# Kristina Christoph

Biology Graduate Teaching Abroad with Fulbright Scholarship




**KRISTINA CHRISTOPH** hasn't wasted any time.

After graduating from the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences in May 2008, the biology major attended an internship at the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda, Maryland. When her internship ended, she moved to Spain for a one-year Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship, which began in September 2008. In fall 2009, Christoph will begin dental school at the Harvard School of Dental Medicine in Massachusetts.

During her career at Nova Southeastern University, Christoph was active in research through the college's Undergraduate Honors Program and served as president of the Pre-Dental Society and the Tri-Beta Biological Honor Society. In her senior year at NSU, she was named Student of the Year for the college's Student Life Achievement Awards (STUEYS) and was recognized at Commencement 2008 as one of the year's 10 Outstanding Student Graduates.

"We're very proud of Kristina," said Don Rosenblum, Ph.D., dean of the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences. "As a student, she gave back to the university community as much as she received and continues to do so as a role model for other students ready to take charge of their education and explore the many creative opportunities available."

For Christoph, teaching abroad through the Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship Program is a continuation of her commitment to academic discovery and community involvement. The program serves countries on almost every continent and provides teachers at a range of educational levels. "My experience in Spain as a 'Fulbrighter' has been very exciting and enriching," Christoph said. "Every day is a new learning opportunity. The elementary [school] kids I teach are curious to learn about life in the United States. Teaching has been wonderful and rewarding." In addition to teaching in Spain, Christoph is conducting research into the country's health care system as part of her participation in the Fulbright program.

In addition to her Fulbright opportunities, Christoph credits her on-campus NSU experience for opening doors and her mind. "Participating in the Honors Program and meeting prominent leaders on campus through the Distinguished Speakers Series broadened my awareness of the world," Christoph said. "And the diverse student body and faculty helped me develop an open mind to different world views and cultures. I could not have asked for a better college experience than the one I received from NSU." 

For more information on Fulbright programs, please visit [www.fulbrightonline.org](http://www.fulbrightonline.org).