

The Westfield Athenaeum Announces Its Spring Lecture Series

The Westfield Athenaeum is pleased to announce its Spring Lecture Series. The Spring Lecture Series includes ten programs featuring a variety of fascinating speakers who have distinguished themselves in their respective fields. Included in the series are well-known authors, writers, artists, poets, musicians, community and international leaders, who will make presentations on a wide array of topics.

The series kicks off on February 25 at 7:00 p.m. with Karen Hardy and Shannon Massey of Educate Malawi, Inc. Educate Malawi, Inc. is a small, 501©(3) non-profit organization that was organized by Karen Hardy and her daughter, Shannon Massey, to support education in Malawi. Karen's husband, Stephen, is also involved in the fundraising efforts. Karen Hardy, of West Springfield, is a substance abuse counselor at a Connecticut prison. In September 2007, Karen and Shannon spent 8 weeks in Malawi helping support their basic needs. The mission of Educate Malawi, Inc. is to support and encourage education to residents of the country by providing supplies, money for teachers' housing and children to attend school, both primary, secondary and beyond. This is accomplished through donations from fundraising and grants. They are sponsoring a Bike-a-Thon on May 30, 2009, to raise funds for Malawi. More information is available at <http://educate-malawi.org/home>.

On March 11, historian Diane Rapaport, author of *The Naked Quaker: True Crimes and Controversies from the Courts of Colonial New England* will present an illustrated lecture, followed by a book signing. Ms Rapaport is a former trial lawyer who has made a career as an award-winning author, speaker and publisher. She brings history to life with true crime stories from colonial New England. Her book was chosen as a Finalist for *ForeWord Magazine's* 2007 "Book of the Year" Award for History. Even one of President-elect Barack Obama's forbears turns up in Ms. Rapaport's book, as a ne'er-do-well who was banished from Plymouth colony to the wilds of New Jersey! A book signing will follow the talk.

On March 25, Michael Tougias, an award-winning author of 18 books, will present a narrated slide lecture about the history and natural history of the Connecticut River entitled *400 Miles Down the Connecticut River*. Tougias will take the audience down the entire 410 miles of the river on a journey through the past and present. Along the way, he will discuss wildlife, environmental issues, Native Americans, log drives, major floods and more. Practical tips will be given, including his favorite sections of the river to paddle, fish, camp and to take photography. A question and answer period will follow the talk, followed by a book signing.

On April 8, author Bob Clark will present *Stories Carved in Stone: Westfield, Massachusetts*, the fifth in a series of books on gravestones published by Dog Pond Press. The other volumes in the series include information about gravestones in West

Springfield, Agawam, and Holyoke, MA and Enfield, MA. Clark did much of his cemetery research at the Westfield Athenaeum and he was so impressed with our special historical collections, that he asked Athenaeum Director Chris Lindquist to write the introduction this volume. The book includes gravestones from the past 350 years of Westfield history, including the people who lived here, the gravestone carvers in the Connecticut River Valley, and early headstone art. A book signing will follow the talk.

On April 15, well-known watercolor artist Susan Tilton Pecora will be doing a live watercolor demonstration and talk. Pecora will be completing a watercolor of the Westfield Athenaeum that will be used as a fundraiser for the library. She has painted on locations all over the country and in many parts of the world. Her watercolor paintings combine a unique blend of architecture and nature. She appears on a regular show on WGBY called "Reflections Through Watercolor," which is broadcast nationally to PBS affiliates. Pecora has given demonstrations to art associations throughout New England, and she teaches painting at the Museum of Fine Arts in Springfield, as well as in her studio in Thorndike. Her work can be seen or purchased at R. Michelson Galleries of Northampton and Amherst, Kiley Court in Provincetown, MA and Gallery on the Green in Woodstock, VT.

On April 22, local poet Lori Desrosiers will facilitate a program of poetry in celebration of National Poetry Month. Desrosiers is the editor of *The Poetry News*, an online compendium of poetry events happening in the greater Western Massachusetts and Connecticut area located at www.poetrynewscalendar.com. She also maintains a blog at www.loridesrosiers.com. According to Desrosiers, her primary subjects are her family, women and women's issues, nature and the environment, and peace. She has participated in readings such as Poems of War/Poems of Peace with the Woronoake Peace Action group in Westfield. Her poem "From the Porch" appeared recently in a well-known online journal of activist poetry. Desrosiers is a graduate of New England College with an MFA in Poetry. She teaches English at Westfield State College. She also recently started an online poetry journal at www.naugatuckriverreview.com.

