

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Contact: Megan Pratt
877-937-6377
megan.pratt@pensacolamesshall.org

Pensacola MESS Hall presents an author talk with environmental journalist and author, Cynthia Barnett Tuesday, February 22, 2022, 6 PM

Jan 24, 2022 – Environmental journalist Cynthia Barnett has chased the story of humanity and rain from the storms of the Little Ice Age to the modern extremes of climate change. Join the Pensacola MESS Hall for an engaging presentation to hear how rain’s history has much to tell us about coming together to live more ethically with water — and adapt to the stormy times ahead.

After thousands of years spent praying for rain or worshipping it — burning witches at the stake to stop rain or sacrificing small children to bring it; mocking rain with irrigated agriculture and cities built in floodplains; even trying to blast rain out of the sky with mortars meant for war — humanity has finally managed to change the rain. Only not in ways we intended. Changing rainfall patterns are some of the earliest tremors of our warming globe, with wet places getting more deluges, dry ones seared in worsening droughts. During this author talk Barnett will draw from the sciences, history and the arts to illustrate the connections between rain and our lives, past, present, and future.

Barnett, an award-winning author, teaches environmental journalism at the University of Florida’s College of Journalism and Communications. She is the author of *Rain: A Natural and Cultural History*, a finalist for the National Book Award and PEN/E.O. Wilson Award for Literary Science Writing, and named a best book of 2015 by NPR’s Science Friday, the Boston Globe, the Miami Herald and others.

Registration is required; space is limited for this in-person event. This program is recommended for ages 15+. Please visit <https://pensacolamesshall.org/rain/> to register. This program is a partnership between Florida Humanities and the Pensacola MESS Hall.

In addition to the lecture at the MESS Hall, Barnett will present a book signing hosted by Bodacious Bookstore & Cafe. She will be signing her newest book, *The Sound of the Sea: Seashells and the Fate of the Oceans*, is a natural and cultural history of seashells and the animals that make them—revealing what they have to tell us about nature, our changing oceans, and ourselves. The MESS Hall will be at this event with hands on science activities related to seashells.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The MESS Hall will follow up the lecture with an engaging interactive forum on March 22. This deliberative forum brings the participants through the resilience planning process for a generic city, named Rivertown. Participants will use visualizations to explore potential vulnerabilities to city infrastructures, social networks, and ecosystems from extreme precipitation. They then learn and discuss stakeholder values, consider trade-offs of various resilience strategies, make a final recommendation for increasing their city's community resilience, and then experience visualizations of how their plan will affect the city and the people who live there.

Registration is required; space is limited for this in-person event. Please visit <https://pensacolamesshall.org/extreme-precipitation-forum/> to register. This program is recommended for ages 15+. This forum was developed by the Museum of Science, Boston, with support from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Funding for this program was provided by Florida Humanities and sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Arts and Culture, and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture.

ABOUT THE MESS HALL

Founded in 2012, the Pensacola MESS Hall is not a typical science museum. It's all hands-on science. Visitors to the facility enjoy exploring math, engineering, science, and stuff with an ever-changing menu of mess kits, activities and exhibits. Additionally, the MESS Hall serves our community with outreach programs, field trips, and other events. For more information about the MESS Hall, visit pensacolamesshall.org.

ABOUT BODACIOUS BOOKSTORE & CAFE

Bodacious Bookstore & Cafe is an independent bookstore and coffee shop in the heart of Downtown Pensacola. It is a community-oriented bookstore under the Bodacious umbrella of businesses featuring local authors, fiction, nonfiction, books about building vibrant communities, an excellent selection of children's books, unique gifts from around the world, and a simple, sophisticated menu.

ABOUT CYNTHIA BARNETT

Cynthia Barnett is an award-winning environmental journalist who has reported on water and climate worldwide. Her writing has appeared in National Geographic, the Atlantic, the New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, the Wall Street Journal and many other publications. She is the author of four books including *Rain: A Natural and Cultural History*, which was longlisted for the National Book Award and her latest, *The Sound of the Sea: Seashells and the Fate of the Oceans*. Ms. Barnett also serves as Environmental Journalist in Residence at the University of Florida's College of Journalism and Communications. She lives with her family in Gainesville.

#