Court TV’s Catherine Crier to deliver commencement address

by Sherri Hill

Catherine Crier has come a long way from serving as the youngest judge elected in the state of Texas to the host of Court TV’s “Catherine Crier Live.” And on Sunday, May 21, Crier will share her wise advice with Western Connecticut State University’s Class of 2006 when she delivers the university’s 108th commencement address.

Commencement exercises will begin at 10:30 a.m. on the Academic Quad.

The program was developed jointly by teachers at Danbury and Bethel high schools and professors at WestConn. Danbury and Bethel are the two biggest feeder schools to the university.

The project began with the testing of juniors in the two high schools. Test results found 61 percent needed remedial English, and 62 percent needed help with math. After a year in modified senior-level high school classes, brought about by work between high school and WestConn educators, the students’ placement improved dramatically. Only 57 percent needed remediation in English and 41 percent in math.

The improvements are good for freshmen bank accounts, too. Students pay for remedial classes but do not get credit for them.

Dr. Linda Vaden-Goad, dean of WestConn’s School of Arts and Sciences, was part of the campus team that formulated the Bridge program. She encouraged Crier to testify before the commission.

“I knew this project would be pleasing to them and it would show them some things we think we are doing, we are doing,” Vaden-Goad said. “The real key is that it was a completely collaborative project with the faculty. Once the WestConn faculty got together with the high school educators and talked about how we share the same students, that is when it came together in a beautiful way.”

Schmotter tells education of WestConn’s success

by Paul Steinmetz

WestConn President James W. Schmotter testified last month before a U.S. Department of Education commission about a project that has improved English and math scores of high school seniors and reduced the number of remedial classes the university must offer.

The Secretary of Education’s Commission on the Future of Higher Education asked speakers at the public hearing in Boston to discuss ways to make college affordable and accessible, along with how students are being prepared for the 21st century.

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Schmotter’s remarks to the commission

I’m here to talk about a successful experiment to increase access to higher education. National data suggest that almost 30 percent of entering college freshmen must enrol in remedial courses, which increases costs and often limits access. At WC/CSU in 2002 we convened an even more serious manifestation of this problem. Approximately 52 percent of freshmen required at least one remedial class at the time of entry prior to our study. Students’ academic progress was being delayed, and costs for remedial education were rising.

We needed to find ways to improve students’ probability of entering college. So we collaborated with our two top feeder high schools to “build a bridge” to improve the students’ success. In this project we capitalized on the number of students needing remediation by providing high school students with the support and resources necessary to improve their chances to attend college, and by building relationships between the university and high school teachers.

We have three phases to our plan. First, we hosted the high school juniors in English and mathematics using our regular placement tests. In both academic areas, individualized feedback was provided to the students and teachers, so they could identify specific strengths and weaknesses. Second, from fall of the...
Mediation makes a difference in any culture

Hatcherson, anthropology students explore health care in Bangladesh

By Hanna Kiviniemi

Ten students visited Bangladesh during the January 2006 intersession with Adjunct Professor of Anthropology Jean Hatcherson. Accompanying a medical volunteer group, the students examined the cross-cultural aspects of health care in a country that is torn by disease and crisis. Nine of the students attended WestConn. The other student attends Syracuse University and filled the entire trip for a documentary of their experiences.

Hatcherson first visited Bangladesh in 2001 when she volunteered as an administrator for Healing the Children Northeast Inc. (HTCNE) with a team of plastic surgeons that operated on acid burn victims. Her second HTCNE visit to Bangladesh was in January 2005 when the team did burn reconstruction and repaired cleft lips and palates. “It was upon my return from that trip that I began thinking about a student trip,” said Hatcherson, who had built up a strong team of supporters through her volunteer work.

After months of planning, the students began their trip with a visit to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital. An HTCNE surgical team conducted a one-week program to help patients with burn injuries and cleft lips. Team members spoke about their experiences and allowed the students to help with patient flow and observe in the operating room.

Junior Katerina Kruzykowski, a multicultural social science major, said the trip was valuable. “Outside of the doctor’s office, I know nothing about the medical field,” Kruzykowski said. “Being able to work side by side with the doctors and nurses in the operating room was amazing. I learned so much from all of them.”

