

# Common Ground

Published for the community by Agnes Scott College

February 1998

## ASC Arbor Day brings 'fringe' benefits

Now's the time to mark calendars for Arbor Day.

The community is invited to join Agnes Scott at 10 a.m. on Friday, Feb. 20, as the College continues its annual participation in Arbor Day. The third Friday of February is reserved each year as Arbor Day in Georgia, and each year, Agnes Scott celebrates it by planting a new tree on campus and giving away seedlings. This year, the College will plant a Nuttall Oak, a tree native to Georgia but not present on the Agnes Scott campus. The oak will replace an older tree, now in decline, on the north side of Presser Hall, which is located on the south side of Buttrick Drive, which cuts through campus along the George and Irene Woodruff Quadrangle.

"Arbor Day is the only holiday that celebrates the future," says Victoria Lambert, assistant director of Agnes Scott's physical plant. "For years, we have been identifying trees in decline through the College's inventory, and we've been planting replacement trees nearby."

Prior to each Arbor Day celebration, Lambert gives special consideration to See ARBOR DAY, page 2

**David Dorfman**

**Dance:** The Athletes Project (Out of Time), page 2.

**Women's History Month:** ASC plans four free events, page 3.



"The Lion Weeps" by Ammena Ahuja of India was part of "The Right to Write" exhibit curated by H.R.H. Princess Wijdan Ali, Ph.D., of Jordan.

## Jordanian princess is guest art history lecturer

Is it art for art's sake or can creativity be an expression of religion?

**Her Royal Highness Princess Wijdan Ali, Ph.D.**, of Jordan will provide insight into these questions at a free public lecture on Monday, Feb. 9, probing the question "What Is Islamic Art?" The lecture will begin at 7 p.m. in Winter Theater of Agnes Scott's Dana Fine Arts Building. H.R.H. Princess Wijdan Ali's work rep-



Princess  
Wijdan Ali

resents an attempt to close the cultural gap between Arabs, Islam and the West, and she has dedicated her work as

writer, artist and educator to the pursuit of peace in the Middle East.

In 1996, Her Royal Highness curated at Agnes See PRINCESS, page 3

# New York's David Dorfman Dance puts new focus on athletics

Come see at Agnes Scott what occurs when dancers and athletes work together.

Local athletes will perform with New-York based David Dorfman Dance on Friday, Feb. 13, and Saturday, Feb. 14.

Sponsored by Agnes Scott College in collaboration with Dancers Collective, David Dorfman Dance will present "Out of Season (The Athletes Project)," a piece that involves the six-member company and 17 athletes from the Atlanta community, including some from Agnes Scott.

Each performance begins at 8 p.m. in Gaines Auditorium of Presser Hall. Tickets are \$12 general admission and \$8 for senior citizens, students and working artists.

Dorfman's "Out of Season" first premiered in 1993 in Burlington, Vt., and since its debut, the collaborative piece has

been performed throughout the United States and Europe.

Last November, David Dorfman, an ex-baseball player turned dancer, conducted an open workshop at Agnes Scott for all Atlanta athletes interested in (or merely curious about) the project. From that audition, approximately 17 volunteers were chosen for the piece.

This February, Dorfman and his company will return to the College for two weeks to work with the volunteers to combine sequences of movement and theatrical staging developed in other performances of the project with new material created on and for the Atlanta athletes.

Most of the athletes, whose athletic prowess range from cross country to tai chi and from rock climbing to gymnastics, vary widely in age, training and social make-up, and many have never before performed on stage.



"Job," David Dorfman Dance

For more information or to purchase tickets, call the Agnes Scott information line at 404-638-6430.

## ARBOR DAY

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what kind of tree to plant and where. Across campus, she points to unique trees with special meaning, especially because they are Arbor Day trees. The distinctive feature of Nuttall Oaks is that their leaves, like maple leaves, retain their color even as they fall to the ground. Most oak leaves turn brown prior to dropping.

## Agnes Scott offers physical activities facilities for community use

If you are looking for a convenient place to walk, run, work on your tennis game or get in a few laps in the pool, Agnes Scott's athletic facilities are available.

The College's tennis courts and Gellerstedt track and field are available for use from 5 p.m. until dark, unless they are being used for a previously scheduled function.

