

From: dajohnson@notes.cc.sunysb.edu
To: darren.johnson@stonybrook.edu

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Subject: Pulitzer-Winner Leads Enviro Forum

PULITZER-WINNER JONATHAN WEINER LEADS ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM AT STONY BROOK SOUTHAMPTON

SOUTHAMPTON, N. Y., October 9, 2009 — Stony Brook Southampton will host a panel discussion with Pulitzer-winner Jonathan Weiner – whose heralded book, “The Beak of the Finch,” was required reading for all campus freshmen this year – along with University President Samuel L. Stanley, Southampton Dean and VP Mary C. Pearl and Distinguished Professor Jeffrey Levinton as part of the Dean’s Distinguished Lecture Series at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, October 21, in the Avram Theater. A reception precedes the event at 7 p.m.

The event is also a part of week-long activities at Stony Brook and Southampton campuses inaugurating the new President. Further information could be found at <http://www.stonybrook.edu/sb/inauguration>.

“The Beak of the Finch: A Story of Evolution in Our Time” is set on a desert island in the heart of the Galapagos archipelago, where Darwin received his first inklings of the theory of evolution. There, two scientists, Peter and Rosemary Grant, have spent 20 years proving that Darwin did not know the strength of his own theory. For among the finches of Daphne Major, natural selection is neither rare nor slow: It is taking place by the hour, and we can watch. In this dramatic story of groundbreaking scientific research, Weiner follows these scientists as they watch Darwin's finches and come up with a new understanding of life itself. “The Beak of the Finch” is an elegantly written and compelling masterpiece of theory and explication. Already, scores of Stony Brook Southampton freshman have submitted creative projects to their professors based on the book for judging. The winners will be honored at a special reception with the author before the event.

Jonathan Weiner's books have won the Pulitzer Prize, the National Book Critics Circle Award, the Los Angeles Times Book Prize, and many other honors. While working on "His Brother's Keeper," he was writer-in-residence at Rockefeller University. Now he teaches science writing at Columbia University’s Graduate School of Journalism. He lives in New York with his wife, Deborah Heiligman, the children's book author, and their two sons.

Samuel L. Stanley, Jr. is President of Stony Brook. He received a BA in biology from the University of Chicago, and MD degree from Harvard Medical School. Previously, he was Vice Chancellor for Research with Washington University in St. Louis, the Director of the Midwest Regional Center of Excellence in Biodefense and Emerging Infectious Diseases, and a Professor in the Departments of Medicine and Molecular Microbiology at Washington University School of Medicine.

Mary C. Pearl, an internationally known and respected conservationist, is Dean and Vice President of Stony Brook Southampton. For the previous 15 years, she was President of Wildlife Trust. She has edited and co-edited both books and journals, in addition to publishing numerous scientific papers. She received her undergraduate and doctoral degrees from Yale University and holds an honorary doctorate from Marist College.

Jeffrey Levinton, Distinguished Professor, Department of Ecology & Evolution, has done research on a wide variety of topics in marine ecology. His major interest is in relating feeding biology of marine bottom animals to population and community-level processes. Currently, he is working on feeding selectivity in suspension-feeding bivalves using flow cytometry and video endoscopy. In the last few years, he has also worked on the evolution of resistance to toxic substances and physiological adaptation of growth strategies to temperature regimes.

For further information about the lecture, call 631-632-5028.

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Darren Johnson
Media Relations Manager
Stony Brook Southampton
239 Montauk Hwy
Southampton, NY 11968
631-632-5088
darren.johnson@stonybrook.edu
<http://www.stonybrook.edu/sb/southampton/>

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