Welcome to the 2009 Greater Reading Literary Festival at Alvernia! The Holleran Center for Community Engagement is pleased to affiliate itself with the Literary Festival and invite all members of our community to come to campus and find “Life Between the Pages.” Please join us as we page through the fascinating works of local and national authors, which the Literary Festival committee has chosen to highlight in this fourth exciting year of the festival.

Join us as we explore the cultural and scholarly efforts of biographers, filmmakers, historians, journalists, literary scholars, philosophers, poets, scientists, theologians, and writers. Each is committed to the power of writing and will enlighten your world as you engage in the opportunities of the 2009 Literary Festival at Alvernia.

On a local level, we encourage you to explore the world of our beloved native son, John Updike. As Berks Countians, we are blessed with a rich literary heritage and hope you will join us as we highlight Updike’s friend and local Shillington native, Dave Silcox, as he revisits the pages of his experiences as Updike’s link to our area. In addition, Dr. Jack DeBellis, Lehigh University English Professor, has a new book focusing on Updike’s Pennsylvania. We have much to celebrate and much to learn from those with insights in the magical nature of “Life Between the Pages!”

These wonderful events cannot happen without dynamic leadership. Our community thanks English/Communications Professor Susan Guay for her indomitable spirit, creativity and enthusiasm in leadership and development of this festival at Alvernia. Sue leads a superb committee of Alvernia faculty, staff, and students who devote their time and resourcefulness to this festival. We are grateful for their participation and assistance.

So join us as we look to find “life between the pages” and engage in our efforts to connect the Greater Reading area with our campus community. All of these events are free and open to the general public to celebrate the month of October as Greater Reading reads.

See you at the Festival!

Ginny Hand

Ginny Hand
Director, Holleran Center for Community Engagement
Alvernia University

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**ALVERNIA UNIVERSITY LITERARY FESTIVAL COMMITTEE:**

Chair—Sue Guay (Communication)
Darlene Berk (Alumni Relations)
Kristin Brumbach (Educational Services)
Jennifer Dalton (Career Center)
Ginny Hand (Holleran Center for Community Engagement)
Carey Manzolillo ’06, M’07 (Marketing and Communications)
Suzanne Miller ’89 (Event Management)
Sharon Neal (Library)
John Nelka ’87 (Library)
Susan Rehhausen (Admissions)
Bridget Scogna (Alvernia Bookstore)
Jessica Umbenhauer (Holleran Center for Community Engagement)
Alvernia University Literary Festival  
2009  
Calendar of Events:

The 2009 Literary Festival at Alvernia University will kickoff October 12, with the National Slam Poetry team of Panama Soweto and Ken Arkind (7:30 p.m., Crusader Café) and will continue with three full weeks of events, from the annual inter-college poetry contest to an Alvernia tribute to Edgar Allen Poe.

October 12  National Slam Poetry championship team The Dynamic Duo (Panama Soweto and Ken Arkind) will make you laugh, cry, and think of the world at large in a refreshingly new light. Sponsored by the Alvernia Campus Activities Board. —Crusader Café, 7:30 p.m.

October 13  Jon Kukla, author of Mr. Jefferson’s Women will offer a lecture and booksigning. —Bernardine Franciscan Conference Center, 4 p.m.

October 14  Wine and Cheese Social, sponsored by Alumni Relations. —Student Center, 5:30 p.m.

October 15  Berks Bards presents an evening of poetry and open mic. Come out and read your original or favorite poet’s work. —Crusader Café, 5 p.m.

October 16  Alvernia University Book Club will review The Elegance of the Hedgehog, by Muriel Barbery. —Shander Room, 6 p.m.

October 19  Berks County Poet Laureate, Dr. Heather Thomas, will be the keynote speaker for Alvernia’s Annual Poetry Contest. Poetry contest winners will also be announced. —Franco Library, 1 p.m.

October 20  New York Times Bestselling Author Lee Woodruff discusses In An Instant and Perfectly Imperfect. —Franco Library, 7 p.m.