Hatcherson has visited many countries, including El Salvador, Colombia, Cambodia and Russia. She is a member of the board of directors for the United States Foster parent medical care team and has been a foster parent.

During her trips to Bangladesh, she became involved with the Impact Foundation and the Acid Survivors Foundation. With other volunteers, she coordinates preparations for each trip. They order the supplies needed and arrange accommodations and transportation.

“People of Bangladesh were very hospitable and interested in their life,” Hatcherson said. “It’s meaningful to educate students and lay the groundwork of other cultures. The social exchange of being given and generous will help dispel cultural misperceptions. Students should know what’s going on around the world. I want to bring my students beyond the text and allow them to explore the health care and gender issues.”

For more information, call Hatcherson at (203) 778-4397.
Women’s History Month wraps up by ‘raising a little hell’

by Paul Steinmetz

A small band of seven WestConn students and two advisers knew they would do good work in hurricane-ravaged Mississippi during spring break. What they didn’t know was that the experience would affect them so deeply they would immediately make plans to head back to continue their work.

“No PowerPoint presentation or photographs or sensitivity sessions could prepare us for what we saw,” said Friar Mike Lasky, chaplain at the university’s Catholic campus ministry, also known as the Newman Center.

Lasky and Associate Minister Sr. Mary Anthony Lovezzola led eight Newman students in preparing for the trip, which was funded by the Bridgeport diocese and a $5,000 grant from the Knights of Columbus in Connecticut. (One student, Richard Perzillo, got sick and couldn’t go, but he sent Scripture by text message to the group every day.)

The work the WestConn group did consisted mostly of working on houses and lots in neighborhoods that hadn’t been touched until the students arrived.

Lasky said the residents told him, “Look, we have plenty of clothes, we have food. What we need is hands.”

The Newman Club crew cleared debris from lots, tore down damaged roofs, put up wallboard and painted. They also helped in other ways.

“You do the physical work but a lot is just visiting with people and hearing their stories,” Lasky said. “People would stop us on the street to thank us.”

One woman, whose house was obliterated, explained to the crew that she had spent the night before the storm sorting pennies by date with her granddaughter in their living room. One day, the students dug for three hours through the muck of the woman’s yard looking for possessions. They found several hundred pennies.

“She would take each one home (to her FEMA trailer) and wash it,” Lasky said. “They’re her memories. It gives her a sense of hope.”

Lasky said Hurricane Katrina “was a historical dramatization performed by five female professors and based on the 1870 patent lawsuit female inventor Margaret Knight brought against a male co-worker.”

Writer and teacher Cindy Hanson offered a writing workshop for WestConn students, faculty and staff in Alumni Hall on March 29.

“Many of the students say it was life-changing,” Lasky said. “That’s a powerful thing for all of us here to realize how blessed we are and not to take what we have for granted.”

Newman students learn life lessons in trip to hurricane country

by Paul Steinmetz

WestConn celebrated Women’s History Month in March with a series of workshops, readings and performances. The events were capped by the April 2 appearance in Ives Concert Hall of the nonagenarian New Hampshire political and environmental activist Doris “Granny D” Haddock.

During her poetry reading on March 1, Panamanian native Bessy Reyna reminded her audience in Alumni Hall that “changes in citizenship don’t affect your identity.”

Lorena Garay, a soloist and guitarist in Latin-based bands, discussed the impact of being a Puerto Rican woman on her professional life in a talk on March 7 in the Student Center Theater.

“Contested Space: A Performance,” staged March 27 in the Student Center, was a historical dramatization performed by five female professors and based on the 1870 patent lawsuit female inventor Margaret Knight brought against a male co-worker.

Writer and teacher Cindy Hanson offered a writing workshop for WestConn students, faculty and staff in Alumni Hall on March 29.

Students who traveled to Biloxi include: Jeff Lalloche, a freshman history major; Amanda Lee, a sophomore business major; Liz Oberwski, an undeclared freshman, Regina Siegrie, a junior music education major; Jessica Thibeault, a freshman education major; Jacob Wycoff, a sophomore meteorology major, and Kevin Trinka, an undeclared freshman.

Tax-deductible donations toward the next trip can be made to the Newman Center, 7 Eighth Ave., Danbury, CT 06810.

