



The land of ANANSI

*Nearly half the world's
spider families live in T&T*

Did you know that Trinidad and Tobago is home to nearly half of the world's spider families—Anansi excluded? Did you know that spiders make an enormous contribution to agriculture?

Read about it on **Page 9**, where **Jo-Anne Sewlal**, from the Dept of Life Sciences at UWI St. Augustine takes us into the fascinating world of spiders.

Jo-Anne's cover photo, taken in Tobago, shows a member of the spider family Thomisidae, commonly referred to as Crab spiders. (*Strange how easy it is to associate Tobago with crabs, even spiders get drawn into that web!*)

They get this name from the size and length of their first two pairs of legs which are much longer and thicker than the other two pairs and are held forward in a crab-like position. They are active hunters particularly wandering on plants, so they do not use the silk they produce to construct webs

to catch prey. Thomisid spiders rely on camouflage to ambush their prey, with some individuals blending in with the petals of flowers, leaves and bark, with some members even mimicking bird droppings. Those that hide on the petals of flowers, ambush the pollinators that visit it, for example,

bees, while they themselves act as pollinators as they move from flower to flower transferring the pollen that has rubbed on their bodies. They are capable of taking down prey much larger than themselves, like the bees. However, they also supplement their diet of insects with nectar.



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New Space for Medical Students

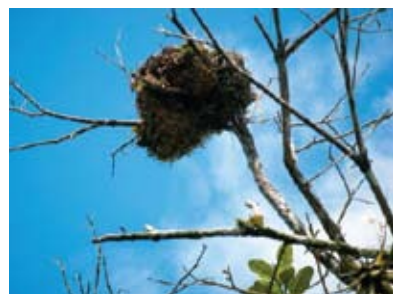
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Educating and Innovating in a Connected World

Canada's Governor General,
David Johnston

A **smart and caring world** is within reach if we can encourage each other to do more for future generations. It is one of those utterances of common sense that we all know, even if we do not work out all the linkages that take us to the eventual conclusion. It came from **Canada's Governor General, David Johnston**, during his address to an audience at the Daaga Auditorium at the St. Augustine Campus on May 2, 2012.

While on his State visit to Trinidad and Tobago, Governor General Johnston was speaking on *Educating and Innovating in a Connected World*, about which he was making the point that education and human development are inexorably linked and that in this century, entire societies will find their wellbeing determined by their ability to learn and innovate.

Citing several Canadian initiatives within the realm of public education, Governor General Johnston said he was a big believer in collaboration, and touted the value of shared knowledge across disciplines and borders. He noted that in Canada he had outlined a set of pillars he felt were necessary to create a smart and caring nation, and that one of them was strengthening learning and innovation. Underlying his talk was the idea

that it didn't matter how technology made the connections possible in our time, people still need to educate themselves to be innovative and to use their knowledge based upon care for the future of the planet and its inhabitants.

Pro Vice Chancellor and St. Augustine Campus Principal, Prof Clement Sankat, in his welcome remarks reminded listeners that the 52-year-old Canada Hall on the Campus, built to "celebrate the establishment of the second Campus of the UWI," was a gift of the Canadian Government. He went on to enumerate some of the scholarships and joint research projects that have existed between universities and other Canadian institutions and The UWI, remarking that this was the kind of collaboration that indeed advanced "teaching, learning, research and innovation."

The panel discussion which followed, featured **Mrs. Nobina Robinson**, Chief Executive Officer at Polytechnics, Canada; **Ms. Karen McBride**, President and Chief Executive Officer at the Canadian Bureau for International Education; and **Mr. James Knight**, President Association of Canadian Community Colleges.



Pro Vice Chancellor and St. Augustine Campus Principal, Prof Clement Sankat, presents a framed UWI photo to Canada's Governor General, David Johnston during his visit on May 2, 2012.

FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Leadership and the University



At the recent meeting of our University Council at Mona, the Principals of the Mona, Cave Hill and Open Campus of The UWI were renewed and reaffirmed. Congratulations to my colleagues, Professors Gordon Shirley, Hilary Beckles and Hazel Simmons-McDonald respectively.

Today's UWI is a complex institution, with a shared governance model, often not understood by many, one which manifests itself at the Departmental, Faculty, Campus and University Centre levels. All of our leaders have to engage these layers of responsibility, including the extensive Committee systems of decision-making,

to ensure the University is meeting its strategic goals and delivery of its promise. This system, with its checks and balances, brings rigor, integrity and transparency in the University's operations. Decision-making can at times be slow but in the main, such decisions are well thought out. In this way The UWI, with its regional governance model, has withstood the test of time.

Campuses today are vast and complex institutions, in the service of both our internal and external stakeholders. It is about teaching, research and service, and striving for quality in all that we do. Expectations for our Campus and University continue to rise: enhanced access, graduate education, research, social transformation, income generation, international recognition etc, while meeting the needs of an expanded student population—now more than 19,000 at St. Augustine.

But our leaders have to manage beyond this complexity, set a vision and direction for our Campuses and University, articulate and sometimes plead for the necessary funding of our institution from our public and private partners and then execute. They have to be the pillars of our University and exemplify its core values such as maintaining a commitment to the pursuit of excellence, building respect for cultural diversity and the rule of law and fostering ethical values, attitudes and approaches.

Our University and Campus leaders have to be academic leaders, so as to assess and mentor those under their wings. Our Campus Principals and Pro Vice Chancellors, all recognized scholars in their own right, have moved through the ranks of academia, had to overcome numerous challenges and treat with very difficult situations and in their own styles, have helped to make our regional University under the leadership of our Vice Chancellor, Professor E. Nigel Harris much stronger. I salute them all. As former Vice Chancellor, the late Professor Rex Nettleford has reminded us, "*The UWI is not a sprint, it is a marathon*".

CLEMENT K. SANKAT

Pro Vice Chancellor & Principal

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CAMPUS NEWS

PENSION TALKS

The University of the West Indies' (UWI) Caribbean Centre for Money and Finance (CCMF) hosted the Caribbean Business Executive Seminar on May 4 at the Hyatt Regency Trinidad.

This seminar, themed “*the Future of the Pension Industry*,” aimed to educate pension beneficiaries, their representatives and the industry’s decision-makers about key issues affecting the operations of Caribbean pension funds.

From left in photo at right: Prof Compton Bourne, Executive Director, Caribbean Centre for Money and Finance (CCMF), with Minister of Finance, Winston Dookeran and St. Augustine Campus Principal, Prof Clement Sankat at the Seminar.

Prof Bourne has suggested that Caribbean governments should look at adjusting the limits pension funds can invest overseas for better risk management.



TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO: OUR PLACE IN THE REGION

The Open Lectures Committee at The UWI, St. Augustine hosted the second panel discussion in commemoration of the country’s 50th Independence Anniversary, titled “*Trinidad and Tobago: Our Place in the Region*”.

It was chaired by **Sir Shridath Ramphal** (at podium) at the Naparima Bowl, San Fernando, with **Ambassador Paulo Sergio Traballi Bozzi** of the Brazilian Embassy, **Mr. Arthur Lok Jack**, **Dr. Michelle Reis** and **Professor Hollis Liverpool** as panellists.