October 21  Ruth White, adolescent literary writer and Newbery Award Winner will give a lecture about writing for adolescents. —Franco Library, 1 p.m.
October 22  Drs. Bongrae Seok, and Marc Lucht will present “The Consciousness of Nothing, from Art to Zen.”
—Bernardine Lecture Hall, 12:30 p.m.

October 23  Original readings and acts will be presented during the monthly meeting of the Alvernia Writers’ Series.
—Franco Library, 1 p.m.

October 26  Dave Silcox, founding member of John Updike Society, will present a documentary and share his experiences with Updike and his family.
—Bernardine Lecture Hall, 10 a.m.

October 26  Updike lecture with Jack DeBellis, founding member of John Updike Society. Albright English professor, Richard Androne, Ph.D., and Alvernia English professor Richard Law, Ph.D., will also present an analysis of Updike’s work.
—Bernardine Franciscan Conference Center, 2 p.m.

October 27  Dr. Laurence Mazzeno, author, and past president of Alvernia University will present “A Writer’s Life.”
—Bernardine Lecture Hall, 12:30 p.m.

October 28  Drs. Donna Yarri and Spencer Stober will present God, Science, and Designer Genes: An Exploration of Emerging Genetic Technologies.
—Bernardine Lecture Hall, 10 a.m.

October 29  Socheata Poeuv’s award winning documentary, “New Year Baby” will be screened by the Office of Student Activities and Campus Ministry.
—Bernardine Franciscan Conference Center, 6 p.m.

October 30  Annual Halloween costume contest and reception with a Sigma Tau Delta tribute to Edgar Allan Poe.
—Student Center, 1 p.m.
October 12  National Slam Poetry championship team The Dynamic Duo (Panama Soweto and Ken Arkind) will make you laugh, cry, and think of the world at large in a refreshingly new light. Sponsored by the Alvernia Campus Activities Board. —Crusader Café, 7:30 p.m.

ABOUT THE PRESENTERS:

Fighting Crime across The United States for the past two years, The Dynamic Duo is poetry’s favorite crime fighting pair. Heralded for their high energy live performances involving complex dual voice work, comedy, and emotionally raw poetry, Panama Soweto and Ken Arkind have taken their show to both coasts and all points in-between. Their work covers subjects as far reaching and broad as politics and video games, depression and comic books, and racism and relationships—proving that poetry can be about whatever you want it to and that it can be enjoyed by anyone.

Panama Soweto is a two-time member of the Mercury Café slam team and a founding member of the Slamnuba! team. He was the 2005 and 2006 Pablo Neruda Poetry Festival Barrio Slam Champion and currently teaches for the Denver Housing Authority. He has spent many years working with underprivileged youth as an art teacher and educator.

Ken Arkind is a five-time member of the Mercury Café Slam Team and two-time National Poetry Slam Finalist. He was the 2004 Barrio Slam Champ and 2005 Denver City Slam Champion, and is the current Project Coordinator for the Denver Minor Disturbance Youth Slam. He has taught workshops in numerous high schools and juvenile detention centers throughout the midwest.

Together, the pair has been featured in the documentaries “SPIT!” and “Slamplanet.” They have shared stages with notable performance poets: the Chicano Messengers of Spoken Word, Mike McGee, Pulitzer Prize winner Yusef Komunyakaa, Andrea Gibson, Blair, New York’s Jive Poetic Falu, Rainmaker, and Mahogany Browne. They’ve also accompanied several entertainers such as The Flobots, Zebra Junction, and Sage Francis, as well as the world famous “Last Comic Standing” winner Josh Blue.
October 13  Jon Kukla, author of *Mr. Jefferson’s Women* will offer a lecture and booksigning.
—Bernardine Franciscan Conference Center, 4 p.m.

ABOUT THE PRESENTER:

Born in Wisconsin, **Jon Kukla** graduated from Carthage College and accepted his Ph.D. from the University of Toronto, where he focused on American, British, and Canadian history. Kukla directed the research and publishing program at the Library of Virginia from 1973 to 1990, served as executive director of the Historic New Orleans Collection through the 1990s, and was Executive Director of Red Hill–The Patrick Henry National Memorial in Charlotte County, Virginia, from 2000 to 2007. He now lives and writes in Richmond, Virginia.

