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## SMC Launches Great Book Series

By Andrea A. Firth



Grete Stenersen enjoys reading a great book as Brother Perez, who started SMC's Great Books Seminar Series, looks on approvingly Photo A. Firth

Who doesn't love a great book? Saint Mary's College recently launched their great book seminar series, The Great Conversation, and they invite members of the community to attend one, two, or all of the Tuesday evening sessions. An SMC faculty member leads each seminar, and the format is designed to encourage the participants to share and exchange their views on the great book of the night. Some of the works chosen for the series are short stories and novellas to make it even more reader-friendly for busy Lamorindans.

The Great Books Seminar has been ongoing at the College for thirty years in one form or another according to the seminar coordinator, Grete Stenersen, the Director of the Weekend College. "SMC has been a Great Books College since the 1940's," states Stenersen.

"All undergraduates are required to take four Great Books courses." Established by Christian Brother and former faculty member, Brother O. DeSales Perez, the seminar serves as an extension of that undergraduate experience for alumni and friends in the community.

Willa Cather's short story Paul's Case was the focus of the first seminar. "Everyone brings their own perspective and questions to the discussion," states Stenersen. "It's very exciting. The professor learns new things each times he or she teaches the text."

Next up on the reading is list is Bartleby the Scrivener, a novella by Herman Melville. For readers who have never been able to conquer Moby Dick, this may be

just the right dose of Melville. The seminar series will conclude with the classic tale of unresolved passion between Heathcliff and Catherine from Wuthering Heights by Emily Bronte. Readers with kids of high school age might be able to share a copy.

Seminars are held on selected Tuesday evenings in Dante 203 at SMC. The cost is \$12 per session; text is not included. To register, contact Grete Stenersen at (925) 631-4162 or email her at [gsteners@stmarys-ca.edu](mailto:gsteners@stmarys-ca.edu).

Date Book/Author

11/18/08 Bartleby the  
Scrivner/Melville

12/9/08 A Pair of Silk  
Stockings/Chopin

1/20/09 The Sunflower:  
On the Possibilities

and Limits of  
Forgiveness/  
Wiesenthal

2/24/09 A White Heron/Jewett

3/24/09 Only the Lover Sings:  
Art and Contemplation/  
Pieper

4/21/09 Zen Mind, Beginner's  
Mind/Foster

5/19/09 Wuthering  
Heights/Bronte

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