On April 29 horticulturalist Pernell Gerver will present a lecture entitled "*Rock and Alpine Gardening*." Gerver was named Gardener of the Year by *Organic Gardening* magazine when he was just 18 years old. He hosts a regular gardening column in the *Sunday Republican* newspaper and he also hosts a year-round series of Gardening Workshops, which until recently was being held at the Westfield Athenaeum. *Rock and Alpine Gardening* focuses on what a rock garden is, how to create a naturalistic rock garden, and the many alpine and dwarf plants suited for growing in a rock garden. Different types of rock gardens are described including a scree, moraine, boulder field, rock outcropping, and stone wall. Proper placement of rocks as well as placement of plants are discussed. With proper placement of rocks and plants, the program will show you how to create a successful and beautiful rock garden of your own. A question and answer session follows the talk. Gerver's website is located at www.pernellgerver.com.

On May 13, L. Mara Dodge, who teaches U.S. History at Westfield State College, will present a talk entitled "*The Historical Journal of Massachusetts Celebrating 37 Years of*

Publishing Local History.” She recently became the new editorial director of *The Historical Journal of Massachusetts*. Dr. Dodge received her Ph.D. from the University of Illinois at Chicago. She has published articles on women’s history, legal history, prisons and criminal justice, and labor history. Her book, “*Whores and Thieves of the Worst Kind*”: *Women, Crime, and Prisons, 1835-2000* (NIU Press) received an outstanding book award and was republished in 2006. Dr. Dodge currently lives in Holyoke, MA. More information about the journal can be found at www.wsc.mass.edu/mhj/current.html.

On May 20 John Edwin Mroz, President, Founder and CEO of the EastWest Institute, will be joining us to talk about his experiences running a powerful non-governmental change-agent institution during the past decade, and about his thoughts going forward, with the new Obama administration in Washington, as the U.S. confronts an increasingly complex set of global challenges. From its roots as a European-American initiative to bridge the divisions between Europe and Eurasia, Mroz built EWI into one of the world’s pre-eminent change-agent institutions. He has served as an advisor to more than 20 governments including the United States, Germany, Poland and the Russian Federation as well as the Commission of the European Union, NATO, the Council of Europe and the G-8. He has received numerous international awards including Germany's highest award to a non-citizen in recognition of the role he and EWI played in facilitating German reunification.

Mroz completed his graduate studies at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy after earning an M.A. from Northeastern University. His B.A. is from the University of Notre Dame. He is the author of a landmark book on the Arab-Israeli conflict, "Beyond Security: Private Perceptions Among Arabs and Israelis" (Pergamon Press, London and New York, 1980). He writes regularly in the international press on global change and international security affairs. He has appeared frequently on BBC, CNN, ABC and other news programs around the world. According to Mroz, his life’s work to make the world a more peaceful place is a realization of a lifetime goal that crystallized as a high school freshman when his father asked his three sons “What do you want to be when you grow up?” This middle son responded “a global change agent.” And the journey continues. Mr. Mroz is originally from Westfield. We are delighted to welcome him back to share his unique perspective on foreign relations in the world in which we live today.

On June 3, acclaimed Jazz duo Ellen Schwartz & Roger Bruno of Too Human will grace us with their unique blend of jazz, R&B, Latin and folk music. Schwartz and Bruno play guitar and percussion, as well as sing and write their own songs. Too Human has had their songs recorded by many major recording artists including Anne Murray, Cher, Nancy Wilson, Teddy Pendergrass and Pat Benatar. Their songs have also been performed on TV shows, including Fame and General Hospital. They have been touring steadily since 1998 at libraries, schools, festivals, arts councils, civic events, museums and other events. Highlights have been the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, The Bottom Line in NYC, The Bushnell Theater in Hartford, CT and Mechanics Hall in Worcester, MA. With humor, passion and high quality musicianship Too Human presents

an entertaining and informative concert that appeals to a wide audience. Their website is located at <http://www.toohumanonline.com/>

The public is cordially invited to attend all of the programs in the Spring Lecture Series, which is sponsored in part by the Friends of the Westfield Athenaeum. All programs will take place in the Lang auditorium at 7:00 p.m. For more information, call the Westfield Athenaeum at 413-562-0716.