

campus currents

Joyce Carol Oates Urges Seniors to Rely on Their Own Judgment in a 'Schizoid Time'



NATIONAL BOOK AWARD WINNER and prolific author Joyce Carol Oates brought graduating seniors a dose of reality therapy in her commencement address on May 28. She told MHC's 590 seniors that they share with other young people across the country the "common experience of coming of age in a schizoid time," in which war, political and business scandals, and other distressing events must be dealt with while plunging into postcollege life. "So this is the great adventure before you, establishing the personal, moral, intellectual, and spiritual life in a schizoid time," she said.

Student speaker Mollie McDermott '06 echoed Oates's comments about the unpredictability of modern life. "No

matter how much planning we do, no matter how well organized we are, we can't change the fact that tomorrow is unpredictable, unrehearsed, and that much of it will be out of our hands," she noted. However, she urged her sister graduates to accept and embrace such uncertainties.

Oates also encouraged the seniors to press ahead despite the challenges awaiting them. "There is an expectation that a younger generation has the opportunity to redeem the crimes and failings of their elders and would have the strength and idealism to do so," she noted. Doing this will require faith in yourself and persistence, Oates said, citing a litany of famous authors who struggled in college or endured



repeated rejection but ultimately achieved literary success. "America is a wonderful country, but its media focus upon winners, stars, and celebrities doesn't really prepare us for living in the world ... We must rely upon our own judgment and our own sense of self-worth," she said.

She also let seniors in on a little secret: professors really do care about their students. "We never tell you that we actually love you. It's one of those secrets that's embarrassing to acknowledge, but we do love our students," she said.

Oates, who is Roger S. Berlind Distinguished Professor of the Humanities at Princeton University, was awarded an honorary doctorate at the MHC commencement ceremonies. So were Kitty Eliopoulos Kyriacopoulos '45, mining entrepreneur and philanthropist; Hilda Chen Apuy '44, a Costa Rican-Chinese scholar who received Costa Rica's highest cultural award in 2004; Eric Reeves, professor of English language and literature at Smith College and an activist for human rights in Sudan; and Eugenie C. Scott, execu-

tive director of the National Center for Science Education.

In all, 590 seniors received bachelor of arts degrees, and one master's degree and twenty-one certificates for international students were awarded at the 169th annual commencement.

Grant Will Boost Number of Low-Income Students at MHC

MOUNT HOLYOKE will markedly increase the opportunities for high-achieving, low-income students to enroll thanks to a \$779,000 grant from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation. The grant will enable the college to expand its commitment to enrolling traditionally underrepresented students from community colleges and to strengthen its established partnership with Holyoke Community College.

"This generous grant goes directly to addressing the biggest challenge that we face in higher education today: access to top-quality education for low-income students," said President Joanne V. Creighton.

Beginning this fall, MHC will implement the Community College Transfer Initiative. This program will increase enrollment of transfer students from community colleges by ten students every year for four years, through enhanced outreach efforts at Holyoke Community College and other institutions.

Other aspects of the program include creating a five-week quantitative reasoning course for HCC students, a peer mentoring program, and an outreach effort to women veterans of the Gulf, Iraq, and Afghanistan wars who wish to continue their educations.

Of the nation's thirty top liberal arts colleges, Mount Holyoke has the second-highest percentage—more than 20 percent—of students receiving Pell Grants, federal funds designated for low-income students. On average, there are 200 community college transfer students at Mount Holyoke, representing 10 percent of the student population. The majority enroll in the Frances Perkins Program for nontraditional-aged students.

Students' Civil Liberties Resolution Read in U.S. Senate

A STUDENT resolution to uphold civil liberties on campus in response to the USA Patriot Act was read on the floor of the U.S. Senate in March by Wisconsin Democratic Senator Russell Feingold, in anticipation of the law's renewal.

The MHC Student Government Association last winter approved the

resolution, proposed by the college chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union. Generally, it seeks to protect the civil rights and liberties of all MHC students, but particularly those of Middle Eastern, Muslim, or South Asian descent. In part, it calls for the college's public safety department to refuse to search a residence without a warrant, and not to hand over to local police a person who might later be placed in federal custody. To read the entire resolution, visit www.mtholyoke.edu/org/acu/resolution.html.