The College's pool is open to the community through semester-long memberships: \$70 for individuals, \$100 for couples and \$125 for families. For more information, call **Pat Inglis**, physical activities facility coordinator at (404)-638-6471.

## PRINCESS

Continued from page 1

Scott "The Right to Write," an exhibition of Islamic calligraphic art. During the exhibition, she met on campus with students, faculty and staff to discuss Islamic art and art in general.

During her visit this year, she will lecture, in addition to topics at her public events, on "The Role of Women in Islam" and "Religion and Politics." For Agnes Scott's faculty, she will present a seminar on Islamic civilization.

H.R.H. Princess Wijdan, an artist, educator, diplomat and writer, is the founder of Jordan's Royal Society of Fine Arts and the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts (Amman), under the patronage of Her Majesty the Queen (Queen Noor).

She has organized several other exhibitions as well as "The Right to Write." The 1989 exhibition, "Contemporary Art from the Islamic World," held in London under the patronage of Crown Prince Hassan of Jordan and the Duke of Kent, was comprised of the artwork of 207 artists from 23 countries and included paintings, graphics, sculptures and ceramics from the Jordan National Gallery. As a painter, Princess Wijdan has held 21 one-person exhibitions and has participated in 40 group exhibitions and bienalles in the Middle East, Europe, North Africa, Asia and the United States.

# Agnes Scott will celebrate Women's History Month

During March, set aside to celebrate Women's History Month, Agnes Scott College will present four events spotlighting six women and their work. All the events are free and open to the public.

**Jane Alexander**, "The Arts in America," Tuesday, March 3, 7 p.m., The Carter Center, One Copenhill Avenue, Atlanta. The event is a cooperative effort of both Agnes Scott College and DeKalb College to mark Women's History Month and to join together to recognize the achievements of women. WXIA-11 Alive news anchor **Kimberley Kennedy**, a 1983 Agnes Scott graduate, will moderate the program with welcomes from **Mary Brown Bullock** and **Jacqueline Belcher**, presidents of Agnes Scott and DeKalb College, respectively.

As the sixth chair of the NEA, Alexander visited more than 200 communities in all 50 states and Puerto Rico, taking up the challenge of President Clinton to "renew America."

**Elaine Pagels**, James Ross McCain Faith and Learning lecturer, Friday, March 6, 10 a.m., Agnes Scott College. Pagels, a professor at Princeton University, is the author of five books, including the bestseller *The Gnostic Gospels*, winner of the National Book Award and the National



Jane Alexander

Book Critics Circle Award. Her most recent book, *The Origin of Satan*, is also a bestseller that postulates that the Satan of orthodox Christianity arose from early contention between competing factions of Christianity.

**Wilma Mankiller**, Saturday, March 7, 8 p.m., Agnes Scott College, Gaines Auditorium. Agnes Scott's Atlanta Semester and its College Events Series will present Wilma Mankiller, former Chief of the Cherokee Nation and recent winner of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, America's highest civilian honor. Drawing from the traditional Cherokee precepts, "We are all interdependent" and "Look forward," Mankiller, as a leader of the Cherokee Nation,

See WOMEN, page 4

## WOMEN

Continued from page 3

has helped bring about a revival of the Native American movement.

**Layli Miller Bashir**, Tuesday, March 10, 4 p.m., Agnes Scott College, Rebekah Scott Hall. Author of the forthcoming book (Bantam Doubleday Dell: March 1998) *Fauziya Kasinga with Layli Miller Bashir, Do They Hear When You Cry?*, Bashir has been a champion of women's rights. A 1993 Phi Beta Kappa Agnes Scott graduate, she has argued cases since her law school days at American University's Washington School of Law.

**Jamaica Kincaid**, March 26-27, Agnes Scott College. For more than a quarter of a century, Agnes Scott College has sponsored a Writers' Festival, featuring nationally known guest writers and a contest in creative writing open to all college students in Georgia. Kincaid's most recent work, *My Brother*, has been nominated for the National Book Award. Her first book, *At the Bottom of the River*, was nominated for the PEN/Faulkner Award and went on to win the Morton Dauwen Zabel Award of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. She won the 1992 Lila Wallace-Readers' Digest Fund's annual writer's award and the 1997 Anisfield Wolf Book Award, which was established 60 years ago to recognize books that illuminate the rich diversity of human cultures.