Sir Shridath, a former Chancellor of The UWI, said the collapse of the West Indian Federation was a catalyst for the independence movement. “After the tumble of the Federation, the region did not become an outcast widow, but the handmaid of Independence,” he said. “After the collapse, the region remained because it was not the end of regionality but of federalism.”

UWI TEACHING AND STUDENT FACILITIES

The UWI Teaching and Student Facilities building at the San Fernando General Hospital was launched on May 9 with a ceremony that involved the Prime Minister of Trinidad & Tobago, **Mrs Kamla Persad-Bissessar** cutting the ribbon, unveiling the commemorative plaque and delivering a feature address. Other speakers included the St. Augustine Campus Principal, **Prof Clement Sankat**, Chairman of the SWRHA, **Dr. Lackram Bodoie**, Minister of Health **Dr Fuad Khan** and Minister of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education, **Fazal Karim**.

The facility, which is the renovated Bachelors Medical Quarters (BMQ), contains 32 rooms as well as common study areas, kitchen and laundry facilities.

The renovated Bachelors Medical Quarters has 32 rooms.



The column that supported Civil Engineering

DESMOND IMBERT

BY PROFESSOR BRIDGET BRERETON

When I.D.C. (Desmond) Imbert died in 2010, Gyan Shrivastava, head of the Department of Civil & Environmental Engineering, described him as ‘the beams and columns that support the Department, physically and intellectually’. No surprise, then, that the Civil Engineering Building—the Faculty’s Block 2—was named after him in a ceremony in November 2011.

Imbert was the quintessential Caribbean man. Born in St Lucia, as a child he lived in Dominica and Montserrat. Before he went to Ireland to study, he lived in both Tobago (where his father was a magistrate) and Trinidad (where he taught at Fatima College for a year). As an engineer, he worked in Antigua and in Barbados, where he was Director of Public Works. Of course, he lived and worked in Trinidad for much of his adult life; and he often visited Jamaica, where he was involved in the transformation of CAST to today’s UTech (University of Technology).

Though Imbert loved literature and the classics, which he studied at his secondary school in Montserrat, he opted for engineering, gaining his BSc and MSc in civil engineering from University College, Dublin, and his PhD from Trinity College, also in Dublin. He joined the new Faculty of Engineering at St Augustine in 1964, one of that small group of West Indian pioneers who built it up after the original, mainly British academics, gradually left in the 1960s—men like Ken Julien, G. M. Richards, George Sammy, Harry Phelps and others.

In some ways Civil Engineering was the core department of the Faculty, and Imbert built up its reputation and its staff, serving as its Head in the 1970s. He was appointed Professor of Construction Engineering & Management in 1976. But it was as a three-term Dean of the Faculty (1979-88) that he became one of the best known ‘Big Men on Campus’ (notwithstanding his small physical stature). He was a passionate advocate of his Faculty and an inspiring leader.

It fell to him to manage the massive expansion of Engineering—new buildings, new staff, rapidly increasing



student numbers, new programmes—which took place during his deanship, funded by oil boom money—even though the oil boom was over by about 1983. Those of us from the less favoured Faculties looked on with awe and envy as the splendid buildings went up, and we heard rumours of an elegantly furnished Board Room which none outside the Faculty could penetrate, except when it was used for a luncheon for Elizabeth II when she visited the campus in 1985. Imbert was an assertive and robust leader of his Faculty at a time of expansion and optimism.

Many have testified that he was also an inspiring teacher and an active graduate supervisor, supervising more successful PhD candidates than any other academic in the Faculty; two of them succeeded him as Professors of Construction Engineering & Management (Winston Suite and T.M. Lewis). With an international reputation in concrete technology, and more generally in construction engineering, Imbert enjoyed a very active professional life off-campus, serving on many national, regional and international committees, boards and associations. This recognition brought him many honours and awards, including a Chaconia Medal, and the Career of Excellence Award from the Association of Professional Engineers of Trinidad & Tobago (APETT), of which he was a past President.

Imbert retired as a Professor Emeritus in 1996, but he continued to teach and to mentor, coming to campus nearly every day until his health began to fail. A man who hardly ever wore a suit and was often to be seen on and off campus in short pants and sandals, who drove small, beat-up cars, Imbert was unquestionably a ‘character’, not to say an eccentric. Genial, sociable, at times acerbic and irascible; a great raconteur (posh speak for ole talker) and compulsive conversationalist—Desmond Imbert will long be recalled, as a founding father of the Faculty of Engineering and as a fascinating human being.

Bridget Brereton is Emerita Professor of History and author of the 2010 “From Imperial College to The University of the West Indies.”

NEW TERMS OF OFFICE

The appointment or re-appointment of several senior managers was confirmed at the annual business meeting of the Council of The UWI, held on April 27 at the Mona Campus.

Principal of the Mona Campus, Prof Gordon Shirley, and Principal of the Cave Hill Campus, Prof Hilary Beckles were reappointed for another five-year term; Principal of the Open Campus, Prof Hazel Simmons-McDonald was also reappointed, but for two years as she is due to retire in 2014.

Also reappointed were University Registrar, Mr C. William Iton for five more years and Deputy Chief Financial Officer, Ms Patricia Harrison, for another three. Prof Yvette Jackson, Coordinator for Graduate Studies at Mona Campus is now Pro Vice-Chancellor for Graduate Studies, succeeding Prof Ronald Young who is retiring.

At the St. Augustine Campus, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Education, Prof Funso Aiyejina serves a further four years, effective August 1, 2012. Errol Simms succeeds Dr Hamid Ghany as Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences for a three-year term. The new Faculty of Science

and Technology will be headed by Prof Indar Ramnarine from August 1, 2012. Also taking up a new Dean's post on August 1, 2012 is Dr Carlisle Pemberton who was named Acting Dean of the new Faculty of Food and Agriculture. Dr Pemberton, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Agricultural Economics & Extension will fill the post for one year.

At Mona Campus, Dean of the Faculty of Pure and Applied Sciences (renamed Science & Technology), Prof Ishenkumba Kahwa, will serve a further four years in the position, until July 31, 2016. Prof Evan Duggan will succeed Professor Figueroa as Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences for two years until his retirement in 2014.

At Cave Hill, Dr David Berry will become Dean of the Faculty of Law on August 1, 2012 for a term of four years; Professor Joseph A. Branday was reappointed Dean of the Faculty of Medical Sciences for a further two years up to July 31, 2014. Dr Justin Robinson will succeed Dr George Belle as Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences for four years effective August 1, 2012.

Council approves UWI Strategic Plan

The governing body of The UWI, its University Council, met on April 27, at the Mona Campus for its annual business meeting. Chaired by UWI Chancellor, Sir George Alleyne, the meeting dealt with a number of matters including approval of financial reports, tuition fees for the next academic year, the appointment of Deans and several Senior Managers, endorsement of recommendations for honorary degrees and approval of the Strategic Plan to guide the institution for the next five-year period.