For more information, call Friar Mike Lasky at (203) 744-5846.
SPS adjuncts honored for dedication, service to students

Anyone who’s ever tried to skim the cool “skin” off the top of warm pudding knows about the delicacy necessary in the research Dr. James P. Boyle is conducting. “Water in the ocean behaves similar to the pudding,” said the Associate Professor of Physics and Meteorology at WestConn. “There’s an extremely thin, cool ‘skin’ on the ocean surface,” said Boyle, a Newtown resident. “I’m trying to place a thermometer into that skin, which is difficult because it’s only a fraction of a millimeter thick.

Since 1997, Boyle has been developing a lightweight instrument with several sensors to directly measure heat exchange between the atmosphere and the ocean, and determine the water surface skin temperature, gauge air and water temperature near the surface, and calculate the shape of the water surface and its motion. With implications for predicting hurricanes and exploring global warming, the research recently took Boyle and two students to a NASA facility on Virginia’s eastern shore.

“The oceanographic and meteorological communities have been interested in these measurements for quite some time,” Boyle said. “Forecasters make predictions based primarily on measurements of a system. Now it’s too expensive to obtain adequate measurements to characterize the oceans, which is one reason forecasting is so difficult.”

With the devastation of the 2005 hurricane season still fresh and predictions for another active season beginning June 1, Boyle hopes his instrument someday will help forecast extreme weather conditions and provide information about climate change. Low cost and simple operation are among the advantages of Boyle’s machine.

“Hundreds of my multi-sensor floats could be deployed from ships or aircraft to provide ground truth for satellite-based measurements and support for air-sea flux field experiments,” Boyle said. “In order to understand potential climate change and climate variability, you need to understand how the atmosphere and ocean work together. It’s a coupled system.”

WestConn recently received a nearly $200,000 grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) for Boyle’s “Development of a Third Generation Surface Contact Heat, Flux, Temperature and Sea State Measurement Instrument.” The funding runs through 2007 and Boyle is using it to refine the instrument, which uses a porous fiberglass float stretched inside a foam ring that’s about 8 inches in diameter to support the sensors where the air and sea meet.

“My device is a wave-following float that’s similar to a Frisbee disc,” said Boyle, who has a Bachelor of Science in Engineering and was an engineer for the U.S. Department of Energy.

Grants from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Office of Naval Research have supported development of earlier versions of Boyle’s device.

“It is a continuing process to improve the wave-following instrument,” Boyle said. “With this NSF funding, I’m establishing the accuracy of the measurements.

To that end, Boyle and two sophomore WestConn meteorology majors, Joseph "J.J." DePasqua and Joseph Roy, took the device to a NASA/Goddard Space Flight Center wave tank this spring. Boyle and the students tested several of these instruments for 10 days at the NASA Air-Sea Interaction Research Facility (NASIRF) at Wallops Flight Facility on Wallops Island, Va.

Boyle tests instrument to help predict climate change, global warming

by Yvonne Johnson

Boyle tests instrument to help predict climate change, global warming

by Yvonne Johnson

...continued...

The annual adjunct appreciation event is a recognition of the value these educators bring to the University. They are experts in their fields, are professionals and provide exemplary teaching. The recognition provides them a sense of value and importance. The event enhances the quality of the education, improves access to higher education, identifies students who need remediation while still in high school and provides the opportunity in their senior year to improve their skills and enter the university ready to take full advantage of the opportunities we offer. Thank you for letting us share this story.
WestConn ‘connects’ with alumni at local corporations

by Sherri Hill

Walk into most any local business and start asking people where they went to college and chances are a many of the employees will say “WestConn.” In fact, a significant number of our graduates remain here in the Danbury area, contributing their skills and expertise to the local economy.

Depending on the decade during which they graduated, many of our alumni also are juggling roles as caretakers for their young children, teenagers or parents in addition to holding down their jobs. That’s why WestConn is coming to them with a series of “Connect with Us” events at area businesses.

In late March, more than two-dozen WCSU alumni who work at Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals Inc. came together for an afternoon reception on their Ridgebury Road campus in Ridgefield. In mid-April, about 50 Cartus (formerly Cendant Mobility) employees with WestConn ties met for breakfast at their headquarters, also on Ridgebury Road.

“It’s great to see so many of our graduates turn out for these events,” said President James W. Schmotter, who attended both get-togethers. “They lead busy lives and it makes sense for us to bring WestConn’s good news to them where they work.”

