

Mary Baldwin College Alumnae/i Book Club

September 2007

What we are reading in
2007/2008:

Apr 5: *Handmaiden's Tale* by
Margaret Atwood

May 3: *The Glass Castle* by
Jeanette Walls

June 7: *The Bean Trees* by
Barbara Kingsolver

July 5: *The Last
Witchfinder* by James
Morrow

Aug 2: *Snow Flower and the
Secret Fan* by Lisa See

Sept 6: *Tortilla Curtain* by
T.C. Boyle

Oct 4: *The Girls Who Went
Away* by Ann Fessler

Nov 1: *The Same Sweet
Girls* by Cassandra King

Dec 6: *The Secret Agent* by
Joseph Conrad

Jan 3: *I Got Somebody in
Staunton* by William Henry
Lewis

Feb. 7: *Love* by Toni
Morrison

Mar 6: *The Kite Runner* by
Khaled Hosseini

Apr 3: *The Lovely Bones* by
Alice Sebold

What's happening at Mary Baldwin College? Part 2

As promised last month here is a recap about the dining venues at MBC taken from the August issue of the Campus Comments. The article was written by Hannah Barrow, Editor-in-Chief of the Campus Comments. I am sure most of you know by now that our beloved Jenny Riggs retired last year. There is a new Director of Dining Services, Mary VanNortwick. So what changes have been made? Well here they are!!

- There are new cash registers in all three dining venues. They are high-tech tallying devices, specifically designed to count meals when MBC ID cards are swiped. This information will help Food Services keep track of individual meal counts, when and where students are eating.
- Hunt Dining Hall now has "Eat and Meet" places on the mezzanine, new artwork in Hunt West and longer hours to accommodate athletes, VWIL, and other groups on campus.
- A new Cook 'n Go station allows students to make their own omelet, waffle, crepe, or pancake at breakfast.
- The Market Carvery is where to go for comfort foods and the Baja Grill will focus on fresh foods.
- There is a new line of non-meat specialty salads, called Terre Ve located in Hunt East.
- Regular and soy milk options are available in cartons and filtered water is now available in all dining venues as well.
- On the weekends, students now have the choice to eat at the Nuthouse which will be open until 11pm on Fridays and 7pm - 11pm on Saturdays.
- The Nuthouse also has a new menu which includes fun foods (hot dogs, hot pretzels, popcorn, nachos, sandwiches, and soup). You can also enjoy Edy's ice cream, floats and other cold treats.
- The Starbucks line is also growing in include teas and iced coffee.
- Ham and Jam's menu also got a makeover. Students can now order new specialty salads.
- At dinner, a hot entrée of home-style cooking will be available.
- The panini grill is back at the Pub, along with a pizza oven and smoothie machine.
- Daily menus are posted online along with nutritional information.
- A new retail line is now available (not included in Room and Board). Vitamin water, nut and candy bars, vegetarian meal bars and other items can be purchased in the Nuthouse by students, faculty and guests.

We are on the MBC website!!
www.mbc.edu/alumnae

Join us online!!
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MBCAlumBookClub>

If you are in the Richmond, VA area we would love for you to join us! All meeting times are 7pm and last approximately 1 hour.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Theresa Cash Lewis '99 at tlewis41203@yahoo.com or the Alumnae/i office at 1-800-763-7359.



Your Guide to the Classics: *Beowulf*

Only through a series of extraordinary escapes has *Beowulf* come down to us. In the late 900s, two anonymous scribes wrote the story on parchment using West Saxon, a Germanic dialect dominant for literary composition in England at the time.

Beowulf was bound together with four other works in Old English: three in prose (*The Passion of St. Christopher*, *The Wonders of the East*, *Alexander's Letter to Aristotle*), and *Judith*, a poem. *Judith* and *Beowulf* are composed in the unrhymed, four-beat alliterative style characteristic of Old English poetry and are among the earliest wholly vernacular works in the English canon.

Why these five works were considered of a piece ten centuries ago is one of the mysteries surrounding *Beowulf*, although the presence of monsters in each suggests that perhaps this was the common thread. It may be this everlasting human interest in monster stories that initiated *Beowulf's* survival.

Today *Beowulf* rests safely in the British Library in London, along with what remains of Cotton's books. Miraculously, one might say. In 1731, the Cottonian Library caught fire and much of the collection was destroyed. The codex containing *Beowulf* was scorched. Its pages, made brittle by the fire, continue to crumble. Fortunately, in the early nineteenth century Grímur Jónsson Thorkelin, a linguist and antiquary from Iceland, made two transcriptions. Thorkelin's copies preserved evidence of now missing or faded words.

If our possession today of the manuscript containing *Beowulf* is a story of good luck and mystery, the tale of the poem's making -- as much as we can piece together -- seems similar. A variety of evidence suggests that *Beowulf* began as an oral poem, passed by singers of one generation to the next. It's a good guess *Beowulf* would have disappeared along with those singers themselves if someone had not caused the poem to be written down around A.D. 1000.

No one knows who "wrote" *Beowulf*. Like all early oral poetry, it had as many authors as singers who performed it. The singers may have performed it when warriors gathered in meadhalls to celebrate their prowess at gatherings like those described in *Beowulf*. In fact, it is from this poem that we derive many of the details for our reconstructions of Anglo-Saxon social life.

Interlaced with the stories of *Beowulf's* battles with monsters are tales of human struggle and less than exemplary people: Heremod, the wicked king who hoarded people, and put many of his own to death; Modthryth, the queen who arbitrarily executed those who displeased her; and Hrothulf, the treacherous usurper-in-waiting.

The struggles the poem depicts are of the good against evil: strength of sinew, heart and spirit, truth and light, pitted against dark power that gives no quarter as it shifts from shape to shape. That the darkness (be it Grendel, a dragon, or treachery, greed, and pride) is familiar only renders it more frightening -- and the more instructive.

Excerpts from *Why Read Beowulf?* By Robert F. Yeager

<http://www.neh.gov/news/humanities/1999-03/yeager.html>