Newsbriefs

Ancient Coins, Darfur Topics of Student Web Sites

STUDENTS IN Professor of Art History Bettina A. Bergmann's 300-level seminar last fall studied ancient Roman coins and helped prepare an exhibit for the Mount Holyoke Art Museum. ("Heads and Tales: Portraits and Propaganda on Classical Coins" runs through the fall.) Students also constructed their own museum on the Web. Anyone can access this numismatic treasure thanks to the Virtual Museum, a software program that allows students to import scanned images and place them in "virtual" galleries. Check out the exhibition at <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/courses/bbergman/arth310-f05/index.html#>.

A more contemporary event is the topic of a Web site created by Rachel M. Sposato '07. Outlining the genocidal killings in Darfur, Sudan, for Professor of Politics Vincent Ferraro's World Politics class in 2004, Sposato never expected the extraordinary response it received. The U.S. Library of Congress recently sought her permission to include the Web site in its

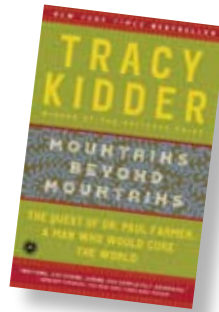


A classical-era coin from Syracuse, Sicily

collection of Internet materials related to the crisis in Darfur. Sposato's site explains the history of the genocides and shares the experience of one woman from Darfur. She is also working with the Red Cross to set up a donation system for victims. Visit her insightful Web site at <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/~rmsposat/index.html>.

A Life Based on Hope

NEXT YEAR'S "common read," assigned to all incoming first-year students, will be *Mountains Beyond Mountains*, by Tracy Kidder, the Pulitzer Prize-winning author. The book is an inspiring chronicle of the life of Dr. Paul Farmer, Harvard professor, MacArthur "genius grant" winner, and world-class Robin Hood. His life demonstrates how radical change—specifically, curing infectious diseases in the world's most challenging places, including Haiti—can occur if equal doses of knowledge, unmitigated persistence, and hope are applied. Kidder will be on campus September 14 to speak about the book. Incoming students, faculty members, and orientation leaders each receive a free copy of the book, which will also be available in the library. Alumnae clubs are encouraged to read the book, too.



Tidbits

- International students, students studying foreign languages, and folks just plain tired of broadcast network news can now access **sixteen international channels** on campus television sets with cable access. From African Independent TV to Sony Television Asia to Al Jazeera, it's a cinch to stay in touch with your home country or area of interest.

- This year's Sally Montgomery Award, celebrating **community-based learning**, was presented to Emily H. Morgan '06, Tracy S. Zhu '08, Kristine M. Swann '06, and Aileen E. Suzara '06 for their urban ecology project, "The Right to Breath: Air Quality Monitoring in Holyoke, Massachusetts." The project was in response to the high rate of asthma in that city.

- The student newspaper, *The Mount Holyoke News*, is now available online. Check out the voices of these uncommon journalists at themhnews.com.

- The MHC Board of Trustees approved a **5.1 percent increase in tuition, room, and board** for 2006–07. The annual tab will be \$44,120.

- In a March op-ed piece in the *Los Angeles Times* that was syndicated across the country, President Joanne Creighton discussed the **failings in standardized testing** above and beyond the College Board's recent grading blunder.

- Coincidentally, the college has ended its five-year, Mellon-supported study of the impact of making SATs optional in admission. "Our research confirmed that we can make good admission decisions whether or not students submit standardized test scores," says Jane Brown, vice president for enrollment and college relations. "There is no meaningful difference in academic performance between students who submitted test scores and those who did not." MHC will remain SAT-optional in the admission process.

Senior Symposium Highlights Diverse Passions

UPWARDS OF EIGHTY-FIVE students from all disciplines showcased their

Association Programs are for Students, Too

More than forty alumnae and 130 seniors gathered in March for the Senior Fair. Alumnae representing various career paths and graduate schools offered seniors advice about job hunting, networking, and postgraduation expectations. The Alumnae Association also cosponsors the annual Junior Banquet, the Networking 101 workshop for sophomores, and a special first-year event. The goal of these events is for students to build networking and mentoring relationships with alumnae, says Associate Director of Campus Programs Maya D'Costa, who works with various college offices and class boards to create events relevant to each class's needs. Students said they enjoyed listening to the different experiences of alumnae and found it reassuring that a Mount Holyoke degree yields so many options.