For more information about any of these events, call (404) 638-6430.

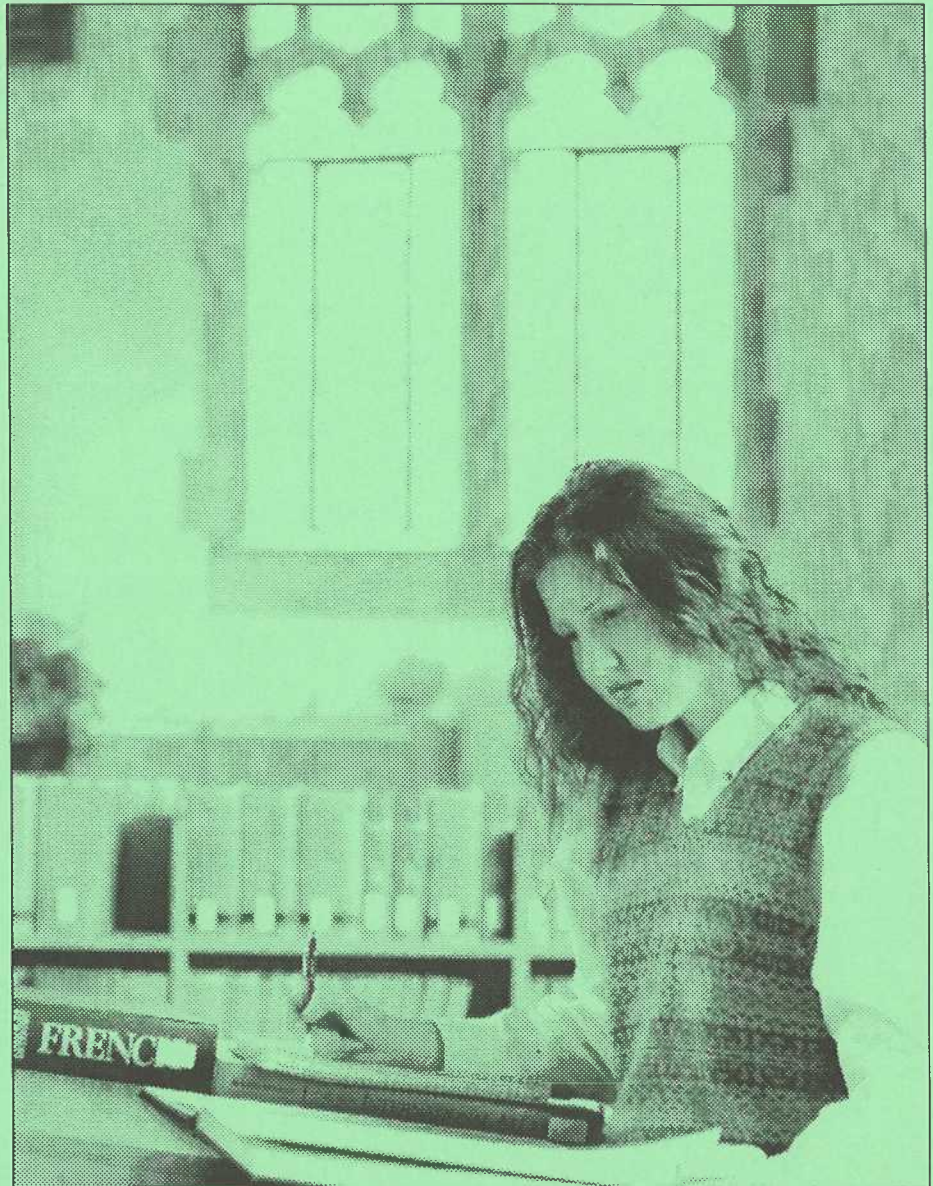


Photo By Stewart Cohen

### *McCain Library is open to community*

The community is welcome to use all resources housed in Agnes Scott's McCain Library, such as reading books from the stacks and perusing reference materials. Checking out materials, however, is limited to area alumnae. McCain Library hours are: Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. to 10:30 p.m.; Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.; and Sunday 1-10:30 p.m. When the College is not in session, the library maintains the same hours as administrative staff, typically 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. For more information, please call McCain Library at (404) 638-6471.