Kukla’s recent books, *Mr. Jefferson’s Women* and *A Wilderness So Immense: The Louisiana Purchase and the Destiny of America* were Book-of-the-Month and History Book Club selections. They exemplify his personal goal of presenting first-rate historical scholarship to a general readership by writing, as one scholar put it, “books that working historians have to read and the general public wants to read.”

Widely published in the major historical journals, Kukla has enjoyed research fellowships at the British Museum, the Virginia Historical Society, and the International Center for Jefferson Studies at Monticello. He served on the advisory board for the Jamestown Rediscovery archaeological excavations and was the principal consultant for the History Channel’s program about the Louisiana Purchase. Kukla speaks frequently to public groups and offers workshops for middle and high-school teachers. He has been elected to membership in the American Antiquarian Society and is a Distinguished Lecturer for the Organization of American Historians.

Kukla is currently working on a book about Patrick Henry, the Stamp Act crisis, and the coming of the American Revolution – the first part of a projected trilogy that will offer a fresh narrative perspective on America’s founding era from the 1750s to the 1790s.
ABOUT THE MUSICIANS:

Acoustic jazz musicians Josh Taylor and Trey LaRue have been playing music together and in other groups for the past 20 years.

As a duo, with Josh on guitar and Trey on upright bass, they play in a variety of styles ranging from jazz, latin, bossa nova, flamenco, rock and blues.

Josh is a full-time educator in the Reading School District and teaches guitar as part of the Youth & Outreach program with the Reading Musical Foundation.

Trey LaRue started on electric bass and made the switch to upright about 12 years ago. He has been in a lot of bands over the years, playing a variety of music from blues to rock to reggae.
October 15  Berks Bards presents “Poetry Alive!” a medley of voices, poetry, and open mic. Come out and read your original or favorite poet’s work.
— Crusader Café, 5 p.m.

ABOUT POETRY ALIVE!:

Is poetry “a living art” in your experience and in our region? Do you believe the “voice in all of us” deserves to be heard? The Berks Bards invite you to join them in a performance and open mic to celebrate and promote the timeless art of poetry and its relevance to our lives.

The Berks Bards is a non-profit group, which includes established and emerging poets Heather Thomas, Craig Czury, Awilda I. Castro-Suarez, Jen Gittings-Dalton, Doug Arnold, Marilyn Klimcho, Patrick Klimcho, Liz Stanley, Michael Clipman, Rachel Dengler and others. These poets will perform their own work in “Poetry Alive! with the Berks Bards.” Some poems will be performed with musical/rhythmic accompaniment. Following the performance, audience members are invited to read their own or others’ favorite poetry, hosted by the Bards. There will also be a book-signing opportunity with the poets after the event.

MORE ABOUT BERKS BARDS:

Berks Bards, a non-profit organization founded ten years ago, promotes “the living art of poetry among the people of the Greater Reading area.” The Bards offer an exciting, year-long array of poetry events, including the monthly poetry series held in the Goggle-Works Cucina Café every month.

The group hosts performances by emerging and nationally known poets, workshops, and youth events at diverse colleges, libraries, restaurants, and other venues across the region. The Bards also produce the month-long BardFest poetry festival each April. Most Berks Bards events include an open mic opportunity for anyone to read their own or others’ poetry.

All events are open to the public and nearly all are free. The group’s mission is partly funded through grants from the PA Council on the Arts, administered through the Berks Arts Council, and through additional support from community organizations, libraries, companies, and colleges. This event is sponsored by the Berks Bards, Berks Arts Council, and the PA Council on the Arts.
Alvernia University Book Club will review *The Elegance of the Hedgehog*, by Muriel Barbery.
—Shander Room, 6 p.m.