Immigration Stand

Students gathered in support of illegal immigrants on May 1 as part of a national boycott against stricter immigration laws. Some of the estimated 125 rally participants on Skinner Green taped signs to their backs declaring “Immigrants are Humans” and listened to a number of student and faculty speakers.

intellectual passions, scholarly research, and independent projects at the first annual Senior Symposium in April. Building on the idea of public presentations required of students majoring in the sciences, this year’s symposium reflected “the diversity of student and faculty interest and mirrors in small the scope of human achievement and curiosity,” said Donal O’Shea, dean of the faculty and vice president for academic affairs.

Presenters were allotted fifteen minutes to divulge the ways in which their questions, theories, and conclusions about their projects evolved during the academic year. On topics including water and forest quality in the Quabbin Reservoir, the visual acuity of jumping spiders, and poetry and literary indebtedness, seniors noted why and how they had been drawn to their projects and the insights and conclusions they had come to understand.

“I am proud of these students, who have built upon the vibrant intellectual foundation that Mary Lyon laid almost 170 years ago,” said MHC President Joanne V. Creighton. Well attended by students, parents, and members of the faculty, the symposium also

Center Stage

While the end of senior year may feel like a series of one-liners for many, Biz Wells ’06 spent one of her last weekends as a Mount Holyoke student in an actual vaudeville show.

But this production—*Side Dish: A Vaudeville Show*—is just part of Wells’s vibrant four-year stint both onstage and backstage at Mount Holyoke. In her time here, Wells has impressed audiences, professors, and fellow students in her quest to plumb the depths of theater and film, both theory and performance, even going to the other side of the world to do it.

“Biz is highly intelligent, very talented, and a wonderful woman. Hands down, she is one of the most gifted students to come through Mount Holyoke in years,” says Joyce Devlin, professor of theatre arts. The rest of the theatre department agreed, giving Wells (and Kristy Matero ’06) the Genevieve Schmich Memorial Award, for “a senior or seniors whose activities have lent most distinction to the benefit of the college.”

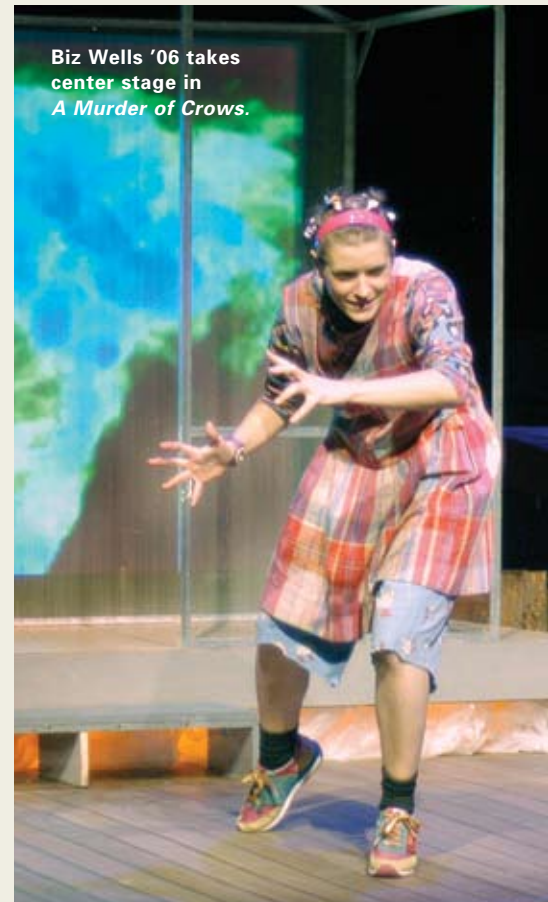
Wells also is interested in film, and graduates with a special major, film studies and theatre. In her junior year, she went to Hyderabad, India, to study the “Bollywood” film industry. Wells was eager to study a vibrant film culture, she says, pointing out that each year India produces three times the number of films produced in the United States.

When asked about her accomplishments and work while a student here, Wells first suggests that a fellow student, Ryan Berman, get the attention. Wells juggled duties as assistant director of Berman’s one-man show, *In-Patient*, while she was learning the finer points of clowning in *Side Dish*. The show gets its name from traditional vaudeville, in which the main acts were called entrées, with smaller acts, or side dishes, serving as bridges between them. Wells is one of three clowns in the show, who do a series of vignettes that all knit together, although there is no official plot, she says.

