

F O C U S

THE FRIENDS OF THE GOUCHER COLLEGE LIBRARY NEWSLETTER

Examining Our Literary Heritage

New English course explores archival research

By Arnie Sanders, Professor of English

Imagine an English class that does not interpret literature, has laboratory experiments, and is organized anti-chronologically, from the present into the past. Last semester, 11 students undertook an unusual course of study in English 241—*Archeology of Text: Archival Research Methods and 'The Book' in the Internet, Print, and Manuscript Eras*. Initially based in my own research in Medieval manuscripts and Early Modern printed books, the course was designed with the help of Goucher librarians Nancy Magnuson, Gail McCormick, Margaret Guccione, Susan Ezell, and Vice President for Information Technology Bill Leimbach. These “guest teachers” and I met with students in Van Meter and in the Special Collections reading room to discover how our literary heritage has been preserved and distributed for the past 2,000 years.

We studied how texts have been created, stored, and retrieved, starting with digital texts, Internet archives, and search engines. Then the class worked backward in time to the hand-press print and manuscript eras to see how each era's texts imitated and changed its predecessor's. The course is labeled as “archeology” because it studies texts as material objects, whether they are software code on a monitor or ink on paper and parchment. Students learned about HTML and XML code, type fonts and book editing practices, scribal calligraphy and manuscripts' illuminations, and bindings.



Arnie Sanders and Susan Dobanick prepare to digitize an illustration from Rossetti's *Goblin Market*. Photo by Nancy Magnuson.

At The Walters Art Museum, Rare Book and Manuscript Curator William Noel showed us the collection's treasures, including a bible that St. Francis of Assisi may have opened to seek his vocation.

Every week, we discovered new surprises. For instance, most people might assume that, as technology improves, texts last longer. Just the opposite is true. Medieval parchment manuscripts over 1,000 years old still can be read at the Monastery of St. Gall because their parchment is so durable. Early printed paper books are far easier to tear or to “read to death,” though even early linen-rag paper remains supple and strong if properly protected. Nineteenth- or 20th-century books on wood-pulp papers are

often too brittle to read, and digital texts on CD-ROM and DVD media can be the most short-lived of all. They may survive only five years unless dedicated archivers move and upgrade files before discs delaminate or software becomes unreadable.

This preparation readied students for independent research projects in the library's Special Collections and Archives. Students worked on a wide range of topics, which included exploring the Haardt-Mencken letters (Meredith Steinfelds), discovering the provenance of the Burke Collection copy of the first American edition of Austen's *Emma* (Sarah Kendall), examining early print

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Patz Program a Success

Alumna donates collection to college

By Nancy Magnuson, College Librarian



(L to R) Barbara Roswell, Tara Tappert, Uta Larkey, Nancy Patz, and Rick Pringle address the audience. Photo by Ben Droz.

Kelley Lecture Hall was filled to capacity on November 29, 2007 for “Who Was the Woman Who Wore the Hat: A Celebration of the Nancy Patz Collection.” Co-sponsored by the Friends of the Goucher College Library and Goucher Hillel, the event marked the gift by Nancy Patz ’52 of materials, which document the many popular children’s books she has written and illustrated, to Goucher College.

After introductions and welcomes from both groups, Patz led the evening with the moving story of how she wrote the book that gave the program its title. Following her remarks, the enthusiastic audience heard from project

archivist Tara Tappert, who organized and described the collection. Dr. Tappert’s lively presentation provided an overview of Patz’s writing for and work with children, and the finding aid she created will provide an excellent road map for researchers.

Next on the program was a panel of Goucher faculty, organized by Professor Barbara Roswell, who introduced the audience to ways the collection may be used to support the college’s curriculum. Using the panel theme of “Memory and Story,” Professor Uta Larkey discussed her course *Oral History on the Holocaust/Storytelling*, in which her students collect oral histories of Holocaust survivors. Professor Rick Pringle discussed the power of storytelling in his course *Psychology of Narrative and Meaning*, as well as in the Read-A-Story/Write-A-Story after-school program he co-founded at Dallas Nicholas Elementary School. Afterwards, Patz and Tappert joined the panel and entertained questions from the audience.

