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Connecticut Center for the Book Ready to Launch World of Words 2007

Programs, Events, and Contest Celebrate National Origins

Connecticut Center for the Book's ninth annual *World of Words (WOW)* initiative will run through the month of April at public libraries throughout the state. The purpose of this program is to learn about Connecticut's literary and cultural roots while exploring our ethnic similarities and differences through exhibitions, author events, films and videos, hands-on workshops, storytelling, lectures, book discussions and displays, games, literary readings promoted as "Telling Passages," music and dance programs, and culinary offerings.

This year, for example, Enfield Public Library will offer programs ranging from a demonstration of Mexican cooking techniques to a mariachi band concert. The Farmington Library will combine a potluck supper of Egyptian dishes, prepared from their cookbook collection, with a documentary film about two Egyptian families. Naugatuck's Howard Whittemore Memorial Library will offer Italian films followed by scholar-led discussions. Nigerian-born author Okey Ndibe will read from his book, *Arrows of Rain*, at New Britain Public Library. Hartford Public Library will feature an evening of readings from classics of regional American literature.

While most libraries choose to celebrate countries that reflect their own constituencies, others are inspired by unfamiliar territory. Countries and regions being celebrated this

year, and the libraries promoting them, are: **Brazil** (Welles-Turner Memorial Library, Glastonbury, 860.652.7719); **Egypt** (The Farmington Library, 860.673.6791); **Gulf Coast United States** (Bridgeport Public Library, 203.576.7403); **India** (Groton Public Library, 860.441.6750); **Italy** (Howard Whittemore Memorial Library, Naugatuck, 203.729.4591; South Windsor Public Library, 860.644.1541); **Mexico** (Derby Neck Library, 203.734.1492; Enfield Public Library, 860.763.7510; The Ferguson Library, Stamford, 203.964.1000); **Nigeria** (New Britain Public Library, 860.224.3155); and, **America** (Hartford Public Library, 860.695.6295). The statewide schedule of programs can be found at www.hplct.org/cfb.htm .

A contest is held in conjunction with WOW for students in grades 6 – 12. “Why We Came and What We Brought” seeks to encourage children to learn from their families why and how they came to live in the United States. Whether their ancestors came as the result of political torture, enslavement, economic incentive, or romance, all of these children will have taken time to consider their personal stories which, together, combine to make Connecticut’s story and, ultimately, America’s story. The winners of this year’s contest, who will receive cash awards of \$100, \$50, and \$25 will be invited, with parents, to the official opening program at the State Capitol; invitations will be sent to consulates of the countries being celebrated, municipal and state officials, directors of participating libraries, and cultural leaders. Diane Smith—co-host of the morning show NewsTalk 1080 on WTIC, host and producer of “Positively Connecticut” on CPTV, and author—has been the honorary chairperson of *WOW* since 2001.

“What the *World of Words* does so well is to show that books bridge many divides. They give readers the opportunity to know other places and other places of mind ...not as a visitor but as a friend,” said Terri Evans, press and public affairs officer for the British Consulate-General in Boston.

All *WOW* programs are free and open to the public, although some may require advance registration. Call the individual libraries for more information. Please call 860.695.6320 for information about other Connecticut Center for the Book programs.

The mission of the Connecticut Center for the Book is to celebrate books, writers and readers who engender and sustain the life of the imagination and to highlight authors, illustrators, printers and the literary heritage of the state of Connecticut. The Connecticut Center for the Book is an affiliate of the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress.

Hartford Public Library provides strategic programs that respond to citizens' real needs and interests. The library offers programs for parenting, literacy and language development; programs for technical literacy and competency; and programs for entrepreneurs and small business owners. Hartford Public Library also provides a cultural and artistic forum that reflects the city's diverse and vibrant community. The Library has 650,000 visits each year. For more information call (860) 695-6295.