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Questions? Contact Dolly Purvis, manager of news services, by phone at (404) 638-5451 or by e-mail at [dpurvis@agnesscott.edu](mailto:dpurvis@agnesscott.edu).

# Common Ground

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Jamaica Kincaid comes to Writers' Festival, page 3.

Young champion of women's rights will deliver lecture, page 3

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## MAK Historic District

# Proposed design guidelines due in March

Decatur's Historic District ordinance will soon have its first historic test.

It won't be long until design guidelines for the proposed MAK (McDonough-Adam-Kings Highway) Historic District are ready for consideration by the Decatur Historic Preservation Commission and then by the Decatur City Commission. The district, if approved, would be Decatur's first local historic area.

The MAK Historic District,

proposed for local ordinance, is roughly the area between South McDonough Street and Kings Highway, including Adams Street. Some of the older homes on Adams Street were designed by Leila Ross Wilburn, Atlanta's second female architect and an Agnes Scott alumna.

Previously, residents sought to name the historic district in Wilburn's honor. However, city officials requested that residents in charge of creating guidelines

change the name to reflect its geographic location.

The task force, comprised of neighborhood residents and Agnes Scott representatives, has only few more days left in their 60 days allowed to create the guidelines. Once the draft guidelines are finished, they will be presented to the Historic Preservation Commission for approval. Then, the city will

See DISTRICT, Page 2

## 'Pros' meet to discuss campus environment

Julian Keniry, right, of the National Wildlife Federation, and Victoria Lambert, assistant director of Agnes Scott's Physical Plant, met late in February to discuss how the College can implement strategies to increase campus sustainability, environmental friendliness. Keniry, a 1989 Agnes Scott graduate, also spoke to students, faculty and staff as part of the Atlanta Science Center for Women's week-long focus on creating sustainable.



Kathryn Kolb photo

## District

Continued from page 1

host a public hearing prior to the guidelines' submission to the City Commission for approval.

Lyn Menne, executive director of the Downtown Development Authority who has worked with historic preservation projects, is volunteer staff with the task force and says the guidelines should be forwarded to the Historic Preservation Commission this month and could reach the City Commission as early as May.

During task force deliberations, a main focus has been defining exactly what a local historic district means, since no precedent exists in Decatur.

The design guidelines, the heart of an ordinance pertaining to a local historic district, are meant to protect the character of the neighborhood, Menne says.

"The task force is working to develop ways to protect the neighborhood without such an oppressive design process in which no one wants to take part," she adds.

Any new construction or significant outer renovation would be governed by the design guidelines.

"Design guidelines are mainly for new or in-fill construction," Menne says. "It's not a big stick against people who own a house and want to renovate it. What these

*'This has been a good process and a chance for Agnes Scott and our neighbors to talk about substantive issues. I've certainly learned a great deal about historic districts, not just in Decatur but nationally.'*

— Agnes Scott's Dean of Students Gué Hudson

guidelines will say is that a two-story brick house doesn't belong among bungalows and that, if the neighborhood's character calls for it, houses should be designed to front on streets not to face in on cul-de-sacs."

Menne likens design guidelines by local ordinance to restrictive covenants, popular in many suburban neighborhoods, that govern types of mailboxes, for instance. A key difference, however, is that individuals are not "the arbiters of good taste."

"In private subdivisions, sometimes people who become the arbiters of good taste are neighbors and it can become very subjective," Menne notes. "In this case,

you have third-party review by the Historic Preservation Commission. The task force is working with very strict and objective guidelines, and the city commission will provide the last review."

Although design guidelines by local ordinance have been held constitutional by the Supreme Court, they cannot apply to individual tastes such as paint color. In fact, they are more like building codes enacted to preserve and maintain rather than to dictate individual choice.

Ultimately, the guidelines could prove useful to residents working to maintain the value of their homes, Menne says.

"This provides a level of protection," she continues. "The research is clear that design guidelines don't make property values go down; in fact, they often go up."

Central to the process is education, according to Menne, and the learning curve has already been broached by task force members.

"This has been a good process and a chance for Agnes Scott and our neighbors to talk about substantive issues," says Dean of Students Gué Hudson, one of two college representatives serving on the task force. "I've certainly learned a great deal about historic districts, not just in Decatur but nationally."

