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NOVEMBER 28, 2007 **"Pirates and Corsairs" Subject of Symposium on Dec. 8**

Event Coincides With New Library Exhibition on the Early Americas

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Within some 50 years of its discovery, the Americas became a great and growing source of wealth for the Spanish crown. Silks, spices, precious metals and gems flowed across the Pacific to Mexico and Panama as silver and gold were transported across the Gulf of Mexico from Cuba to Spain. Pirates and privateers preyed on these vessels, often as commissioned agents sent out against the enemies of their sovereigns or as renegades for their own personal gain. An all-day symposium, "Pirates and Corsairs of the Americas in History and Literature," will be held on **Saturday, Dec. 8, from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.** in the Mumford Room, sixth floor of the James Madison Building, 101 Independence Avenue, S.E., Washington, D.C. Sponsored by the Rare Book and Special Collections Division and the Hispanic Division, the symposium is free and open to the public. Featured speakers are noted international scholars and writers Carmen Boullosa, Peter Earle, Nina Gerassi-Navarro, Sabrina Guerra, Franklin Knight and Kris Lane. The symposium is planned in conjunction with an exhibition titled "Exploring the Early Americas," which opens Thursday, Dec. 13, in the North galleries of the Great Hall of the Thomas

Jefferson Building, 10 First St. S.E., Washington, D.C. Featuring more than 150 artifacts from the Jay I. Kislak Collection, the exhibition focuses on the early Americas from the time of the indigenous people of Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean through the period of European contact, exploration and settlement. Mexican writer Carmen Boullosa has published many novels and books of poetry, some of which, like “They’re Cows, We’re Pigs” (1997), have featured pirates as characters. She will talk about how the true story of pirates has been transformed into current works of fiction. Peter Earle, professor emeritus at the University of London, will discuss how the British navy defended shipping against pirates. His book “The Royal Navy and the War Against the Pirates, 1680-1730” was published in 2003. Nina Gerassi-Navarro, associate professor of literature at Tufts University and author of “Pirate Novels: Fictions of Nation Building in Spanish America” (1999), will talk about how pirates have impacted the popular imagination, focusing on 19th century melodramatic historical novels. Sabrina Guerra of the Universidad de San Francisco in Quito, Ecuador, will provide a look at pirates in the Pacific. Franklin Knight, Leonard and Helen Stulman Professor of History at Johns Hopkins University, presents “Pirates of the Caribbean: An Irregular Form of Imperial Expansion.” In his lecture, he will discuss how pirates were used as instruments of imperial policy. Kris Lane of the University of William and Mary presents a talk on “Pirates and Corsairs: The Seaborne Attackers of the Spanish Empire.” The Library will also show two classic sea adventures starring Errol Flynn in the Mary Pickford Theater, third floor of the James Madison Building. On **Thursday, Dec. 6**, “Captain Blood” (1935) is being screened. “The Sea Hawk” (1940) is being shown on **Friday, Dec. 7**. Showtime for both films is 7 p.m. Reservations may be made by phone, beginning one week before any given show. Call (202) 707-5677 during business hours, Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Reserved seats must be claimed at least 10 minutes before showtime, after which standbys will be admitted to unclaimed seats. All programs are free, but seating is limited to 60.

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