Patz’s generous gift, described in the Spring 2007 issue of *Focus*, will clearly be a great resource for Goucher students in many disciplines and will also attract the attention of researchers beyond our campus.

24/7 Update

More students taking advantage of library’s extended hours

By Jennifer Spieler

Since November 2006, when the college made the decision to expand the library operating hours to a 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week schedule, students have been showing their approval by spending more time among the stacks and study areas. And the numbers are ever increasing: according to Access Services Librarian Susan Ezell, the total number of students visiting between November 2005 and October 2006 neared 178,000. The Spring 2007 semester (Jan-April) saw nearly the same number in a four month period—close to 175,000 students total. Compare this figure to the Fall 2007 semester (Sept-Dec), when close to 236,000 students visited the library (nearly a 25% increase).

Ezell also mentions that, according to student feedback, students seem more comfortable using the library as place to settle in and

work—to “camp out” while engaged in projects. Evidence suggests that students are browsing the stacks more than before, as seen in the number of books that have moved from shelf to table by the morning hours. Also on the rise is the circulation of CDs, DVDs, and headphones, prompting the library to replace headphones that were falling apart. The vending machines in the building are also being filled more regularly than in the past.

The library staff has been especially thankful to Information Technology for providing the funds for a public safety officer to make sure the space stays safe at night. Such positive feedback clearly shows that students’ needs and safety are being met and appreciated, as the library continues its extended hours during the semester.

President’s Update

Dear Members,

As spring approaches, I see more and more changes occurring on Goucher’s campus. It doesn’t surprise me that the Athenaeum, situated about 500 feet from the Alumnae/i House, is rising toward the sky. Each day brings excitement as we anticipate how wonderful this new addition to the campus will be. As I mentioned in my previous letter, the Friends of the Library committed \$75,000 toward a Group Study Room, which will be used by the Goucher community. You can make a difference in Goucher’s history by donating to the new library. I am hoping that you will consider making a pledge, if you have not yet done so, which will enable us to meet our goal. For those of you who have supported us, we can’t thank you enough! Libraries are a crucial part of our community. We are extremely excited about this and hope you will be too. Please look forward to more updates as the year progresses.

On March 5, 2008 in Merrick, our annual meeting will feature a presentation by the library’s Burke Scholar-in-Residence. Professor Devoney Looser will talk about her books on Jane Austen and her research in the library’s collections. Come at 7 p.m. for the business meeting and election of officers, followed by Dr. Looser at 7:30.

Just a reminder that our membership year began on September 1. I encourage you to become an active member of the Friends, to stay in touch, and to become involved! We value your support and hope to see you at our event on March 5th!

Have a wonderful spring,

Cori Rich Tyner ’82
President

Preparing Collections for the "Big Move"

Sorting continues by library staff

By Barbara Snead, Collection Management Librarian

We've all seen the floor plans and architectural drawings of the Athenaeum—but what about the "stuff" that will be moved into this exciting space? While crews toil at the excavation site, librarians are racing to ready existing collections for the move. Efforts include removing obsolete items, repairing or replacing useful books, transferring materials to our special collections, and substituting electronic versions for certain resources. The goal is an Athenaeum with a physically attractive, content-rich collection that will support and enhance Goucher's curriculum.

What is the mechanism for weeding? The Julia Rogers Library communicates with faculty chiefly through its liaison program, matching librarians with academic departments for matters involving collections and research in their disciplines. The easiest task is removing items that are obviously deteriorating. An equally important aim is to identify and remove outdated material, while anticipating possible future directions for the curriculum.

Books withdrawn from the collection are redirected in an ethical fashion. Outlived books still in decent shape are set aside for the Baltimore Book Thing, which offers free books to anyone who visits its warehouse. To determine a rare book, librarians check ownership by other libraries through WorldCat. Such books might either be sold or offered to other libraries for their collections. Books physically beyond repair go as a last resort into a special recycling dumpster outside the library.

Two types of material being aggressively replaced by online



Reference Librarian Muriel Jones works through the library stacks. Photo by Barbara Snead.

versions are journals and reference books—both of which deliver information in manageably sized articles. Much of the library's bound journals collection has already been replaced by online archives, and indexes to journal literature by databases. The library has replaced important reference works with their electronic counterparts and buys new titles almost exclusively in this format.