Stephenie O’Brien, Vice President for Institutional Advancement Dr. Koroye Anim-Wright also attended the “Connect with Us” events.

“The purpose of these functions is to reconnect with our alumni,” she said. “Many work close to the campus. However, because of work and other family obligations, it's very difficult for them to find the time to engage with us.

“We reached out to them in two ways. First, we brought them up-to-date on programs and initiatives currently taking place at WestConn,” Anim-Wright continued. “Secondly, we encouraged them to take a few hours once every few months to ‘reconnect’ with us by attending lectures, theatrical productions, musical performances and other campus events.”

Human resource departments at both Boehringer Ingelheim and Cartus helped facilitate the alumni “reunions” by inviting their employees with WestConn degrees to attend their respective events.

Senior Vice President for Human Resources David W. Nurnberger was WestConn’s liaison at Boehringer Ingelheim. He’s also a WestConn alumnus.

“Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals Inc. was very pleased to help with the ‘Connect with Us’ reception at our facilities,” Nurnberger said. “We saw this as a great opportunity to expose those employees who graduated from WestConn to Dr. Schmotter and today’s university. We have more than 120 WestConn alumni here — some who graduated more than 30 years ago.

“So much has changed over the years and those of us who attended WestConn can be proud of the progress made at our alma maters.” Nurnberger continued. “Over those years, our company has also forged important partnerships with the university, especially with the business school and the science department. BI has benefited from both those partnerships and from the contributions of the many employees who have attended the university. And, we look forward to building on our relationship with WestConn in the years to come.”

Plans are underway for future “Connect with Us” events.

For more information about the “Connect with Us” series, call Anim-Wright at (203) 837-9805.

ALUMNI & DEVELOPMENT

Barnard Scholars named

by Jessica Borchetta

On April 18, the Connecticut State University (CSU) System awarded 12 seniors from the four CSU schools with the Henry Barnard Distinguished Student Award. The award acknowledges students who maintain a high grade point average (G.P.A.) as well as perform community service on and off campus.

WestConn’s Cheryl Haller and Stephanie O’Brien received the award this year.

Haller, a Shelton resident, is a theatre arts student with a 3.78 G.P.A. During her studies at WestConn, she has been the recipient of several scholarships, including the Young Family Theatre Scholarship and the Alumni Association Scholarship. Haller also has made her presence known in campus clubs and activities. As a member of Center Stage, she was club secretary during her sophomore year and performed in the club’s annual one-act plays. She also acted in the Child Care Cadet, a show to benefit the WCSU Child Care Center. Haller’s desire to aid and educate children led her to direct the fifth-grade play in spring 2005 and 2006 at Park Avenue Elementary School in Danbury.

Haller has been in many of WestConn’s theater department shows, including “Twelfth Night,” performed during the Fringe Festival in Edinburg, Scotland. This April, she will be part of a WestConn group taking the play to Ecuador.

Stephanie O’Brien, of Danbury, is an interactive marketing and supervisory management major with a 3.89 G.P.A. O’Brien earned a place on the Dean’s List and in the University Honors Program every semester of her WestConn career. She was listed in the 2006 “Who’s Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges.” In fall 2004 O’Brien helped found the WCSU chapter of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars and has held the position of president ever since. She also has served as president of the Gay-Straight Alliance since fall 2005. She is a member of the American Marketing Association. This semester she received their “Above and Beyond Communications Student Marketer of the Year.” O’Brien also found time to intern and work at Branson Ultrasound in Danbury, becoming a project manager overseeing the company e-newsletter and Internet marketing.

First lecture in Macricostas series focuses on Turkish pogrom

by Paul Steinmetz

Dr. Speros Vryonis Jr., an expert on Byzantine and Hellenic history, connected the past to the present during his lecture on April 6 in the Science Building.

Vryonis delivered the first talk in a new lecture series funded by a grant from the foundation of Brookfield industrialist and philanthropist Constantine “Deno” Macricostas and his wife, Marie.

The nearly 200 people who attended the lecture heard President James W. Schmotter describe the Macricostas’ generosity.