## Agnes Scott offers physical activities facilities for community use

If you are looking for a convenient place to walk, run, work on your tennis game or get in a few laps in the pool, Agnes Scott's athletic facilities are available.

The College's tennis courts and

Gellerstedt Track and Field are available for use from 5 p.m. until dark, unless they are being used for a previously scheduled function. The College's pool is open to the community through semester-

long memberships: \$70 for individuals, \$100 for couples and \$125 for families. For more information, call **Pat Inglis**, physical activities facility coordinator, at (404) 638-6471.

## Young champion of women's rights returns to ASC

It hasn't taken Layli Miller Bashir, a 1993 Phi Beta Kappa Agnes Scott graduate, long to make her mark on the world. Author of the forthcoming book (Bantam Doubleday Dell: March 1998) *Fauziya Kasinga with Layli Miller Bashir, Do They Hear When You Cry?*, Bashir has been a champion of women's rights, especially those of women subjected to tribal female genital mutilation.

Bashir, as part of Agnes Scott's Atlanta Semester: a Program in Women, Leadership and Social Change, will present a lecture, "The Fight Against Genital Mutilation," at the Decatur campus on Tuesday, March 10, at 4 p.m. The program is free and open to the public and will be held in the Katharine Woltz Reception Room of Rebekah Scott Hall.

While only a student in law school, Bashir represented Kasinga, a young woman from Togo, before an immigration judge and assisted in the appeal of a high-profile case involving a woman's right to receive refuge in the United States from a tribal genital mutilation. The case was the first, by the Board of Immigration Appeals (the highest appellate immigration tribunal), to recognize female genital mutilation as a basis for asylum. Thus, the widely-publicized case set nationally binding legal precedent and made legal history.

## Kincaid will give free reading at 26th annual Writers' Festival

For more than a quarter of a century, Agnes Scott College has sponsored a Writers' Festival, and this year, Agnes Scott welcomes Jamaica Kincaid, whose most recent work, *My Brother*, has been nominated for the National Book Award.

The Writers' Festival each year features nationally known guest writers and a contest in creative writing open to all college students in Georgia. All events are free and open to the public.

Kincaid's first book, *At the Bottom of the River*, was nominated for the PEN/Faulkner Award and went on to win the Morton Dauwen Zabel Award of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. She won the 1992 Lila Wallace-Readers' Digest Fund annual writer's award and the 1997



Kincaid

Anisfield Wolf Book Award, which was established 60 years ago to recognize books that illuminate the rich diversity of human cultures.

Other writers who will participate in this Writers' Festival are:

- Thylas Moss who has published six volumes of poetry, selections of which are anthologized in *Small Congregations*. Her latest volume of poetry, *Last Chance for the Tarzan Holler*, is due out this February from Persea Books. Her first children's book, *I Want to Be*, was named one of the ten best books for children of 1993 by both *USA Today* and the *Detroit Free Press*. She teaches poetry at the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor) and is currently a MacArthur Foundation Fellow, the first black female poet to be so named.

See **FESTIVAL**, page 4

### Schedule of Events

(All are free and open to the public)

#### Thursday, March 26

4 p.m., Winter Theatre, Jalaine Halsall, poet, Distinguished Alumnae Writer, and Thylas Moss, poet.

8 p.m., Gaines Auditorium, Jamaica Kincaid, fiction writer and essayist.

#### Friday, March 27

10 a.m., Winter Theatre, Sherman Yellen, playwright and screenwriter

## This month's events at Agnes Scott

### ART

All exhibitions will be located in the Dalton Galleries, Dana Fine Arts Building, and are free and open to the public. For more information call (404) 638-6368.

**March 29-May 16**, Annual Student Exhibition. An exhibition of student work featuring senior students.

Opening reception, Sunday, March 29, 2 - 4:30 p.m.

### Music:

For more information, call (404) 638-6430.

**March 8**, Marcena Kinney, piano, 3 p.m., Maclean Auditorium

**March 27**, Music Department, Student Recital, 10 a.m., Maclean Auditorium

**March 27**, Recital: Bonnie Page, flute, 7 p.m., Maclean Auditorium.

## McCain Library is open to community

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When the College is not in session, the library maintains the same hours as administrative staff, typically 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.