The Vice Chancellor (VC), Professor E. Nigel Harris, reported on the University's accomplishments and highpoints of the preceding year. He spoke of the record growth in student numbers over the past decade, from approximately 22,000 to in excess of 47,000, which spawned a number of capital development projects to meet the demand for teaching, learning and living spaces. More than 21 infrastructural projects were undertaken in that period. Among them, student housing, medical facilities and the Ryan Brathwaite athletic track at Cave Hill, teaching and student accommodation at Mona, along with the new Faculty of Law building, film building, Daaga Auditorium and Teaching and Learning Complex at St Augustine, and the upgrade of Open campus sites across the region, including Grenada, St. Lucia, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago.

Reporting on the foundation set in the current five-year strategic planning period (2007-2012), the Vice Chancellor noted the gains in expanding Caribbean citizens' access to higher education—namely through a 25% increase in enrolment in undergraduate and graduate programmes over that time, and initiatives such as the establishment of the Open Campus and Western Jamaica Campus and the addition of more market-driven programme offerings. He mentioned initiatives such as the strengthening of UWI's Quality Assurance Units and the commencement of Institutional Accreditation exercises. Special emphasis was placed on the formation of research clusters in areas relevant to sustainable regional development, and the Vice Chancellor highlighted some important research projects in the period under review, namely, the Caribbean Cocoa Rehabilitation project, the regional Biosafety Project through the Global Environment Fund, and research in Non-Communicable Disease, HIV/AIDS as well as in the areas of Improving Early Childhood Development and Parenting Interventions.

Council approved the 2012-2017 Strategic Plan, which features a business model approach and utilises the Balanced Scorecard.

CONFERENCE INSIGHT

Hydrocarbon Management

BY TIMOTHY WOOLFORD

As a nation, Trinidad and Tobago is considered by many as being blessed in varying capacities. Perhaps most prevalent among these is the blessing of oil and natural gas. It is no secret that the engine of its economy is fuelled by the energy sector, with reports suggesting that as of 2010 approximately 42.5 per cent of the nation's gross domestic product was accounted for by activity within this sector—which the World Bank has recorded as being approximately US\$20.6bn. With this in mind, the Trade and Economic Development Unit (TEDU) of the Department of Economics at The UWI decided to host a conference entitled "Revenue Management in Hydrocarbon Economies".

The conference takes place in light of the fact that small, hydrocarbon-rich exporting economies are typically faced with peculiar challenges in the context of revenue management. Research suggests that very few developing economies with a rich hydrocarbon endowment achieve sustainable development. Over the past three years, Trinidad and Tobago has been characterized as experiencing successive periods of negative economic growth. This is not to suggest that we are incapable of achieving sustainable development, in fact, quite the opposite. Hydrocarbon revenues can provide the resources necessary to achieve our development goals. However, management of these revenues is critical to the process of achieving sustainable development.

As the nation prepares to celebrate its fiftieth year of independence, there could be no greater gift than this gathering of intellectuals, policy specialists and experts in the field. With themes speaking to the concepts of corporate social responsibility as well as transparency and

accountability in the management of such revenues, this conference will help chart a way forward for the nation.

A key major discussion on Dutch Disease and its relevance to the case of Trinidad and Tobago is expected. There is a view that the Dutch Disease, defined as the adverse macroeconomic impact on an economy occasioned by an oil windfall, has undoubtedly affected the country's economy. Dr. Roger Hosein, the Coordinator of TEDU, highlighted this at the Department of Economics' recently concluded Conference on the Economy, stating that the dependence of the economy on the hydrocarbon sector has led to the failure of other sectors of the economy to perform at their fullest potential.

The conference is meant to appeal to all facets of the society including youths. An essay competition for secondary school students invites them to lend a voice to the discussion of revenue management and sustainable development.

Issues such as the historical context of the petroleum industry of Trinidad and Tobago shall be heard, as well as the proposition of an appropriate regulatory regime for economies of our nature. Discussions on macroeconomic implications for the nation's economy shall also take centre stage. Perhaps of key significance, will be the discussion of potential diversification which promises to be enlightening, given that an issue that has been on the tips of the tongues of many national and regional economists over the years shall be addressed.

Timothy Woolford is a MSc student of Economics.

The conference, "Revenue Management in Hydrocarbon Economies" takes place from June 20th to 22nd, 2012 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Port of Spain, Trinidad. For further information, please contact the Trade and Economic Development Unit, Department of Economics, at 662-2002 ext 83233 or 83231 or via e-mail at corm@sta.uwi.edu or visit the conference website at <http://sta.uwi.edu/conferences/12/revenue/index.asp>

RESEARCH



Ray Martinez collects a finch during bird netting on the Galapagos Islands (February 2012)

PHOTOS: RAY MARTINEZ

Not Just for the Birds

BY PROFESSOR DAVE D. CHADEE

In academia the term “blue-sky research” is often used when the importance or relevance of the research findings is not immediately apparent, obvious or applicable to present day problems. Some academics argue that a certain percentage of this type of research should be encouraged or allowed while others vigorously oppose this type of “scientific adventure” because of the cost and also the perceived idiosyncratic or esoteric nature of these studies.

For example, during the course of bleeding nestling birds for arboviruses in Trinidad in the 1950s, Dr. T.H.G. Aitken and Prof. W. G. Downs found that nestling birds were frequently found to be parasitized with many immature fly larvae. The flies were collected and specimens were sent to Dr. Rodney Dodge from Washington State University who subsequently revised the Insect Genus *Philornis* and described 10 species of invasive flies from Trinidad, eight of which were new species to science. This pioneering work by Dr. Aitken and Prof. Downs from the UWI's Trinidad Regional Virus Laboratory during the 1950s to the 1960s was published in 1958 and remained unused outside academia for more than 60 years.

In January 2012, research assistant, Raymond Martinez, and I were invited to a workshop in the Galapagos Islands to help develop an action plan to control the invasive parasite *Philornis downsi* (originally described from Trinidad in 1968), which is attacking 17 species of birds in the Galapagos Islands. The workshop was funded in part by the Galapagos Conservancy and hosted by the Galapagos National Park Service and the Charles Darwin Foundation. It was reported that the Galapagos bird populations are under serious threat of extinction as a result of infections with *Philornis* flies which are causing very high mortality among nestlings, including the world famous Darwin finches and the very rare Mangrove Finches, the Floreana Mockingbird and the Medium Tree Finch. Sometimes there is 100% mortality



Entrance to the Charles Darwin Foundation on Galapagos Islands



Two dead Darwin finches collected from a nest on Galapagos Island. Their death was due to the parasite *Philornis downsi*.

of fledglings in a nest from these parasites. Those that do survive often have deformed beaks, are shorter in length, have reduced growth rates, anemia and poor fitness potential.

The workshop provided an opportunity to share information, to identify gaps in the knowledge of the parasite, *Philornis downsi*, and to discuss numerous control strategies, including traps with attractants, sterile insect techniques and biological control.