“This is my first time as an actual clown,” Wells says. Comedy is much harder to do than tragedy, she adds, because “comedy has to be reinvented.” An audience can watch a lovers’ tragedy again and again, “but the banana peel only works three times, and then it’s not funny anymore.” People can withstand bad drama, she says, but bad comedy “is like death.”

Wells will continue her exploration of theater after graduation when she starts an acting apprenticeship with the prestigious Actors Theatre of Louisville.—E.C.W.

Student Edge



Biz Wells '06 takes center stage in *A Murder of Crows*.

was supported by foundations, College programs, and research centers.

Students Earn Prestigious Academic Awards

SEVEN STUDENTS have won prestigious fellowships this year, including Josephine R. Giles '07 and Caitlin E. Scott '07, who are among this year's winners of the coveted Goldwater Scholarship. The award is designed to encourage outstanding students to pursue careers in mathematics, the natural sciences, and engineering.

Giles, a resident of Houston, Texas, has been doing immunology research with Sharon A. Stranford, assistant professor of biological sciences, and plans to

study immunology at the doctoral level. Scott, from Moraga, California, works with Maria A. Gomez, assistant professor of chemistry. She is planning graduate work in computational chemistry.

Viviane S. Callier '06 has won a Churchill Fellowship, one of only ten awarded this year, and Mount Holyoke's first ever. The fellowship will allow Callier to study at Cambridge University's Churchill College in England next year. She plans to return to America the following year for graduate school in biology.

Melissa A. Yasinow '06, Katie B. Flachs '06, Edana A. Kleinhans '03, and Lindsay R. Chura '06 each received a Fulbright Fellowship to travel and work abroad next year. Yasinow plans to teach

English in South Korea. Flachs will go to Canada to work on a project involving the delivery of health services to immigrant groups. Kleinhans will teach in Germany, and Chura will investigate the role of diet in relation to female infertility at the reproductive clinic at the University of Adelaide in South Australia.

Sport Shorts

Alumnae Association Scholar-Athlete Award

FIELD HOCKEY player Katie Marquis '06 received the Alumnae Association Scholar-Athlete Award at the annual athletic awards celebration. Marquis, a

Raising Our Public Voices

It's been more than thirty years since women took to the streets demanding equality. But for all the progress since then on the home front and in the workplace, the dearth of women's public voices remains deafening, says Martha Ackmann, senior lecturer in gender studies. She points to numerous national studies showing that men are still relied

on as sources for news stories twice as often as women. Women make up less than 20 percent of newspaper columnists, and are commentators on Sunday morning news shows only 10 percent of the time.

"There is a culture of expertise that equates wisdom with men," says Ackmann, who adds that the lack of female voices in public debate ultimately lessens confidence in women's leadership abilities. In the next eighteen months, she hopes to help turn the tide. Thanks to a grant

from the National Institute of Technology in Liberal Education, Ackmann has engaged technology experts, faculty, and students at MHC and four other women's colleges in developing ways to project the voices of undergraduate women through classes, videoconferences, workshops, and the Internet. Students will create a Web site including podcasts, digital

storytelling, and photography on a wide variety of public-policy matters and current events.

The participation of alumnae whose voices are already part of contemporary public discourse is an integral component of the project, which includes MHC, Smith, Wellesley, Barnard, and Bryn Mawr colleges. At the March kickoff event, Cassandra L. West '79, editor of "WomanNews" at the *Chicago Tribune*, shared her editorial experiences. In a first-year seminar Ackmann taught last fall, Priscilla Painton '80, executive editor of *Time* magazine, and Jane "Bambi" Bachman Wulf '76, chief of reporters, met with students for four hours at *Time's* headquarters. "We still live in a world in which gender bias undeniably exists," says Ackmann. "To present students with these great role models excites and inspires them to speak up."

This fall, at least three classes at each participating college will devote an assignment to some aspect of Ackmann's project, and alumnae journalists will present their experiences in January videoconferences. By spring 2007, the student Web site will go live with content from the blogging exercises, course work, and workshops. Ackmann hopes these efforts will result in a permanent institutional collaboration.