Gary Meek photo

## Spring is around the corner

Each year, Agnes Scott's students take to the Woodruff Quadrangle when warm weather arrives. This year, Spring will arrive officially on March 20, and the community is invited to take a stroll through campus to examine many of nature's wonders.

## Festival

### Continued from page 3

• Sherman Yellen, who is a playwright and screenwriter. His newest production, *The Jazz Singer*, is a musical biography of Al Jolson, opening this fall in Boston. His plays include *The Rothschilds*, a musical about the banking family, and *Rex*, a musical written with Richard Rodgers about the life and loves of Henry VIII. Yellen won an Emmy Award for his creation of the PBS mini-series *The Adams Chronicles*, and he wrote the story for the television movie *An*

*Early Frost*, one of the earliest treatments of AIDS on screen.

• Jalaine Halsall, who has published poems in *Black Warrior Review*, *Negative Capability*, *the minnesota review*, and *Kansas Quarterly* among others. Her first book of poetry, *Halfway Up the Stairs*, was published in 1997. Halsall won the Robert Frost Award at Agnes Scott College where she also co-edited the literary magazine, *Aurora*.

For more information about any of these events, call the Agnes Scott College information desk at (404) 638-6430.

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**Movie Talk:** Professor Chris Ames recommends film just out on video, page 4.

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April 1998



## ASC makes donation to Youth Book Fund

Dr. Julie Weisberg, associate professor of education at Agnes Scott, right, joins Emilie Markert, left, president of the Decatur Business Association (DBA), and Ida Love, superintendent of the Decatur City Schools, at the DBA's meeting last month. Weisberg presented on behalf of the College a check for \$600 to support the DBA's Youth Book Fund. Donations to the Youth Book Fund purchase books for economically disadvantaged students. Chris Tiegreen photo.

## \* Bullock names architects for first phase of campus expansion

President Mary Brown Bullock announced this week the selection of the architectural firms for the first phase of the campus expansion. The team includes several of the nation's finest architects, representing the firms of Thompson, Ventulett, Stainback and Associates of Atlanta; Perry, Dean Rogers & Partners of Boston; Shepley, Bulfinch, Richardson & Abbott of Boston; Richard + Wittschiede of Atlanta; and Carol R. Johnson Landscape Architects of Boston.

The team of Perry Dean Rogers & Partners (PDR&P) and Thompson, Ventulett, Stainback &

Associates (TVS&A) was selected for two projects: the McCain Library expansion and the new campus center. PDR&P will lead the design, and TVS&A will manage the projects. Steven M. Foote, FAIA, of PDR&P will lead the library design, and Martha A. Pilgreen, AIA, of PDR&P will lead the campus center design with Charles F. Rogers II, AIA, collaborating. TVS&A's Helen Davis Hatch, AIA, who graduated from Agnes Scott in 1965, will manage both projects.

Shepley, Bulfinch, Richardson & Abbott Architects will design the renovation of Letitia Pate

Evans Dining Hall. Jonathon Ross, AIA, will lead the firm's design team with the assistance of Thomas D. Kearns, AIA, and Sara H. Gardner, AIA, who worked on the campus master plan.

Richard + Wittschiede Architects will design the College's physical plant facilities. Janice N. Wittschiede, AIA, partner, will lead the design team.

Carol R. Johnson Associates will design the campus landscape program. Johnson, chair and president of the firm, will lead the design team assisted by Stacey Bridge, an associate with firm, who will serve as project manager.

## Congratulations Bertie!

South Candler Street resident Bertie Bond, a member of Agnes Scott's class of 1953, will be honored this year by the College's Alumnae Association for her service to the College.

Bond will be honored for helping to organize President Mary Brown Bullock's inauguration in 1996.

She shares the Alumnae Association Award for Service to the College with fellow alumna Mildred Love Petty of Atlanta.

## NBC's Mitchell will speak at Agnes Scott commencement

Perhaps the most exciting moment in the life of the College is commencement. On Saturday, May 16, Agnes Scott's seniors and faculty will don their academic regalia in preparation for the all-important awarding of the degree.

The class of 1998 will be joined by Andrea Mitchell, chief foreign affairs correspondent for NBC, who will give the commencement address.