Current research in Trinidad is being conducted in collaboration with the International Atomic Energy Agency who provided research funds to Prof. John Agard, Head of the Department of Life Sciences and me, to develop rearing facilities in the Department of Life Sciences, UWI, St. Augustine, Trinidad. In Trinidad, *Philornis downsi* flies have been found in the nests of Smooth-billed Ani (*Crotophaga sp.*), Rufus-tailed Jacamar (*Galbula sp.*), Tropical Kingbird (*Tyrannus sp.*), Piratite Flycatcher (*Legatus sp.*), Great Kiskadee (*Pitangus sp.*), Grey-breasted Martin (*Progne sp.*), Southern House Wren (*Troglodytes sp.*), Tropical Mockingbird (*Mimus sp.*), Bare-eyed Thrush (*Turdus sp.*), Cocoa Trush (*Turdus sp.*), Bananaquit (*Coereba sp.*), Yellow-rumped Cacique (*Cacicus sp.*), Shiny Cowbird (*Molothrus sp.*), Palm Tanager (*Thraupis sp.*), Silver-beak Tanager (*Ramphocelus sp.*) and White-lined Tanager (*Tachyphonus sp.*) bird species. Clearly, the work done 64 years ago by Aitken and Downs remains relevant and is being used as the “launching pad” to build strategies for the control of this major parasite of Galapagos island birds, with Trinidad being one of the major focal points to find natural enemies for biological control and for studies on parasite-bird interaction and association.

Professor Dave Chadee is a Professor of Environmental Health in the Department of Life Sciences, at The UWI.

RESEARCH

Along came our Spiders

Nearly half the world's types live in T&T

BY JO-ANNE NINA SEWLAL

Nephila clavipes.
PHOTO: JOHN C. ABBOTT
(www.abbottnaturephotography.com)

Early last year I was approached by a UK production company about appearing in an episode of the documentary series, “Wild Freaks of Nature” for the Discovery Channel which focused on the importance of spider silk. But this is just one aspect of spiders that make them fascinating creatures to study. People tend to cringe at the mention of their name and think they belong in horror movies, but these arthropods play very important roles in our ecosystems.

Spiders carry out many useful ecological functions, for instance they are pollinators. The spiders doing this job include those belonging to the spider family *Thomisidae* commonly referred to as “crab spiders” which act as pollinators of plants, as they move from flower to flower hiding between the petals to ambush insect prey.

The ability of spiders to regulate insect populations coupled with the fact that they are quite voracious carnivores allows them to perform another important ecosystem service, that of biological control agent. This service assists the agricultural sector in protecting crops against pests. Simply put, they are more interested in eating the insects that prey on the crops than the crops themselves. Only a small percentage of spider species supplement their diet with other substances like nectar.

Spiders also act as biological indicators as the presence or absence of certain species can be used to indicate the health of ecosystems. This is linked to the mid-level position they occupy in food webs, where they act as predators of organisms at lower trophic levels while acting as prey for organisms in higher trophic levels like lizards and birds. Their presence and the species found in a habitat depend on the animals found at lower trophic levels.

All spiders produce silk, however not all species build webs, which are primarily used as a prey capture device. Some spiders use silk to construct retreats to rest in, to wrap egg sacs or for transport (ballooning). This method of transport is mainly used by very young spiders to escape their cannibalistic siblings or by others to get to more suitable habitats. Usually, the spider releases a length of silk from a height such as from a rock or a leaf and if it catches on the wind, it carries the spider along with it.



Discovery film crew: PHOTO: JO-ANNE SEWLAL



Whitebanded Crab spider. PHOTO: BRYAN REYNOLDS

Spider silk is quite strong and the remnants of the webs of some species like *Nephila clavipes* (Golden Orb Weaver) which is found right here in Trinidad and Tobago can persist for months after it has been abandoned by the spider. Some tribes in the South Pacific use the silk from a relative of this species to catch fish. It is the strength and beauty of silk that makes it very applicable to a variety of industries for example in textiles. However, it is also applicable to the security and military industries as the silk of some species is ten times tougher than Kevlar, the material used to make bulletproof vests.

Trinidad and Tobago contain 52 of the 110 spider families recorded in the world. It is also quite a unique location to study biodiversity, because they are continental islands—they broke away from the South American continent taking flora and fauna with them. Also, the many millennia of isolation from the mainland have resulted in the development of endemic species, thus adding to the uniqueness of this country's biodiversity.

“The silk of some species is ten times tougher than Kevlar, the material used to make bulletproof vests.”



Jo-Anne Nina Sewlal, BSc, MPhil, FLS, AMSB, is attached to the Department of Life Sciences, UWI, St. Augustine. A version of this article originally appeared in the March edition of *Earth Conscious* magazine at www.earthconsciousmagazine.com


 ■ MENTAL HEALTH

Thinking about *depression*

BY PROFESSOR GERARD HUTCHINSON

“...because sadness is a natural and normal part of the human condition, the precise point at which it becomes pathological and necessitates professional intervention is sometimes unclear.”

Depression is thought to be undoubtedly the most common single entity that brings a patient into the physician’s office. The symptom itself is rarely presented directly, because the patient is generally not aware that he/she is depressed. By far the most likely complaints are those of a physical nature—fatigue, weakness, non-specific pain, lack of interest, sleep disturbance, or weight changes.

Depressive disorder is a global health problem and reflects an experience that is a consequence of a painful, subjective mood state characterized by feelings of sadness, discouragement, loneliness, worthlessness and isolation. It is frequently manifested by unwarranted crying spells, sluggishness of mental and physical activity and suicidal thoughts. Sleep, energy and appetite are often affected, as well as sexual drive and desire. Sex, sleep and appetite can be affected in either direction and may be severely diminished or irrationally increased, but energy is generally decreased.

Perhaps it can best be described as emotional pain accompanying a sense of sadness that seems to be far greater than the context or circumstance in which it occurs. This pain disrupts and profoundly affects the sufferer’s view of the value of life and traumatizes those who are closely involved with them. As described by Andrew Solomon in his award-winning memoir of a depressive illness, it is a sense of unspeakable despair that cannot be expressed much less shared. William Stryon agreed, stating that its horror is

quite beyond expression. Its only saving grace, Stryon adds, is that it is conquerable; if it were not then suicide would be the only remedy.

It has been suggested that depression causes more disability than other chronic illnesses such as diabetes mellitus, arthritis and angina; primarily because only 30% of those afflicted receive treatment and therefore its chronicity and complications affect both the sufferer and their social networks. This sense that it is under-recognised, even by those who suffer it, naturally extends itself to a situation where it will be under-diagnosed by those who may be called upon to treat it.

It has been described as the archetypal modern disease and straddles an unstable bridge between social conditions and brain biochemistry. This makes it difficult for both patients and clinicians to confront its presence with great certainty because sadness is a natural and normal part of the human condition, the precise point at which it becomes pathological and necessitates professional intervention is sometimes unclear. Some argue that in the attempts to make it more recognizable and visible, it may be reaching a point where it is being sought too aggressively and will ultimately result in it being over-diagnosed as has happened with other conditions such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). The danger here is that individuals may begin to feel that all sadness and indeed any suffering is pathological and requires either medication or therapy. How is normal sadness separated from pathological depression?