“Everyone in this audience knows what Deno has done — for WCSU; for the Greek-American community of the region, and for Danbury,” Schmotter said. “His personal story is an inspiring one — the story of a young immigrant working with his uncle in Dixon, Ill., and taking courses at Eureka College, a young immigrant who moves east and grows up to become one of the nation’s most noted entrepreneurs, businessmen and philanthropists.

“Deno’s is a classic American story, but one that very much has its beginnings in Greece,” Schmotter continued. “And the funding of this lecture series is yet another example of how he’s never forgotten those beginnings.

The Macricostas gift of $1.1 million to the university established the lecture series, an Endowed Chair in Hellenic Studies, a scholarship for students who recently immigrated to the United States and a business award for regional entrepreneurs.
Women’s soccer team celebrates LEC honors

Adjunct Professor of Music Jeff Siegel, a jazz percussionist, recently was recognized for his songwriting skills. He won the recognition from the International Songwriting Competition, an annual songwriting contest that provides the opportunity for both aspiring and established songwriters to have their works heard in a professional, international arena. His composition was awarded honorable mention. The overall competition included more than 15,000 song entries from throughout the world.

If you have an announcement about a recent appointment to a board, an award or other professional accomplishment you’d like to share in this section, please e-mail the information to pr@wcsu.edu.

Percussion concert hits right notes

Professor of Justice and Law Administration Dr. David Machell will gain valuable insights into treatment of alcoholism among American Indians in a major interview to be conducted with tribal representatives who direct or coordinate substance abuse programs in the Southwestern United States.

Machell is slated to interview the program director for the Southwest Indian Foundation, a Gallup, N.M., organization serving American Indian communities throughout the region; the clinical director of the Na’Nizhoozhi Center for substance abuse treatment, also of Gallup; leaders of the Navajo nation; and tribal liaisons from the Zuni, Hopi and Apache nations.

Machell will conduct the interview during a research trip to New Mexico to gather information about the American Indian response to spiritual and other aspects of the Alcoholics Anonymous program.

Theatre Arts Professor Sal Trapani (left) makes a presentation at Ridgefield Crossings, an assisted-living facility on Danbury Road in Ridgefield, as part of the Ridgefield Crossings University collaboration. In April, Trapani and a number of talented WestConn theatre arts students gave the Ridgefield Crossings residents a taste of their department’s outstanding offerings.

Learning continues at ‘Ridgefield Crossings U’

Machell to conduct research in New Mexico

World Music series features Scottish tartan

WestConn education department this spring provided funding to defray part or all of the registration costs for three graduate students fulfilling the departmental requirement to attend conferences in their areas of specialization.

The grants were assigned to pay fees for Steve Ortiz and Julie Overland to attend the Connecticut Conference for Music Educators, and for Joyce Intervalle to participate in a conference about the educational philosophy and implementation of “balanced literacy.”

Learning continues at ‘Ridgefield Crossings U’

Entry earns music adjunct honorable mention in international songwriting competition

Congratulations!

Entry earns music adjunct honorable mention in international songwriting competition

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Dr. Jeremy Wolfe
by Robert Taylor

From the airport security screener who misses the weapon concealed in a carry-on bag to the doctor who overlooks an early sign of a cancerous tumor in a diagnostic image, recognizing failures in critical visual search tasks pose a matter of life and death — and a formidable research challenge for Dr. Jeremy Wolfe, professor of ophthalmology at Harvard Medical School.

As director of the Visual Attention Lab at the Center for Ophthalmic Research of Brigham and Women’s Hospital (BWH) in Cambridge, Mass., Wolfe heads a team of researchers who are pursuing studies aimed at better understanding the visual processes and why they often fail. He visited WestConn on March 29 as a guest lecturer in the “PsychMatters” series, sponsored by the university’s psychology department, to share his lab’s findings on search techniques and possible strategies to improve performance.

As head of the Visual Attention Lab, Wolfe has directed and published extensively on psychological studies of how people process visual stimuli, select specific items for attention, and retain information from the visual search after it has ended. Clinical research studies in progress at the lab are exploring the practical application of visual search techniques to airport security screening, as well as the effects of circadian rhythms and sleep deprivation on attention disorders.

Wolfe earned a Ph.D. in psychology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1981 and served for 10 years on the MIT faculty. Since 1991 he has held dual appointments as a member of the ophthalmology department at Harvard Medical School and director of psychophysical studies at BWH, while retaining visiting and adjunct faculty affiliations with MIT and Boston University.