**ABOUT THE BOOK:**

Synopsis from Abe Books: *The Elegance of the Hedgehog* is an enchanting New York Times and international bestseller and award-winner about life, art, literature, philosophy, culture, class, privilege, and power, seen through the eyes of a 54-year old French concierge and a precocious but troubled 12-year-old girl.

Renée Michel is the 54-year-old concierge of a luxury Paris apartment building. Her exterior (“short, ugly, and plump”) and demeanor (“poor, discreet, and insignificant”) belie her keen, questioning mind, and profound erudition.

Paloma Josse is a 12-year-old genius who behaves as everyone expects her to behave: a mediocre pre-teen high on adolescent subculture, a good but not outstanding student, an obedient if obstinate daughter. She plans to kill herself on the sixteenth of June, her thirteenth birthday.

Both Renée and Paloma hide their true talents and finest qualities from the bourgeois families around them, until a wealthy Japanese gentleman named Ozu moves into building. Only he sees through them, perceiving the secret that haunts Renée, winning Paloma’s trust, and helping the two discover their kindred souls. Moving, funny, tender, and triumphant, Barbery’s novel exalts the quiet victories of the inconspicuous among us.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

Muriel Barbery was born in 1969 in Casablanca, and lived in France for most of her life. She studied philosophy at the Ecole Normale Supérieure and worked for many years as a philosophy teacher. Her first novel, *Une Gourmandise*, was published in French in 2000 and in English in 2009. Her second novel, *The Elegance of the Hedgehog*, has been published in over thirty countries. Barbery now lives now in Japan, where she devotes herself to writing full-time.
October 19  Berks County Poet Laureate, Dr. Heather Thomas, will be the keynote speaker for Alvernia’s Annual Poetry Contest. Poetry contest winners will also be announced.  
—Franco Library, 1 p.m.

ABOUT THE PRESENTER:

Heather Thomas, Ph.D., is an award-winning poet and a professor of English at Kutztown University. She is the author of seven books of poetry, including Blue Ruby (2008).

Resurrection Papers (2003) was translated into a bilingual edition and published in Argentina.

The Fray, an art and poetry collaboration, was created with artist Barbara Schulman.

Poems by Thomas appear in anthologies such as Common Wealth: Contemporary Poets on Pennsylvania, and in more than 30 print and online journals including American Letters and Commentary, Chain, and 13th Moon.

Associate poetry editor for the online magazine 5Trope, Heather also has published literary criticism as well as journalism, fiction, and nonfiction essays. Her play, Blue Firefly, was produced by the Reading Theater Project.

Thomas has received awards from the Academy of American Poets, the Gertrude Stein (awards in innovative American poetry), and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. She earned a master’s degree and doctorate from Temple University and has given readings in Ireland, Russia, and Argentina, as well as throughout the United States.
October 20 New York Times Bestselling Author Lee Woodruff discusses *In An Instant* and *Perfectly Imperfect*.
—Franco Library, 7 p.m.

ABOUT THE PRESENTER:

Lee Woodruff received her Bachelors degree in English from Colgate University. While working in the field of public relations (rising to the position of senior vice president of Porter Novelli) and spending a year with the communications company Hill & Knowlton in Beijing, China (helping international clients break into markets in the People’s Republic of China), Woodruff continually wrote freelance for a number of applications.

She opened a freelance writing and public relations business in 1991, and used her personal family experience to help her work as a contributing editor to *Family Fun* magazine. Her articles have appeared in *Health*, *Redbook*, *Country Living*, and *Prevention* magazines.

As a spokesperson for *Family Fun* on television and radio, Woodruff talked about various aspects of parenting and family life. In 2007, she joined ABC’s “Good Morning America” as a lifestyle and family contributor.

ABOUT THE BOOK:

Woodruff’s first book *In an Instant* was co-authored with husband Bob (an ABC News Anchor who was critically injured while working as a correspondent in Iraq, in 2006).

The book quickly became a New York Times bestseller, and stayed on the list for four weeks.