Mitchell, former chief White House correspondent for NBC, covers the State Department, presidential trips, summits and international crises, drawing upon her experience in foreign policy gained during her White House tours with President Ronald Reagan over two terms.

She is currently the only woman in network television covering foreign policy.

Mitchell joined NBC News in 1978 as a correspondent based in Washington, D.C. She covered the White House from 1981 to 1988, reporting on arms control, the budget, tax reform and the Iran-Contra scandal. She traveled extensively in her coverage of the Reagan

presidency, filing reports from numerous international locations, including Geneva, Iceland and Moscow, sites of summit meetings

between Reagan and then Soviet Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev.

Mitchell also followed the candidacy of Bill Clinton during the 1992 presidential campaign, and reported on the campaigns of all major democratic candidates as chief congressional correspondent. Following the election of Clinton, Mitchell served as chief White House correspondent. She moved to the newly created post of chief foreign affairs correspondent following the 1994 midterm elections.

*(The community is welcome to join Agnes Scott for its commencement. However, space will be reserved for graduates' families and friends. In case of rain, there will be space reserved inside only for graduates and their guests.)*



Mitchell

## ASC invites community to cheer teams

### *Softball: ASC v. Emory*

Agnes Scott's softball team will close its 1998 season at 5 p.m. on Thursday, April 9 when it takes on cross-town rival Emory University. All ASC home games are played at Southeast Athletic Complex, 5845 Hillvale Road, Lithonia.

### *Tennis: Season closes with April home matches*

Agnes Scott takes on Savannah College of Art and Design on Saturday, April 11 at 10 a.m., Oglethorpe on Wednesday, April 15 at 3 p.m. and Centre College on Thursday, April 16 at 3 p.m. All home matches are played on ASC's tennis courts.

## Mark your calendar for Decatur Arts Festival show

Agnes Scott's Dalton Galleries will host this year the Decatur Arts Festival's Visual Arts Show.

The juried show, which includes artists from all over metropolitan Atlanta and surrounding areas, will run May 21-28. More details about its opening will appear in next month's *Common Ground*.

For more information about the Visual Arts Show or the Decatur Arts Festival, call the Decatur Arts Alliance at 404/371-9583.

# ASC hosts numerous cultural events in April

## VISUAL ART

Through May 16, Annual Student Exhibition, an exhibition of student work featuring senior students. Dalton Galleries, Dana Fine Arts Building.

## DANCE

April 23-24, *DancExplosion '98*, a dance production based on all professional choreography. Guest choreographers will include David Dorfman of New York City. 8 p.m. in Gaines Auditorium of Presser Hall. Admission is \$4.

May 4-5, 1998, *Feets of Magic, Spring '98*, featuring student works of dance composition, choreography and dance technique. 7:30 p.m., Studio B, Alston Center. FREE

## MUSIC

*All events are free and open to the public and held in Presser Hall.*

April 19, Junior Recital, Joy Garwood, flute, 7 p.m. Maclean Auditorium.

April 24, Music Department, Student Recital, 10 a.m. Maclean Auditorium.

April 26, Agnes Scott College Community Orchestra Concert, 3 p.m. Gaines Auditorium. J. Lynn Thompson, director.

## Jazz Messengers bring Blakey's legacy

Jazz will be the focus of the final concert in the Agnes Scott College Events Series, featuring "The Jazz Messengers: The Legacy of Art Blakey."

Called "a fire-breathing founding father of jazz drumming," Art Blakey not only had a unique style of drumming that influenced



new generations of jazz drummers, he also had an ear for new talent. His passionate legacy is embodied today in The Jazz Messengers, a school for young musicians that since the 1950s has fostered the talents of the likes of Wynton and Branford Marsalis, Wayne Shorter and Clifford Brown. The school continues to spread Blakey's legacy to new audiences, just as throughout his career, he has

influenced new generations of musicians.

The Jazz Messengers will be on campus on Saturday, April 25, performing at 8 p.m. in Gaines Auditorium of Presser Hall. Tickets are \$12 general admission and \$8 for students and senior citizens. For more information, call Agnes Scott's Information Desk at 404/638-6430.

