

For Immediate Release

# The Newburyport Literary Festival

**For more information contact:**

Skye Wentworth

(978) 462-4453

[press@newburyportliteraryfestival.org](mailto:press@newburyportliteraryfestival.org)

## Newburyport Literary Festival Honors the Work of Rhina Espaillat

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Newburyport Literary Festival is pleased to announce that the honoree for the 2008 festival is poet and translator Rhina Espaillat. The festival will be held on April 25-27, 2008

Renowned poets **Dana Gioia**, chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts; **X. J. Kennedy**, author of ten poetry collections and widely known for his anthologies, translations, light verse, and beloved works for children; and essayist and poet **Lewis Turco** will join the celebration of Espaillat at the Festival.

Espaillat has published ten collections of her work including *Playing at Stillness* (Truman State University Press, 2005), a bilingual collection of poems and essays titled *Agua de dos rios*, published under the auspices of the Dominican Republic's Ministry of Culture (Editora Buho, 2006); and a bilingual collection of her short stories, *E olor de la memoria/The Scent of Memory* (Editora CEDIBIL, 2007).

Her achievements have won her numerous awards including the T.S. Eliot Prize for Poetry; the Richard Wilbur Award; the Nemerov Prize; three yearly prizes from the Poetry Society of America; the Barbara Bradley Award and the May Sarton Award from the New England Poetry Club.

Espaillat said of the Festival: "My chief interest is bringing poetry back into the daily life of ordinary readers, both as a reading and listening experience, and as a skill natural to human beings. I would like poetry to be perceived as one of the normal pleasures of human life, like music, to be enjoyed, shared and attempted."

More than 50 authors of fiction, non-fiction, and children's literature will be on hand. These include **Anne Easter Smith**, and **Frank Schaeffer**, each of whom have recently published books and **Andre Dubus III**, whose new book will be in bookstores soon. The literary events and readings will take place in bookstores, churches and theaters around Newburyport. There will also be events for children and teens. The festival is free and open to the public.

### **About Rhina Espaillat**

Rhina P. Espaillat was born in the Dominican Republic in 1932. She has lived in the United States since 1939 and taught high school English in New York City for several years. Espaillat writes poetry and prose both in English and in her native Spanish. Her work has appeared in numerous magazines and more than forty anthologies. She resides in Newburyport, Massachusetts where, for fourteen years, she coordinated the Newburyport Art Association's Annual Poetry Contest, is on the planning committee of the Newburyport Literary Festival, and is a founding member and former director of the Powow River Poets. She has also been instrumental in bringing about bilingual poetry readings in the area north of Boston, and has assisted teachers Debbie Szabo and Cesar Sanchez Beras with the planning for bilingual activities shared by high school students of Lawrence, Massachusetts and Newburyport.

### **About the Newburyport Literary Festival**

The 2008 Newburyport Literary Festival (NLF) runs from Friday, April 25 through Sunday, April 27. The NLF aims to promote literacy in the community and in America with various literary efforts during the month of April.

A three-day celebration of reading, writing, and the love of books, this year's festival features more than 50 writers of distinguished fiction and non-fiction-including short story writers, children's authors, biographers, nature writers, critics, screenwriters, poets, novelists, and journalists, who will read and discuss their work in venues throughout Newburyport's historic downtown.

The vision of the Newburyport Literary Festival is shared by many individuals and organizations. The NLF is especially grateful for the generous support of our founding sponsors, the Newburyport Five Cents Savings Bank Charitable Foundation and the Institution for Savings, which have made it possible for the festival to take root and flourish. This program is supported in part by a grant from the Newburyport Cultural Council, a local agency that is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

All festival events are wheelchair accessible and open to the public. All events are free, except for the opening night gala. For complete information about the festival, including event times and venues, please visit: [www.newburyportliteraryfestival.org](http://www.newburyportliteraryfestival.org)