*In an Instant* helped put a face on the serious issue of traumatic brain injury among returning Iraq war veterans, as well as the millions of Americans who live with this often invisible, but life-changing affliction. “In the end, people tell me it is a love story; a story about a family, a marriage and a journey to heal,” says Woodruff.

Following Bob’s injury and miraculous recovery, the couple founded the Bob Woodruff Foundation, ReMIND.org to assist wounded servicemen and their families to receive the long-term care that they need and help them successfully reintegrate into their communities. Lee and Bob Woodruff continue to speak and raise awareness about the plight of our returning veterans.
October 21  Ruth White, adolescent literary writer and Newbery Award Winner will give a lecture about writing for adolescents.
—Franco Library, 1 p.m.

ABOUT THE PRESENTER:

Born to a poor West Virginian family during the 1950s provided Ruth C. White with both incentive and fodder for her later writing career. Her father, a coal miner died when she was six-years-old, and although her family had no television, they read aloud and performed music together. White later grew to graduate from college, build a career as a schoolteacher and librarian, and gain respect as a writer.

White is the author of several award-winning novels for middle-grade and young-adult readers. Her works include Sweet Creek Holler, Weeping Willow, Tadpole, Belle Prater’s Boy, and its sequel, The Search for Belle Prater.

The stories of Belle Prater are set in the coal-mining region of western Virginia where the author spent her childhood. Commentators have praised White for her characterizations, depiction of locale, and sensitive treatment of such difficult experiences as the death of a parent, divorce, abandonment, and rape. In 1997 White’s much-acclaimed novel Belle Prater’s Boy was named a Newbery Honor Book.

WRITINGS:

October 22  Drs. Bongrae Seok, and Marc Lucht will present “The Consciousness of Nothing, from Art to Zen.”  
—Bernardine Lecture Hall, 12:30 p.m.

ABOUT THE PRESENTERS:

Dr. Bongrae Seok is an Associate Professor of Philosophy at Alvernia University. He received his doctorate and masters degrees (in philosophy) from the University of Arizona, and completed his undergraduate degree at Seoul National University, in Korea. Dr. Seok teaches major areas of philosophy and researches in philosophy of mind and psychology, cognitive science, neuroscience, and Asian philosophy. He has published several books and presented at conferences throughout the United States. He also studies Art and Music and gives lectures in local museums.

Dr. Marc Lucht is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Alvernia University. He received his doctorate from Emory University and has taught at Rocky Mountain College, the University of Maine, and Kenyon College. His scholarly work focuses on phenomenology, environmental philosophy, and the philosophy of art and beauty. He has published and delivered numerous conference papers on the work of thinkers such as Martin Heidegger, Immanuel Kant, George Santayana, Arthur Schopenhauer, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Leo Tolstoy. A recent paper of his entitled “Does Kant Have Anything to Teach Us About Environmental Ethics?” won the Jacobsen Research Prize. Dr. Lucht serves on the board of directors of the International Society for Universal Dialogue.
Original readings and acts will be presented during the monthly meeting of the Alvernia Writers’ Series. — Franco Library, 1 p.m.

ABOUT THE EVENT:

Led by Dr. Tom Bierowski, Assistant Professor of English at Alvernia University, students, faculty, and Alvernia community members gather in the Franco Library each Friday to read original or otherwise intriguing stories and poetry.
October 26  Dave Silcox, founding member of John Updike Society, will present a documentary and share his experiences with Updike and his family.
—Bernardine Lecture Hall, 10 a.m.

ABOUT JOHN updike (1932-2009):

John Updike was born in Reading, Pennsylvania, and spent his first years in nearby Shillington, where his father was a high school science teacher. The area surrounding Reading has provided the setting for many of his stories, with the invented towns of Brewer and Olinger standing in for Reading and Shillington. An only child, Updike and his parents shared a house with his grandparents for much of his childhood. When he was 13, the family moved to his mother’s birthplace, a stone farmhouse on an 80-acre farm near Plowville, eleven miles from Shillington, where he continued to attend school. Married twice with four children, Updike resided in Massachusetts for the majority of his life.