Speaking to an audience of more than 100 students, faculty members and guests during his slide presentation in the Student Center, Wolfe said the Visual Attention Lab’s field studies of simulated baggage screening — funded by the federal Transportation Security Administration — have yielded important findings that may lay the foundations for future improvements in airport security, diagnostic imaging and other search tasks.

One conclusion from these studies is that the rate of “target prevalence” — that is, how often a target of a search appears — has a major impact on the accuracy of the screening process. Visual searches for relatively rare objects have demonstrated a much higher rate of error — a significant finding, Wolfe observed, since security and medical screenings typically have levels of target prevalence of 1 percent or less.

In a recent study, researchers showed test subjects a series of computer images replicating the X-ray screening of actual baggage, with controlled studies tracking accuracy rates when images of guns, knives and other prohibited items are introduced in 50 percent, 10 percent and 1 percent of the screenings. The results were striking. While subjects made mistakes in 7 percent of all screenings when at least one target appeared 50 percent of the time, the error rate rose to 50 percent on average when targets appeared in just 1 percent of the images viewed.

“The job of an airport screener can be very difficult work,” Wolfe observed. While popular media reports sometimes suggest frequent errors in screening result from poor work habits, he said the research findings point to another explanation: “Rare targets are hard to find simply because they are rare.”

And screening by more than one individual does not ensure greater accuracy, he noted. “Two people looking at the same thing are only a little bit more accurate than the better of the two screeners,” he said. “And the really interesting finding is that they’re making the same mistakes.”

Research at the Visual Attention Lab has focused on the strategy of ‘guided search,’ where the individual narrows the field of search by seeking out defined characteristics and differences from other items to identify a search target more quickly and accurately. Such strategies have particular relevance to search tasks like mammography or security screening, where the target — whether a tumor or an explosive — is typically absent.

“People must be able to identify quickly the absence of an item,” he said. “It’s important to be able to set some sort of criterion to know when it’s OK for you to stop a search.”

Wolfe observed human search capacities remain “coarse.” Screening accuracy is high when targets are easily differentiated but fails noticeably as it becomes harder to distinguish a given target from more common objects. A case in point: A calculator packed alongside a baloney sandwich — which yields the same orange hue as that of certain plastic explosives on baggage imaging — is likely to result in a lengthy stop at airport security.

The task ahead for Wolfe’s lab is to translate its basic research findings into practical and effective applications in the field. He conceded the initial results in the field have produced some disappointments, but he remains committed to the quest.

“Our challenge is to find out how we might be able to perform these search tasks better than we do today,” he said.

For more information about the “PsychMatters” series, call the psychology department at (203) 837-8470.

Schmotter tells education commission of WestConn’s success (cont’d.)

Schmotter said another positive result of the program is that the university has been able to reduce the number of remedial classes it offers, thus saving money. “We are proud of the ‘Building a Bridge’ program,” Schmotter said. “And I think it’s good for people to know what’s happening at WestConn and institutions like WestConn. Most of the attention goes to the major research universities, but we’re doing some things here that are just as substantial.” For more information, call (203) 837-9460.

Student Center: Visual Attention Lab (VOL) director Maureen Gernert...
May 2 Concert: The WCSU Symphony Band and Wind Ensemble will perform at 8 p.m. in Ives Concert Hall in White Hall on the Midtown campus. The performance will be free and open to the public. For more information, call (203) 837-8450.

May 3 Dinner: The Newman Center will host a free dinner in honor of students awarded their degrees. The event will be free and open to WestConn students, staff and faculty only. For more information, call (203) 837-8476.

May 3 Science-at-Night Presentation: Andy Reynolds, an environmental reporter with The New Times Magazine, will discuss “The Daily Planet.” A Journalist’s Sensitivity for Sustainability, from the Amazon to the Arctic” at 6 p.m. in Room 125 of the Science Building on the Midtown campus. Reynolds will provide an Earth-scaping tour, from reefs and rainforests to sea ice and tundra, which will reveal how scientists are gauging the human impact on ecosystems and climate. For more information, call Professor of Biological and Environmental Sciences Dr. Thomas Phehl in (203) 837-8772.