CLASSIFICATION AND DIAGNOSTIC CRITERIA – DSM-IV

According to the classification system of the American Psychiatric Association’s (APA) Diagnostic and Statistical Manual which is now in its fourth revision and called DSM-IV-TR (TR refers to Text Revision), it can be divided into three groups, major depressive disorder, dysthymia and depressive disorder not otherwise specified. The latter is a catch-all for premenstrual dysphoria (PMS—irritable and unhappy mood), minor depressive episodes and recurrent brief depressive episodes. These three categories of depression represent the general diagnostic criteria and include within their headings many subtypes.

The following criteria established by the APA for the diagnosis and classification of depression represent the criteria most used by mental health professionals to diagnose the disorder. An alternative classification, the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10), is produced by the World Health Organisation and is now fairly consistent with the DSM system.

Major depressive episode: five or more of the following symptoms present for most of two weeks and representing a change from previous functioning. The essential but not sufficient symptoms that must be present are 1 and/or 2, that is, a depressed mood and/or a marked loss of interest or pleasure.

The symptoms are:

1. *depressed mood*
2. *markedly diminished interest or pleasure*
3. *significant weight loss or weight gain not due to dieting*
4. *insomnia or hypersomnia (decreased or increased sleep)*
5. *psychomotor agitation or retardation (increased restlessness or decreased activity)*
6. *fatigue or loss of energy nearly every day*
7. *feelings of worthlessness or guilt*
8. *pronounced difficulty in concentrating and making decisions*
9. *recurrent thoughts of death, including suicidal and/or homicidal thoughts.*

These symptoms must cause significant distress, must not be due to the physiological effects of a medical disorder or substance use and are not better accounted for by bereavement.

Mild major depressive episodes suggest meeting the minimum criteria and causing relatively less functional impairment. Moderate depressive episodes have more functional impairment and more symptoms than meet the minimum criteria while severe episodes cause such marked impairment that functioning is almost totally impaired, with problems of self care, marked reduction of daily activity inclusive of eating and attending to basic needs and constantly significant suicidal and/or homicidal ideation.

For dysthymia, the person must have a depressed mood for most days over at least a two-year period (one year for children and adolescents). The symptoms would never have been absent for more than two months, and no major depressive episode would have occurred within the first two years of the disorder. There must also be at least two of the following symptoms:

1. *poor appetite or overeating*
2. *insomnia or hypersomnia*
3. *low energy or fatigue*
4. *low self esteem*
5. *poor concentration and/or indecisiveness*
6. *feelings of hopelessness.*

Patients with dysthymia can have superimposed major depression and are then described as having double depression.

In psychotic depression, the patient has a severe mental disorganization, with some degree of loss of contact with reality.

In melancholic depression, there are marked somatic or physical symptoms.

Depression can also be part of a manic depressive illness or bipolar disorder; in this case it is called bipolar depression. History-taking should always include questions about mood swings, previous manic symptoms, for instance, over-activity, grandiosity, impulsiveness, excessive and inappropriate spending or sexual activity, talkativeness, easy distractibility, a subjective feeling that one's thoughts are racing beyond control. This would establish the presence of bipolar disorder rather than unipolar depression.

Other categories of depression include Mixed Anxiety and Depressive Disorder where it is difficult to distinguish the temporal relationship between disabling anxiety and depressive symptoms and Adjustment Disorder with depressed mood where in response to a life stressor, the individual experiences periods of depressed mood but does not fulfil the other criteria for a Major Depressive Episode. Depression may also present in atypical ways at both extremes of the age spectrum.

In the elderly, it may present as a syndrome of decreased motivation with a lack of mental flexibility and mild cognitive deficits. In the adolescent, it may present with disruptive behaviour, substance abuse and self harm

before the low mood is actually evident. It may also occur in the post partum period with an onset two to six weeks after delivery. The risk here is self neglect by the mother and neglect of the newborn baby with infanticide as a possible outcome.

Mood disorders contribute to an increased consumption of health care because many people do not understand what they are experiencing and frequently respond by seeking medical help before mental health help.

Patients with bipolar disorder for example have been calculated to consume four times more health care than those with unipolar major depression. Depression whether of the unipolar or bipolar variety is also the psychiatric disorder that is most associated with suicide and more recently with homicide, making it the most potentially lethal mental illness.

It has also been reported that people with depression tend to experience more physical pain symptoms than people who are not depressed or would have more painful exacerbations of existing illness. It leads to more inappropriate use of hospital beds, a greater risk of hospitalization for physical illness and prolongs periods of hospitalization. It is also associated with reduced compliance to medical treatments and is an independent predictor of increased mortality for physical illness.

This further increases the risk that depression will present to the general practitioner and would therefore be initially managed outside of the mental health services. In addition, when the experience is one of dysthymia, which

is a mild but chronic depression, many people think it is the way their life has been and will continue to be. This sense however undermines and disables them even as they are able to continue struggling to function and fulfil their daily commitments. Major depression is a more acute phenomenon that demonstrably causes impairment and sometimes complete breakdown. People with depression are therefore more likely to utilize health services and the cost to society of this condition through health care utilization alone is tremendous, in addition to the social, family and community costs.

There is no doubt that when the disorder does exist, it is a source of great suffering and disability and contributes to mortality through suicide, particularly in the young adult and elderly age groups. This explains why depression is estimated to become the second highest cause of disability by 2020. Only about 40% of patients with depression receive treatment and not all of those receive the appropriate treatment while roughly half of the people with depression never seek any help at all from any source.

The value of successful intervention for depression will mean diminished morbidity for a range of medical conditions, decreases in the suicide, violence and homicide rates and more effective utilization of health services. There will also be greater productivity in the society through the reduction of social pathology, improvements in functional performance and improved time utilization for the people whose lives are entwined with those who suffer through the experience of having depressive disorders.

■ HAIR TODAY

In the words of the St. Augustine Campus Deputy Principal, Professor Rhoda Reddock, 'UWI belongs to all of us' and 'we should strive to be lifelong learners.' These were the greetings and sentiments offered to cosmetologists, professional practitioners in the field of hair styling, staff and students at the UWI's lecture, "Hair This."

The Department of Chemistry hosted "**Hair This! A Public Lecture on Health and Safety Challenges for the Hair Styling Industry**" on Thursday 19th April, 2012. This lecture was the fourth in a series of lectures by the Chemistry Department as part of UWI's public outreach initiatives. Members of the hair styling community and trainees from YTEPP were among the 175 participants.

Dr. Linda Forst, the Director of the Division of Environmental and Occupational Health Science in the School of Public Health at the University of Illinois, Chicago and an external lecturer in the Occupational, Environmental, Safety and Health (OESH) graduate programme, was the key speaker.

The lecture engaged academics, researchers, prominent hairstylists and students of hairstyling institutions on issues affecting the hair grooming industry. The lecture also sought to identify health and safety challenges affecting the hair styling industry, generate discussion and awareness on health and safety concerns in the industry and share knowledge on some of the preventative measures referencing research and legislation from the USA. Of great significance was the framework that was presented by Dr. Forst to understand if a disorder can be classified as occupational. This offers a new direction for research and analysis in the hair styling industry.