What will the future library collection look like? It's obvious that new technology and media evolve faster than our ability to keep pace with them. Libraries are caught between the desire to offer the latest, popular formats and the need to preserve our cultural heritage. Assuming that formats will overlap for an indeterminate period, the opening-day collection will hold the visible "stuff"—about 80 percent of the books found in the current library, most of the existing DVDs and CDs, printed books and journals. This visible collection will be but the tip of the iceberg of scholarly and entertainment resources, while the vast majority will appear on the ubiquitous Internet-enabled devices and large screens situated throughout the building.

"Examining," continued from p. 1

editions donated by John Franklin Goucher and acquired in the James W. Bright Collection (Sam Colon, Colleen Desrosiers, Toni Boyd, Anna Waltman, and Simone Martell), and using the Goucher copy of Francis Child's ballad collection to create her own manuscript of "Lord Rendal," written in a 14th-century Textura Quadrata hand and sewn in real boards and leather (Michelle Zimmerman).

English 241 students are prepared to work in rare book and archival collections anywhere in the world, but we hope some will undertake internships in our

Special Collections. With the help of Director of Gift Planning Nancy Turner, and Margaret Patricelli '72, the internship project was awarded a Patricelli Family Foundation grant for \$10,000 for internships in 2008 and 2009. Rare study materials and digitization equipment were acquired with the help of a Goucher Innovation Grant, two Faculty Affairs Committee Summer Research Grants from the Elizabeth Nitchie Fund, and a Crosby Fund grant. With this generous assistance, English 241 students will have a wonderful opportunity to discover the riches of the library's Special Collections.

New Membership

Yes, I wish to join the Friends of the Goucher College Library. My contribution is enclosed.

Please make your check payable to Friends of the Goucher College Library. Mail this form and your check to Friends of the Goucher College Library, Julia Rogers Library, Goucher College, 1021 Dulany Valley Road, Baltimore, MD 21204.

- Benefactor (\$500 or more)
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From the College Librarian

By Nancy Magnuson

The first piece of news from the library is the appointment of **Tara Olivero** as the new special collections librarian and college archivist. Tara arrived on January 14th to fill the position vacated by Gail Rodgers McCormick, who resigned in late September to take a position nearer her home in Washington, D.C., as director of the Women's History and Resource Center of the General Federation of Women's Clubs.

Tara was most recently assistant director, government relations, for the American Library Association. She has also worked as an archivist for the U.S. Senate Committee on the Budget and the Orange County Regional History Center in

Florida, as well as the Center for American History at University of Texas, Austin, where she earned her master's degree in information studies.

Our Burke Jane Austen Scholar in Residence will be with us the week of March 3rd and will deliver a public talk on March 5th as part of the Friends annual program. Professor **Devoney Looser** is the fifth scholar at Goucher under the Burke program, each of whom has enriched the campus in a different way. We look forward to Dr. Looser's time with us.

In January, IT librarian and Friends board member **Margaret Guccione** traveled to Vietnam as co-leader, with

professors **Nick Brown** (also on the Friends board) and **Kay Munns**, of an intensive course abroad (ICA). ICAs are an integral part of Goucher's new requirement for all students to study abroad. Margaret will be speaking about her experience in April at the Off-Campus Library Services Conference in Salt Lake City.

Instruction Librarian **Jim Huff** chaired a roundtable in San Francisco at the February "Conference on the First-Year Experience." The session was titled "Beyond Library Day: Keeping First-Years Afloat in the Sea of Knowledge," and Jim spoke about his own experiences in teaching with primary sources and using visual search engines.

We are excited to have received a generous gift from **Dr. Judith Evans '60**, establishing a fund to help us improve the collection of materials used by education majors. This collection will ultimately be housed in the Curriculum Resource Center in the Athenaeum. We'll tell you more about the gift and that space in the next issue of *Focus*.

Please watch our library web page at www.goucher.edu/library for other news, including activities to celebrate National Library Week in April. During that week, we will be awarding the fourth annual set of student research prizes sponsored by the Friends. I hope you will join us for this happy ceremony!

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