May 3 Honors Convocation: The WestConn School of Professional Studies will host its Honors Convocation at 7:30 p.m. in Ives Concert Hall in White Hall on the Midtown campus. The public is invited to this annual event at which scholarship and award recipients are honored. For more information, call (203) 837-8452.

May 4 Golf Outing: The WCSU Rugby Club will host the 5th Annual Rugby Golf Outing at 8 a.m. at James Bard State Park, 1220 Freedom Road, Pleasant Valley, N.Y. The cost will be $100 per participant, which will cover admission, greens fees, golf cart rental and a post-golf dinner in Room 218 of the Westside Classroom Building on the Westside campus. For more information, call Keith Proehl at (203) 837-8522.

May 5 Reception: The Psychology department will host a reception from noon to 3:30 p.m. in Alumnae Hall on the Midtown campus. Faculty members of the faculty will be on duty to answer the reception. The event will be free and open to WestConn students, staff and faculty only. For more information, call Professor of Psychology Dr. Nancy Julett at (203) 837-8476.

May 5 Rugby Game: The WCSU Rugby Club will host a Powder Puff Formal Game at 8 p.m. on the Rugby Field on the Westside campus. Dresses and suits are required to play. For more information, call Keith Proehl at (203) 837-8522.

May 6 University Ball: WestConn will host the University Ball at 7 p.m. at the Ethan Allen Hotel, 21 Lake Avenue Extension in Danbury. The 2010 annual ball will feature a gourmet meal, music by “Higher and Higher,” a silent auction and a chance for all those who support the university to join together in a common celebration. Further details of the event will support the WCSU Foundation, which funds the educational services of the university and provides for student scholarships, campus enhancements and faculty development. For tickets and other information, call the Office of Institutional Advancement at (203) 837-8598.

May 6 –7 Writing Conference: WestConn will host a two-day conference for student and community writers on May 6 and 7 on the Midtown campus. Pulitzer Prize-winning author Frank McCourt will give the keynote address on Saturday, May 6, in Ives Concert Hall in White Hall. The talk will be free and open to the public, and a book signing will follow. The conference also will feature writing workshops, seminars, panel discussions and readings by noted visiting authors. Pre-registration will be required to attend. There will be three workshops for students on May 6 and for the public on May 7. For more information, call (203) 837-9434 or send to mcro@wash.acad.ccsu.edu.

May 6 Rugby Game and Picnic: The WCSU Rugby Club will host the 14th annual Alumni Game at 1 p.m. on the Rugby Field on the Westside campus. The public is invited; admission will be $10. For more information, call Keith Proehl at (203) 837-8522.

May 6 Planetarium Show and Telescope Viewing: WestConn will present a planetarium show, followed by telescope viewing of Saturn, the moon near first quarter, Jupiter near opposition and the early summer sky, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Observatory and Planetarium on the Westside campus. The event will be free and open to the public. For more information, call (203) 837-8522.

May 9 Art Slide Lecture: Landscape painter Jake Berthot will discuss his work at 11 a.m. in Viewing Room 1 in White Hall on the Midtown campus. Berthot is the 2005 War Farm Trust lecturer; his work has been called “American sublime.” Berthot’s work can be found in the collections of many significant American museums, including the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the Guggenheim, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and others. The event will be free and open to the public, and it will be presented as part of the university’s Artist of the Year slide lecture series. For more information, call (203) 837-8881.

May 11 Student Research Presentations: WestConn Research Day, enabling students from across the university to present their research to faculty and colleagues, will be from 2 to 5 p.m. in the Science Building on the Midtown campus. The event will feature a keynote address by science journalist John Horgan, followed by faculty-endorced student research presentations in a variety of academic disciplines. The event will be free and the public is invited. For more information, call Assistant Professor of Psychology Dr. Robin Forgan at (203) 837-8471 or Professor of Biological and Environmental Sciences Dr. Susan Muskin at (203) 837-8799.

May 11 Graduate Commencement Ceremony and Reception: The WestConn Division of Graduate Studies will host a ceremony and reception at 5:30 p.m. in Room 218 of the Westside Classroom Building on the Westside campus. Graduate students who have completed their programs and their guests will be invited to a brief ceremony with a reception to follow. Scholarship and award recipients also will be honored. For more information, call (203) 837-8244.