Feature speaker Dr. Linda Forst, Director of the Division of Environmental and Occupational Health Science, School of Public Health, University of Illinois, Chicago. At the head table: (from left) Dr. Lebert Grierson, Head Department of Chemistry; Professor Anderson Maxwell, Deputy Dean Postgraduate Studies and Research, Faculty of Science and Agriculture, Professor Dyer Narinesingh, Dean Faculty of Science and Agriculture

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■ BOOKS

Exploring CARIBBEAN CINEMA

BY DR BRUCE PADDINGTON



I was brought up in a working class household in England where books were hardly present, apart from the occasional Louis L'Amour western novel that my father enjoyed. It is therefore a great privilege to be recognized as an editor on a unique publication Exploring Caribbean Cinema. I initially thought I should wait to launch the book when I have an English version, but then I considered the scope of the Caribbean: with Cuba having over 11 million people, Dominican Republic over 10 million and Puerto Rico almost four million. The approximate 25 million Spanish speakers certainly dwarfs the English-speaking Caribbean, and we have not taken into account countries like Venezuela, Colombia and those in Central America that share the Caribbean coast. So I should not apologise but celebrate having the book published first in Spanish.

The book is unique in that it is the first book on Caribbean cinema to focus on the entire Caribbean region including the English, Spanish, French and Dutch Caribbean. It also includes an essay on the Caribbean Diaspora with an article on independent Puerto Rican films made in New York.

It is a comprehensive collection with articles on Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Haiti, Cayman Islands, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, explorations of issues of the image and representation of the Caribbean, overviews of developments in the French, English and Dutch Caribbean and interviews and profiles on Tomas Guittierrez Alea, Rigoberto Lopez and Euzhan Palcy. Of course there are many important films and filmmakers that require more attention and we hope to correct this in the English version.

Exploring Caribbean Cinema is one of the few books that have been published that focus on Caribbean Cinema. Others include *Ex-Iles Essays on Caribbean Cinema* (1992) by Mbye Cham. On *Location Cinema and Film in the Anglophone Caribbean* by Keith Warner while Gabrielle Hezekiah has explored the work of Robert Yao Ramesar in her book *Phenomenology's Material Presence, Video, Vision and Experience* (2009).

I have been very lucky to have the participation of some of the leading film and cultural studies scholars in the region including Professor Gladstone Yearwood, the Director of the Errol Barrow Centre for Creative

Imagination, UWI Cave Hill and Yolanda Wood, Director of the Caribbean Studies Center of Casa de Las Americas in Cuba. And today I am very pleased to thank two of the contributors Carla Foderingham and Nina Bruni and also wish to mention another contributor Savrina Chinien from UWI St Augustine who was unable to attend. I wish to thank Dr Lance Cowie for his insightful critique of the book, someone who has always been very supportive of my work at TheUWI.

UWI and the Dean Funso Aiyejina must be especially thanked, as I was able to undertake this work as a recipient of a one-year sabbatical that I don't want to end. Finally I wish to pay tribute to my coeditor Luis Notario, and ICAIC publications and the Cuban Government who arranged for the production of the book in less than nine months in order that it could be launched at the Havana International Book Fair in February, an event attended by over one million people and am very pleased that the Argentinian Ambassador and his wife were able to be present. And thanks to Chris Meir and my colleagues at UWI and all of you who came to support this publication.

This the address given by its editor Dr Bruce Paddington at the launch of the book, "Explorando el Cine Caribeno," on May 4 at the Centre for Language Learning, UWI, St. Augustine. The book's co-editor is Luis Notario, while the contributors to the book included Professor Gladstone Yearwood and Dr. Savrina Chinien from UWI as well as Carla Foderingham and Nina Bruni, both of whom spoke at the launch. Dr. Lance Cowie from UWI provided a critique of the book.

■ CAMPUS NEWS

The School of Education (SOE) at The UWI St. Augustine Campus held its first open day in November 2011, titled "An Educational Showcase: New Directions in Teaching and Research."

The Inclusive/Special Education display featured students' work in the master's level course I deliver: "Introduction to Special Education." The course was designed to give teachers advanced-level preparation in key areas of special education teacher training such as leadership, advocacy, and collaboration. Students were exposed to 13 categories of exceptionalities and the many cross-categorical issues that affect teaching and learning in inclusive and special schools in the Caribbean.

Inclusive Education is an approach that seeks to respond to the diversity of learning needs in the classroom, so that the most appropriate and least restrictive environment for students would be the general education classroom. On the other hand, Special Education is specially designed instruction and related services tailored to meet individual learning needs. There are obviously some needs we just cannot meet in the general education classroom, either because the necessary supports are not in place or the need will be best served in a special setting. Schools need both an inclusive approach and specially designed individualized instruction.

The display consisted of nine display booths, which covered a range of exceptionalities that included:

Special Education on display

BY DR. ELNA CARRINGTON-BLAIDES

the gifted and talented, autism, learning disabilities, communication disorders, intellectual disabilities, physical disabilities, emotional and behavioural disorders, hearing impairments, and visual impairments. The display was the culmination of an assignment that challenged students to create, in collaboration with a non-governmental organization (NGO) or individuals, an informational display for the assigned exceptionality. Students, in collaboration with the Caribbean Gifted and Talented Association, the Autistic Society, the Dyslexia Association, and other NGOs, engaged in consultative collaboration that resulted in an exciting display of student work including posters, brochures, bookmarks, and t-shirts.

Students produced websites and engaged in outreach activities in their schools and communities.

This showcase provided an introduction to the Master of Education (Inclusive and Special Education) programme. The programme is a part-time two-year programme, and it will be delivered utilizing a blended mode (face-to-face

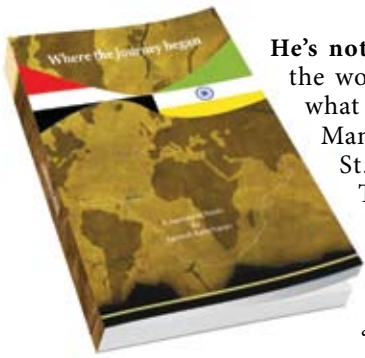
and online). The programme is currently receiving the attention of various university committees as part of the process of approval for delivery, and the SOE is aiming to launch the programme during the upcoming academic year. Additional information about the programme can be obtained from the SOE, St. Augustine Campus, UWI.

Dr. Elna Carrington-Blaides is a Lecturer (Special/ Inclusive Education) at the School of Education, UWI, St. Augustine.

Visitors were exposed to some of the new programmes at the SOE— the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) Primary (General); the Postgraduate Pre-Service Diploma in Education (Dip.Ed.)—and prospective and current graduate students were invited to join selected research clusters at the SOE—"Culture and Schooling," "Equity in Education," "ICT and Education," "Educational Evaluation," and "Factors Impacting on Students' Learning."