Updike’s first book of poetry, *The Carpentered Hen and Other Tame Creatures*, was published by Harper and Brothers in 1958, and his last book, *The Widows of Eastwick*, in 2008. Updike succumbed to lung cancer the following year at the age of 76, having written more than 40 books and receiving many awards, including two Pulitzer Prizes for Fiction.
October 26  Updike lecture with Jack DeBellis, founding member of John Updike Society. Albright English professor, Richard Androne, Ph.D., and Alvernia English professor Richard Law, Ph.D., will also present an analysis of Updike’s work. —Bernardine Franciscan Conference Center, 2 p.m.

ABOUT THE JOHN UPDIKE SOCIETY:

The John Updike Society was officially launched on May 24, 2009 at the 20th Annual American Literature Association Conference in Boston. The Society’s first roundtable, “John Updike: Fifty Years of Literary Influence,” was moderated by James Plath and featured panelists Marshall Boswell, Lawrence Broer, Jack De Bellis, and James Schiff. It was that core group, along with Updike’s Shillington, PA contact, Dave Silcox, who founded the Society. At the first business meeting, which immediately followed, members approved a mission statement and bylaws, then elected Plath as president/director, Schiff as director and editor of The John Updike Review, Peter Bailey as secretary/director, and Marshall Boswell, Jack De Bellis, Judith Newman, and David Parker Royal as the remaining directors on the board.

Immediate plans for the society include publication of an annual refereed critical journal, The John Updike Review, and the hosting of biennial conferences in Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and other places in which Updike spent time. Unless otherwise announced, the Society will hold its annual general membership meeting at the May conference of the American Literature Association, which alternates sites between Boston and San Francisco.

Mission:
The John Updike Society operates exclusively for the purposes of awakening and sustaining reader interest in the literature and life of John Updike, promoting literature written by Updike, and fostering and encouraging critical responses to Updike's literary works.
Dr. Laurence Mazzeno, author, and past president of Alvernia University will present “A Writer’s Life.” —Bernardine Lecture Hall, 12:30 p.m.

About the Presenter:

Dr. Laurence Mazzeno published his first article in 1968 while still a college undergraduate. Since then he’s authored ten books and more than five hundred articles, notes, reviews, and review essays on literature, business, history, and topics of general interest. He’s also published a number of short stories and poems, and has edited a scholarly journal, worked as a contributing editor for a regional magazine, and written articles, book reviews, and press releases for local and regional newspapers and periodicals. He has twice served as consulting editor for updated editions of the popular Masterplots series, a staple in college libraries. Currently he is editor of TheLocalAccent.com, an online magazine featuring the people and events in Virginia’s Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula.

Although he’s always devoted time to writing, Mazzeno has had two other careers: For 21 years he served in the U.S. Army, with assignments at both the U.S. Military Academy and the U.S. Naval Academy, where he chaired the English Department. After retiring as a lieutenant colonel, he became an academic dean in Colorado and later a chief academic officer in Ohio. From 1997 until 2005 he was president of Alvernia College (now Alvernia University), where, in addition to serving as the college’s chief executive, he taught literature and writing classes.

The Writer’s Life: A Conversation:

What does it mean to be “a writer”? Many people express the desire to write, but never follow through. Others end up writing for most of their lives, but don’t describe themselves as writers. Who is a writer, anyway? What does it take to be a writer? What kinds of work do writers do? How does one get started? How do writers spend their days? Why do people want to write?

Dr. Laurence Mazzeno has been writing (and publishing) for more than forty years, and has taught writing classes for nearly three decades. During that time he’s formulated some ideas – both practical and philosophical – about “the writer’s life.” During his presentation at the Literary Festival, he hopes to share some of his personal experiences in the hope of generating a conversation with the audience about the philosophy and the business of writing. Aspiring writers may find some inspiration, while established authors are welcome to come join the conversation to help expand and clarify Mazzeno’s observations about the practice of the craft.
October 28  
Drs. Donna Yarri and Spencer Stober will present *God, Science, and Designer Genes: An Exploration of Emerging Genetic Technologies.*
— Bernardine Lecture Hall, 10 a.m.