## THEATER

*All performances will be held in the Winter Theatre, Dana Fine Arts Building at Agnes Scott College. For more information call 404/638-6248.*

April 16-18, *Clowns' Play: A New Version of "Jack and the Beanstalk"* by Reginald F. Bain. A delightful adaptation of the classic children's fairytale "Jack and the Beanstalk" performed by a wacky

troupe of clowns with the assistance of the audience. 9:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. on Thursday & Friday, 2 p.m. on Saturday. Admission is \$3.

May 1-2, *theatreworks '98*. A night of theatre showcasing student endeavors including student-directed one-act plays, capstone projects created by theatre majors and other performances by students in the Department of Theatre and Dance. 8 p.m. Admission is \$3.

# Movie Talk

By DR. CHRISTOPHER AMES  
Professor of English

(Agnes Scott's resident film buff, Chris Ames, provides this weekly column on all things Hollywood and beyond to the College's internal newsletter, Campus Connection.)

As the thunder of the Oscars recedes into a gentle susurrus, we can return to just watching films again. I had planned to write a column this week about the re-release of *Grease* and the sorry state of the American musical film, but I rented some videos this weekend and scrapped the planned column to write one on a different John Travolta film. One video I rented was *In and Out*, just trashy fluff that you forget the moment you see it. The other, though, was the inauspiciously titled *She's So Lovely*. After weeks of hype about what was the best picture of the year, I stumbled across it by chance in a video store.

A word of qualification. I try not to use this column to write "reviews," that is, descriptive and evaluative accounts of current movies. Instead, I try to connect things happening in current cinema with film history, politics and theory. But this week I have to make an exception.

*She's So Lovely* was a long time being made. Director John Cassavetes wrote it in the 1970s for his wife, Gena Rowlands, but it never got made. In 1989, the last year of his life, Cassavetes rewrote it for Sean Penn. Penn, whose career goal is to direct, planned to direct this film, shooting it in gritty black and white. But as he pursued other projects, John Cassavetes's son, Nick, took over the project and shot it (in color) with Penn, Robin Wright (Penn's wife-after Madonna) and Travolta. Rowlands appears in a cameo and Harry Dean Stanton does his usual astute characterization of a barfly.

The same sort of sharp but surprising dialogue Cassavetes was known for in films like *Husbands* and *A Woman Under the Influence* animates this film, a work

built around three unlikable characters. The first is Wright, whom we meet in a brilliant opening scene. Playing Maureen, she's pregnant, and smoking and drinking like there's no tomorrow, bemoaning the absence of her husband, Eddie, whom barroom friends assure her will eventually show up as he always does. She flirts with a drunken neighbor, who later beats her up and rapes her. Through this sequence, Wright is absolutely convincing. No "Princess Bride" here, she is tough-talking, funny and pathetic.

Enter her husband, played by Penn. His dialogue is a bizarre mixture of street talk and poetry. It's not simply the obscenity filled monosyllables of the typical gang-that-couldn't-shoot-straight style movie. Instead, the conversations keep you on edge and surprise you with unexpected insight and wit. We sense that something is wrong with Eddie -- beyond being an unemployed drunk -- but only later do we discover the depths of his psychosis. Penn's performance here is as good as his Oscar-nominated turn in *Dead Man Walking*. Indeed, he is such an original and talented actor that one almost hopes his dreams to "only direct" don't come true.

The movie is about the powerful and destructive love between Maureen and Eddie, an obsessive love that persists in spite of his illness and erratic behavior -- and in spite of his ten-year incarceration in a mental hospital. The second half of the film follows his release. The child Maureen was carrying is now nine. Maureen is married to Joey (Travolta), has two children by him and lives in a comfortable middle class house. The film examines what happens to this family when Eddie returns and Maureen asserts her undying love for him. Travolta's performance keeps pace with the superb efforts of Wright and Penn. Helped by the original and quirky script, he comes across as a caring father and loving husband with an edgy capacity for dire or violent action. Producer Harvey Weinstein said, "John is a sure shot for a Best Supporting Actor. I'll resign my Academy membership if he doesn't get nominated." Somehow, I doubt he has acted on it, but his instincts are right.

## McCain Library Hours

Monday through Thursday,  
8 a.m.-10:30 p.m.  
Friday, 8 a.m.-6 p.m.  
Saturday, 9 a.m.-6 p.m.  
Sunday, 1-10:30 p.m.

## Common Ground

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