The work of the Multimedia Production Unit (MPC) and the Continuing Professional Development and Outreach Unit were also featured and, in addition, the SOE showcased new developments in the areas of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) and Inclusive/Special Education.

■ BOOK REVIEW



He's not a writer; really, his is the world of finance, which is what he practises as Campus Management Auditor at the St. Augustine Campus of The UWI. But Ramesh Ramcharan believes he was driven to write the book that was launched earlier this month, "Where the Journey Began,"

because he chose to take a risk and be adventurous in pursuit of his passion.

The passion, which he invokes like a mantra, is for tracing his ancestral roots in India and bringing to life the images he had carefully husbanded from the stories told by his grandmother (Aaji) and the rich diet of Indian movies from his childhood. Both had created such a fairytale aura around India—film creating a landscape of beauty, song, and mystery, with his aaji's stories pouring chunks of a different reality: poverty, hardship, and overcrowded communities—that he yearned to press the flesh of this familiar yet faraway land.

So, Ramesh set off on his journey of discovery, visiting Jamaican archives to find documents, visiting India for more, and reconnecting with the family his grandparents—25 and 21 years old—had left behind when they set sail on the SS Indus on July 2, 1905 and landed in Jamaica on July 27.

"My grandparents came from India to Jamaica then to Trinidad," he explained. Indeed, Jagesar and Maharaji had thought they were coming to "Chinnidad," but ended up at Newry Estate, where they lived and worked for some years before coming to Trinidad with their firstborn and making their home in Tacarigua.

It was a rural, agricultural life that was passed on. Ramesh noted that when he was growing up, "my parents were involved in gardening, planting and harvesting sugar cane and other agricultural crops." His grandmother related stories of her life in India and Jamaica.

"In 1923, she lost her husband, and all his relatives in Trinidad had already returned to India, she was in a totally strange place. Being a woman in this unfamiliar land, with three young children, no husband, no relatives, few new friends; with nothing like telephone, Internet, Skype, cell phone, e-mail, and as someone who could not read or write, she was virtually locked away in another corner of this world, and she had to move her life ahead."

He said she taught her children both Bhojपुरi and English and passed on much of their oral history to his parents. For her to speak out as frankly as she did, in a time when women were not even allowed to address men by their 'proper' names (and were not even referred to by their first names, but by reference to their male kin, such as so-and-



Grinding sugar cane using bullock power.

PHOTOS COURTESY RAMESH RAMCHARAN

Following Footsteps

An auditor takes a pen to write the journey of a lifetime

BY VANEISA BAKSH

so's daughter), was an act of bravery that made her assume heroic proportions in his mind.

"In my eyes, she was a hero, the link that made it possible to connect the families on both side of the world," he said.

The book, according to the author's preface, "follows three generations of an agricultural family, which originated from the remote farming community of Karaundi Goan near the town of Faizabad in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh."

It is not just a narrative, he says it contains a number of documents, like the ship's manifest, which offers information on the 800 passengers such as their names, place of registration, father's name, gender, caste, district, village and

so on. He wanted others to have a chance to trace their own ancestral lines and so has even included a sort of how-to guide as to documents required (and where to get them) for anyone interested in setting off on a similar journey.

He is very keen for readers to appreciate that the book is full of "primary" data and the "originality" of his sources. It is not an academic work, and he does not want it to be mistaken for such. It is different, because it tells the story of one family's history from the magical land of India to the even more magical land of Trinidad.

The book, "Where the Journey Began," is available at the UWI Bookshop and other national booksellers.



Boiling sugar cane juice to make "goud" or "jiggery," known as "bheily" in Trinidad long ago.



Pottery: Making deyas, "guguglette" and other forms of pottery. This tradition was until recently carried out by a selected few.



"Jaharing" rice, using bullocks to separate the grains from the husks.

Uncovering History

The work of Caribbean writers

Usually the **Writer-in-Residence** arrives in time to participate in Campus Literature Week which in recent years happens in March. However, Professor Chancy was also due to take part in the NGC Bocas Lit Fest, the Trinidad and Tobago Literary Festival, at the end of April and so keenly was her involvement in the MFA programme anticipated, that Aiyejina patiently awaited her arrival. In addition to mentoring and, in particular, sharing the skills of her craft as a creative writer with the MFA students, Chancy spoke about Haitian writers and writing at a public lecture on April 20 at the University whose audience included undergraduate French literature students.

GS: What have you been sharing with our UWI students?

MC: I've had the wonderful pleasure of speaking to [the] students—we've discussed some of my work in terms of women's literary tradition, both in terms of the Anglophone and Haitian/Francophone literary traditions.

GS: As a scholar and novelist who has written extensively on Haiti, what have you personally uncovered about your birthplace that you wish your readers to see and understand?

MC: Caribbean literature by and large, both by men and women, attempts to uncover historical moments that are not recorded in official history. What I've seen happening on the side of women's literature is that they've had to really do some work to uncover what women have been contributing both at the national level—the community and their country of origin—and also in terms of aesthetic sort of considerations. In my early work, for example, I looked at women writers in exile, primarily the Anglophone tradition and how they re-defined the term *exilic* so differently from Lamming who talks about the pleasures and pain of exile. On the women's side there is much more of an emphasis on the pain [...] that exile wasn't necessarily only about having to migrate out of the Caribbean, but also being exilic within one's country of origin as a woman—in terms of women's issues, children's issues. [...]

GS: Do Haitian writers like you feel compelled to rewrite the image of Haiti? Is it a specific burden or responsibility you have to bear that distinguishes you from other diasporic writers from the Caribbean region and other parts of the world?

MC: No, I don't think so. [...] as a writer you write what you know and so [...] most of us write about the country we were originally from. But, if there is a burden I think it's the expectation that one will look at particular themes [...] so in that sense it's more about what others don't know about Haiti that becomes a burden and can limit the reach of your work [...] they have a very narrow expectation about what a Haitian writer should be concerned about. At the same time I also have to say I don't consider myself diasporic [...] and that's a strange thing to say and I realize that because I live in the United States, but I think like many Haitian writers before me who were forced to live outside of Haiti there's a sense in which we're still in Haiti, we still are part of Haiti. [...] I live outside of Haiti, but I belong to Haiti.

Myriam J. A. Chancy is a Haitian-Canadian writer who was here in Trinidad during late April-early May as UWI's Writer-in-Residence on the invitation of Professor Funso Aiyejina, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Education and Coordinator of the MFA – Creative Writing programme in the Department of Liberal Arts, St. Augustine. This is adapted from an interview she did with Dr Geraldine Skeete for **The Spaces between Words: Conversations with Writers** podcast series produced by Dr. Giselle Rampaul and affiliated with the Literatures in English section of St. Augustine's Liberal Arts Department.



About Myriam Chancy

Myriam Chancy, 42, was born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti; grew up in Canada; and has had a career as a professor of English and Comparative Literature in the United States. She is the author of three novels, all set in her homeland: *Spirit of Haiti* (2003), shortlisted for the Commonwealth Prize 2004 for First Book, Canada/Caribbean region; *The Scorpion's Claw* (2005); and *The Loneliness of Angels* (2010), winner of the Guyana Prize for Literature Caribbean Award 2010 for Best Book of Fiction and at the 2011 Bocas Lit Fest it was shortlisted in the fiction category and long-listed for the overall OCM Bocas Prize. At present she is penning a young adult novel entitled *The Escape Artist*.