ABOUT THE PRESENTERS:

**Dr. Spencer S. Stober** is an Associate Professor of Biology, and Director of the Ph.D. program at Alvernia University. He has taught biology for 30 years including undergraduate courses in genetics, botany and environmental science. Since earning his doctorate at Temple University, with a specialization in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, he has taught graduate courses in education and leadership. In 2005 Stober received Alvernia’s Christian R. & Mary F. Lindback Foundation Award for Excellence in Teaching. He has also served in a number of key administrative positions at Alvernia University, including Department Chairperson, Dean of Arts and Sciences, and Dean of Graduate and Continuing Studies. His research interests include the intersection between religion and science, and environmental sustainability.

**Dr. Donna Yarri** is an Associate Professor of Theology at Alvernia. She received her doctorate in religion from Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, after completing undergraduate work in English and sociology at Queens College, NY. In addition to *God, Science, and Designer Genes*, Yarri is working on a different project entitled, *Kafka’s Animals*, and finished *The Ethics of Animal Experimentation* in 2005. She has written and presented a large number of articles on theology, ethical issues, and the treatment of animals.

ABOUT THE BOOK:

The brave new world of genetic technology has arrived. Extraordinary breakthroughs are giving us the means to screen in advance for diseases, determine the sex of a child, establish guilt or innocence in criminal cases, and even artificially create life. How do we balance what we can do with what we should do with this power? How do we resist the urge to use this technology to “play God?” Dr. Spencer S. Stober, Associate Professor of Biology and Director of the Ph.D. Program in Leadership, and Dr. Donna Yarri, Associate Professor of Theology, will discuss these issues in light of their newly published book entitled, *God, Science, and Designer Genes: An Exploration of Emerging Technologies*. They will offer both an up-to-date account of the current state of genetic technologies and provided discussion of some of the moral/theological questions these technologies raise.
Socheata Poeuv’s award winning documentary, “New Year Baby” will be screened by the Office of Student Activities and Campus Ministry.
—Bernardine Franciscan Conference Center, 6 p.m.

ABOUT THE FILM:

*New Year Baby* is the first documentary directed by a Cambodian-American woman about her family’s survival.

Socheata Poeuv was born on Cambodian New Year in a Thai refugee camp. Her parents never told her how she got there. *New Year Baby* is her personal documentary—a search for the truth about how her family survived the Khmer Rouge genocide and why they buried the truth for so long.

“My parents used to embarrass me,” says Socheata. “They were oddballs, awkward immigrants who still fermented fish in the kitchen and sprouted mung beans in the bathtub. All this time, I thought they were holding me back.” But her parents carried Socheata further than she could have imagined... across the border, over landmines and across the ocean to a new life in America. “My birth marked the end of the horror and the beginning of a future.” She says.

*New Year Baby* is meant to move and inspire Americans and the world with a story of love, joy, and pardon. Their promise is to share *New Year Baby* with 100 million people in 10 years, transforming a conversation of victimhood and shame into one of heroism and honor.

“*New Year Baby* by Socheata Poeuv has been awarded Best Documentary for its gripping portrayal of a family’s struggle to overcome the traumatic legacies of the Khmer Rouge. The film unfolds with remarkable candor, humor, and a heartbreaking intensity that captures a daughter’s quest to understand her family’s history and a father’s willingness to lay open his vulnerabilities by confronting his past. We congratulate Socheata for a courageous debut feature.” —San Francisco Best Documentary Jury Report
October 30  Annual Halloween costume contest and reception with a Sigma Tau Delta tribute to Edgar Allan Poe.  
— Student Center, 1 p.m.

ABOUT THE EVENT:

Members of Alvernia’s Kappa Pi Chapter of Sigma Tau Delta will read poems and stories as a tribute to Edgar Allan Poe.