Ackmann has focused her academic career on women whose stories have been pushed into the shadows of American history. These include her book on the first women astronaut candidates, *The Mercury 13*, and a new project on female baseball players in the Negro leagues of the 1950s. With her own public voice very much in tune, Ackmann hopes her work will stimulate students to fulfill one of the College's primary missions—purposeful engagement with the world. Check out her Web site at www.marthaackmann.com.

—M.H.B.

Brainstorms

Martha Ackmann with a few of her intellectual interests.





Alumnae Association Scholar-Athlete Award winner Kathryn Marquis '06

four-year starting forward on the field hockey team, compiled

a career total of 77 points (34 goals and 9 assists), ranking her third in the college record books. She was a two-time NEWMAC All-Conference Second Team honoree and a 2005 NFHCA All-Region Second Team selection. Academically, Marquis received the Sarah Williston Scholar Award in 2003, the Robert P. Sibley Prize for English in 2002, and was named to the NEWMAC Academic All-Conference Team for three straight years. She graduated with a double major in English and Spanish.

Spring Sports Roundup

ALL SIX SPRING SPORTS programs earned postseason bids at the team or individual level. The **riding** team led the effort by winning the Intercollegiate Horse Show Association National Championship for the third time in MHC history. In individual competition, Danielle Johnson '07 walked away with the Walk-Trot National Champion title,

and Nathalie Cooper '06 earned Open Flat Reserve Champion honors. The tennis team earned a 5-4 spring record, and tennis player Angela Horner '09 was one of thirty-two athletes selected to compete at the NCAA Division III Singles Championships. The lacrosse team ended the regular season with a 7-9 record and upset Wellesley in the first round of the NEWMAC Championship, 15-8, before falling to second-seeded Wheaton College in the semifinals, 12-15. Caitlin Taylor '06 was one of forty Division III lacrosse players chosen to compete in the North-South Senior All-Star Game held at Johns Hopkins University. The crew team defeated national qualifier Smith College and placed second at the NEWMAC Rowing Championship; four boats also qualified for the ECAC Division III Rowing Championships. Members of the track and field team achieved many personal records throughout the season, and several athletes qualified for post-season competition, including five ECAC Championship bids: Grace Zeigler '08 in the long jump, Valerie Shepard '06 in the 400m hurdles, Meghan Lynch '08 in the 5k, Anna Zimmerman '09 in the 10k, and Charisse Pickron '08, Jen Bourdeau '08, Stephanie Albero '07, and Zeigler in the 4x100m relay.



MHC Faculty Honored for Outstanding Work

Four Mount Holyoke faculty members were honored for outstanding teaching and scholarship in April. Carolyn Penney Collette '67, professor of English language and literature and chair of medieval studies (center right), and Vincent Ferraro, professor of politics (left), received the Mount Holyoke College Faculty Prize for Teaching. Janice Hudgings, associate professor of physics (center left), and Donald Weber, professor of English (right), received the Meribeth E. Cameron Faculty Prize for Scholarship.

By the Numbers

The Building Blocks of Learning

We've lived in the buildings at Mount Holyoke, studied and learned in them, and told stories about them. To add to your next discussion of campus architecture, here are some facts that may surprise you.

Zero: the number of original architectural plans of the Mandelles still at the college (They were stolen.)

One: the number of locked "ghost rooms" in Wilder. In truth, the room was formerly used for storage and was not a dorm room because of the chimney standing in the middle of it. It's now closed altogether as repairs continue on Wilder's roof, which was hit by a falling limb from a beech tree last winter.



Two: the width in inches of the dorm-room walls in Prospect

Eight: the width in inches of the walls in Brigham

Fourteen: the number of towers on campus, at Mary Woolley (four), Abbey Chapel (three), and Mary Lyon, Clapp, Williston Library, Miles-Smith Library, Dwight, Kendade, and Safford

Twenty-six: the number of cement stick figures parading around the Rooke Theatre building façade (above)

Ninety-one: the height in feet of Clapp tower, which also features the campus's highest classroom, at fifty feet

105: the total number of vertical feet cold water travels between buildings to provide air-conditioning

Countless: the number of burnt bricks, foundation stones, shards of crockery, and other artifacts and remnants remaining from the original Seminary building that are scattered around campus, underground