She has lectured at Louisiana State University and now teaches at the University of Cincinnati. Her academic publications include *Framing Silence: Revolutionary Novels by Haitian Women* (1997) and *Searching for Safe Spaces: Afro-Caribbean Women Writers in Exile* (1997). Both books are on the reading lists of French Caribbean and Anglophone Caribbean literature courses at UWI, St. Augustine. The journal of the American Library Association, *Choices*, awarded *Searching for Safe Spaces* a 1998 Outstanding Academic Book Award; and *Framing Silence* as stated on Chancy's academic profile is deemed "the first book-length study of its kind in English [...] instrumental in inaugurating Haitian women's studies as a field of specialization in the U.S." In March 2012 Chancy's most recent endeavour *From Sugar to Revolution: Women's Visions of Haiti, Cuba and the Dominican Republic* was released. Not yet completed non-fiction works include *Floating Islands: Cosmopolitanism, Transnationalism and Racial Identity Formation* and a collection of memoir essays entitled *Fracture*. For her work as Editor-in-Chief from 2002-2004 of the Ford-funded academic/arts journal *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism*, Chancy was bestowed the Phoenix Award for Editorial Achievement by the Council of Editors of Learned Journals (CLEJ) in 2004. She was also the Vice-President of the Association of Caribbean Women Writers and Scholars (ACWWS) from 2008-2010.

As is common with many contemporary Caribbean writers, she engages with her readership in an online environment on Facebook, and via her website <http://www.myriamchancy.com> that is worth visiting by the interested reader and scholar.

Much more of this podcast interview will be released in the coming months and can be accessed at www.spaceswords.com where interviews with and information on other Caribbean and non-Caribbean writers are also available. One reviewer has said that Chancy "may well become a grand dame of Haitian literature" and so we thank her for granting us the privilege of accepting our invitation to the campus and we eagerly look forward to her future fiction and non-fiction works.

UWI CALENDAR of EVENTS

JUNE–JULY 2012



14TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PENAL ABOLITION

13-15 June, 2012
UWI St. Augustine

The UWI's Institute of International Relations (IIR) hosts the 14th International Conference on Penal Abolition (ICOPA), themed 'Inspiring Abolition: Strengthening Ourselves for Local/Global Influence.' ICOPA is a biennial gathering of activists, academics, journalists, practitioners, people currently or formerly imprisoned, survivors of state and personal harm, and others from across the world who are working towards the abolition of imprisonment, the penal system, carceral controls and the prison industrial complex.

For further information, please contact Dr. Anthony Gonzales at Anthony.P.Gonzales@sta.uwi.edu or icopa_14@hotmail.com or at (868) 662-2002 Ext 82011.

MATHEMATICS EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY: EMBRACING POSSIBILITIES

21-23 June, 2012
School of Education
UWI St. Augustine

UWI's School of Education (SOE) hosts a symposium, titled Mathematics Education in the 21st Century: Embracing Possibilities. This symposium will focus on a number of areas, including highlight the contribution of the SOE to mathematics education over the years in celebration of the 50th anniversary of independence of Trinidad and Tobago, provide a forum for teachers to share best practices in mathematics teaching and identify teacher concerns in the content of mathematics, pedagogy and technology.

For further information, please contact Nalini Ramsawak-Jodha at ext 83403 or Nalini.Ramsawak-Jodha@sta.uwi.edu, or Elizabeth Greene at ext 84326 or Elizabeth.Greene@sta.uwi.edu.

5TH EUROPEAN CONFERENCE OF POECILIID BIOLOGISTS

25-28 June, 2012
Daaga Auditorium
UWI St. Augustine

The Department of Life Sciences hosts the 5th European Conference of Poeciliid Biologists. This conference is held every two years and this year, for the first time since its inception, it will be held outside of Europe. Approximately 100 delegates from USA, Canada, Mexico, South America, Britain, Europe, India and Australia will visit The UWI St. Augustine Campus to attend the conference, scheduled to take place from 8 am-5:30 pm each day.

For further information, please contact Dr Amy Deacon or Professor Indar Ramnarine via e-mail at poeciliid2012@sta.uwi.edu.

HYDROCARBON REVENUE MANAGEMENT

20-22 June, 2012
Hyatt Regency Trinidad
Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago

The Trade and Economic Development Unit, a research cluster at The UWI's Department of Economics, hosts a conference on Hydrocarbon Revenue Management in Small Highly Open Hydrocarbon Rich Exporting Economies. This conference will address some of these critical success factors within the context of revenue management.

For further information, please contact the Trade and Economic Development Unit, Department of Economics, at 662 -2002 ext 83233 or 83231 or via e-mail at corm.mail@gmail.com.



UWI TODAY WANTS TO HEAR FROM YOU

UWI TODAY welcomes submissions by staff and students for publication in the paper. Please send your suggestions, comments, or articles for consideration to uwitoday@sta.uwi.edu

SHIFTING THE GEOGRAPHY OF REASON IX

19-21 July, 2012
UWI St. Augustine

The UWI collaborates with the Caribbean Philosophical Association (CPA) to host the CPA's 2012 Annual Meeting, themed "Shifting the Geography of Reason IX: Racial Capitalism and the Creole Discourses of Native-, Indo-, Afro-, and Euro-Caribbeans." Under this broad heading, the CPA will examine the impact of the global capitalist crisis on old and new thinking in the Creole discourses of the region.

For further information, please contact the Caribbean Philosophical Association via e-mail at caribphil@gmail.com.

7TH CARIBBEAN CREATIVE WRITERS' RESIDENTIAL WORKSHOP

8-19 July, 2012
Trinidad and Tobago

The 7th Caribbean Creative Writers' Residential Workshop is sponsored by the Cropper Foundation, and organised in partnership with The UWI's Department of Creative and Festival Arts and Department of Liberal Arts. Ten writers who have not as yet published any of their works will be chosen from across the Caribbean to join this year's residential workshop which will focus on writing fiction, plays and poetry. The workshop will be facilitated by Professor Funso Aiyejina and Dr. Merle Hodge at a secluded, writing-inducing setting somewhere in Trinidad.

For further information, please contact Dr. Dani Lyndersay at 628-4792, Ms. Rhoda Bharath at 779-7457 or Ms. Marissa Brooks 662-2002 ext. 83040, or via e-mail at MarissaUWI@gmail.com.



DCIT BOOT CAMP

July 23-27, 2012
UWI, St. Augustine

The Department of Computing and Information Technology, The UWI, St. Augustine is holding an IT Boot Camp for secondary school students and prospective undergraduates. Interested persons can sign up online. The cost is TT1300, but scholarships are available.

For more information, please call 662-2002, ext. 83080, or visit <http://sta.uwi.edu/fsa/dcit/bootcamp.asp> or Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/dcitbootcamp>