DON'T MISS THE COSTUME CONTEST

ABOUT SIGMA TAU DELTA:

Sigma Tau Delta, the International English Honor Society, strives to confer distinction for high achievement in English language and literature in undergraduate, graduate, and professional studies. For the past 10 years, the Kappa Pi Chapter of Sigma Tau Delta has been recognized nationally as a “most active chapter” and asked to present a display of its activities at the annual international convention. Recently at conventions in Portland, OR, Pittsburgh, PA, and Louisville, KY, Alvernia students have presented their scholarly and creative work, participated on panels, competed successfully in dry t-shirt design, theatrical skits, and bad poetry competitions, won over $4,750 in scholarships and awards (2006, 2007), won the Outstanding Chapter award (2006), and won the Outstanding Sponsor award (2008).

On campus, the Kappa Pi chapter runs a yearly creative writing contest for local high schools; assists with Christmas on Campus and Spring Fling; provides the editors for Zephyrus, the college literary arts journal; and hosts a year-end student/faculty induction picnic. With book drives and other fundraisers, trips to poetry readings, regional conference participation, and other activities, the Kappa Pi Chapter offers students both opportunities for fun and recognition for academic excellence.
In 1894, the Bernardine Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis, originating in Poland, emigrated to the United States. Under the leadership of the congregation’s foundress, Mother Veronica, a ministry was established in Pennsylvania to teach and serve immigrant miners’ families. In 1925 construction began on an administration building later named Francis Hall, which was first an orphanage, then a high school, both operated by the Bernardine Franciscan order.

With very little money but with enormous vision and drive, the Bernardine Franciscan Sisters established a four-year liberal arts college in 1958, to educate the younger members of the congregation who were aspiring teachers. Sister M. Zygmunta, the founding president of Alvernia, described her vision for the institution as “a college which is faithful to Catholic philosophy and Franciscan ideals, which aims to develop the intellectual, spiritual, moral, social, and physical potential of students, to prepare them for their role in the Church, in the home, and in society.”

In 1960, Alvernia College received its charter from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. In a letter to President Zygmunta, a State Department of Education representative recognized this accomplishment by saying: “You have been remarkably successful in getting recognition from the State for your four-year college. Believe me, you have obtained this recognition much earlier than essentially any other institution in the state of Pennsylvania.” Also in 1960, Francis Hall was renovated to accommodate a chapel, library, dining hall, auditorium, a student lounge remodeled from an old furnace room, classrooms, small gym, science and education labs, administrative offices, lecture hall, and a wing that served as a dormitory for women. In 1961 the first lay women were accepted as students.

In the last fifty years, Alvernia has grown transformationally in educational opportunities, enrollment, and in its physical plant. Alvernia’s student population has grown from 23 freshmen and eight sophomores in 1958 to a current enrollment of over 2,800 women and men across three Pennsylvania campuses including Centers in Pottsville and Philadelphia, and at numerous offsite locations in Central and Eastern Pennsylvania. In addition to degree and certificate-granting programs, the University currently sponsors a thriving Seniors College for older adults with more than 700 members. From a single building atop a hill in 1958, the campus has grown to 17 buildings, the most recent being the new Village Apartments, completed this summer, and the newly converted Upland Center in 2007, Alvernia’s home for graduate education. From a single program in undergraduate education in 1958, Alvernia’s academic program has grown to include more than fifty undergraduate programs and grants, Associate Degrees, Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Social Work, Bachelor of Science in Nursing, five Master’s degrees, and a Doctoral program in leadership, the only such program within the region.

Most significantly, Alvernia College became Alvernia University during its anniversary year, after being granted the status by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. It is with tremendous pride and optimism that we honor the past and our heroic foundresses, celebrate the present-day vitality and significance of Alvernia University in the Reading community and far beyond, and envision the future of Alvernia University.
Alvernia University would like to thank the following groups for sponsoring the 2009 Greater Reading Literary Festival:

Alumni Relations of Alvernia University
Alvernia University Nursing Department
Alvernia University Seniors College
Berks Arts Council
Berks Bards
Berks County Living Magazine
Holleran Center for Community Engagement
Pennsylvania Council on the Arts
Student Activities of Alvernia University

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