May 11 Planetarium Show and Telescope Viewing: WestConn will host an 8 p.m. planetarium show, followed by telescope viewing of Saturn, the moon near full and Jupiter, from 9 to 11 p.m., at the Westside Observatory and Planetarium on the Westside campus. The event will be free and open to the public. For more information, call (203) 837-8672.

May 11 Orchestra Concert: The WCSU Orchestra will perform at 8 p.m. in Ives Concert Hall in White Hall on the Midtown campus. The performance will be free and open to the public. For more information, call (203) 837-8530.

May 11 Holistic Health Event: The Institute for Holistic Health Studies at WestConn and the Danbury branch of the Connecticut Holistic Health Association will present “Pro-Active Through Pain: A Panel Discussion” at 7 p.m. at Arcadia Health Center, 499 Federal Road, Brookfield. Five practitioners representing acupuncture, Chinese medicine, hypnosis, nutrition and tibetan work will discuss ways to relieve chronic pain. Registration and networking will begin at 6:30 p.m., and the program will be from 7 to 8 p.m. Admission will be $25 for CHHA members, $10 for nonmembers, and $1 for senior citizens and non-WestConn students with valid identification. WestConn students, faculty and staff with valid ID will be admitted free. For more information, call Denise Donovan at (203) 837-8612.

May 18 Holistic Health Event: The Institute for Holistic Health Studies at WestConn and the Danbury branch of the Connecticut Holistic Health Association will present “Pro-Active Through Pain: A Panel Discussion” at 7 p.m. at Arcadia Health Center, 499 Federal Road, Brookfield. Five practitioners representing acupuncture, Chinese medicine, hypnosis, nutrition and tibetan work will discuss ways to relieve chronic pain. Registration and networking will begin at 6:30 p.m., and the program will be from 7 to 8 p.m. Admission will be $25 for CHHA members, $10 for nonmembers, and $1 for senior citizens and non-WestConn students with valid identification. WestConn students, faculty and staff with valid ID will be admitted free. For more information, call Denise Donovan at (203) 837-8612.

May 18 Math Enrichment Workshops: A day of math enrichment workshops for Connecticut’s mathematically inclined students in grades five through eight will be from 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. in White Hall on the Froebel Math/Science Day. Five workshops, sponsored by the Connecticut Association for Mathematically Precocious Youth and the WCSU math department, will cost $35 for students and chaperones. Registration will be in Warmer Hall on the Midtown campus. For registration information and a workshop schedule, visit http://so-mako.sysoff.ctstateu.edu/AcadAff/cwc.nsf.

May 25 Ridgefield Crossings University Event: Coordinator of Disability Services and Senior Adjunct Professor of Social Sciences Jack Sikora will discuss “A User-Friendly Introduction to the Historical Buddha and Buddhism” at Ridgefield Crossings University. The event will begin at 7 p.m. in the Ridgefield Crossings University Atrium. For more information, call (203) 837-8630.

June 12 Holistic Health Event: The Institute for Holistic Health Studies at WestConn and the Danbury branch of the Connecticut Holistic Health Association will present “Pro-Active Through Pain: A Panel Discussion” at 7 p.m. at Arcadia Health Center, 499 Federal Road, Brookfield. Five practitioners representing acupuncture, Chinese medicine, hypnosis, nutrition and tibetan work will discuss ways to relieve chronic pain. Registration and networking will begin at 6:30 p.m., and the program will be from 7 to 8 p.m. Admission will be $25 for CHHA members, $10 for nonmembers, and $1 for senior citizens and non-WestConn students with valid identification. WestConn students, faculty and staff with valid ID will be admitted free. For more information, call Denise Donovan at (203) 837-8612.

Please join us for a conversation with the Pulitzer Prize-winning author as he talks about his life described in his latest bestseller, “Teacher Man.” For more information, call (203) 837-8486.

Frank McCourt is coming to WestConn!

Saturday, May 8, 2010, at 4 p.m. – Ives Concert Hall, WCSU, Midtown campus

Free and open to the public.

Writers, also join us on Sunday, May 9, from noon to 4 p.m. where four prominent authors in fiction, poetry, film and nonfiction will conduct seminars and panel discussions for public participation. Student Center, WCSU, Westside campus

Get info at www.wcsu.edu or call (203) 837-8486.