

A LOOK AT THE LITERARY SEASON



LITERARY LIGHTS: Clockwise from top left, Toni Morrison, Garrison Keillor, Mario Vargas Llosa and Amy Tan. **File photos**



Our top page-turner: Miami Book Fair

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It hardly seems possible, but the Miami Book Fair celebrates its 20th anniversary this year. What began as a modest event in 1983, conceived by Books & Books owner Mitch Kaplan and a few visionaries at Miami-Dade Community College, quickly became the largest and most influential literary festival of its kind in the United States. Along the way, it played a key role in South Florida's cultural renaissance.

Mark your calendars, though, or you might miss this year's landmark edition. The traditional date for the eight-day celebration — the third week in November — conflicts with the Latin American Trade Conference, which will also take place in downtown Miami and which is expected to attract hordes of demonstrators. This year's book fair runs Nov. 2-9 at MDCC.

While the time may have changed — it will go back to the usual dates next year — the Mi-

ami Book Fair still promises to draw more than 250 national and international writers, not to mention about 500,000 book lovers.

As befits an event in one of the country's premier multicultural cities, this year's fair is more diverse than ever. There will be even more Spanish-language options, in addition to the usual assortment of English-language and Caribbean-themed panel discussions.

Indeed, the fair opens with two distinguished visitors, and on a bilingual note. Nobel Prize-winning African-American novelist Toni Morrison kicks off the prestigious "Evening with..." series on Nov. 2. At the same time, Cuban-French novelist Zoé Valdés initiates the Spanish programming at a different venue.

In addition to Morrison, the nightly "Evening with..." lineup is set to include humorist Dave Barry, radio raconteur Garrison Keillor and Peruvian novelist and politician Mario Vargas Llosa.

As always, the fair culminates in a three-day weekend street festival, with all offerings free on a first-come basis. Authors set to appear include Madeleine Albright, Edwin Black, Robert Dallek, Edwidge Danticat, Carolina Garcia-Aguilera, Joyce Carol Oates and dozens more.

In Broward County, the biggest literary festival is the Night of Literary Feasts and Day of Literary Lectures, sponsored by the Broward County Library Foundation. The feasts component is a fund-raising event that enables book lovers and socialites to dine with famous authors. Those same authors are featured at the lectures, a free menu of panel discussions at Nova Southeastern University in Davie. The feasts and lectures are scheduled for March 19 and 20.

In recent years, the cozy Key West Literary Seminar has climbed to national prominence, and this season's session, *Crossing Borders*, is no exception. In fact, the festival has grown so popular that it sold out long ago.

Crossing Borders, set for Jan. 8-11, will provide a timely take on immigrant writing in American literature. The lineup includes Sandra Cisneros, Robert Olen Butler, Andrei Codrescu, David Wong Louie, Amy Tan and Bharati Mukherjee, among others.

The Florida Center for the Book, with headquarters in the Broward County Library, also has a full slate of literary activities scheduled for the season. Among them is the "One Book, One Broward" program, in which the entire county will be encouraged to read a single book and talk about it. This year's book is the best-selling memoir *Tuesdays With Morrie*, by sportswriter Mitch Albom. Related events will culminate in an address by the author on Feb. 7.

The center sponsors many additional programs, such as *Books by the River*, a series that will bring together readers and mostly local authors at the New River Inn at the Old Fort Lauderdale Village and Museum beginning in October. Book stores — particularly Books & Books and Barnes & Noble — also will bring a steady stream of national writers to the region throughout the year.

ARTS PREVIEW

In addition to the accompanying preview of the upcoming literary season, today's *Sun-Sentinel* includes our annual *Sunshine Guide to the Arts* supplement, showcasing the 2003-04 season in theater, classical music, pop and variety, art, dance and film — plus calendars of upcoming events throughout South Florida.



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