Reveries on Reading

Reveries on Reading: from Hermits to Horses, displayed in the Fairchild Gallery through July, celebrates the book in an era when digital media are transforming the process of reading. The exhibition highlights the joy of reading and bibliophilia with images in fine prints, rare books and vintage posters, in a broad range of periods and styles, reflecting the rich diversity of the University’s Special Collections Research Center.

The oldest items include two rare volumes: Raccolta di Santi Padri nel Deserto (Bologna, 1763) with 31 plates illuminating the desert fathers, and a 1683 emblem book from the library of Thomas C. Levins, Irish-born Jesuit bibliophile and Georgetown’s first librarian. The Raccolta is open to a fanciful illustration of Saint Anthony (see above), attempting to study his book of scripture while being tormented by curious-looking demons wearing hats.

The horses referred to in the exhibition’s title are represented in two prints: a lithograph by Claire Van Vliet and an engraving by Frank Wright. Inspired by a Franz Kafka parable, the Van Vliet depicts the afterlife of Alexander the Great’s warhorse Bucephalus. Finding few opportunities for conquest, he turns instead to study and becomes a doctor of law (as was Kafka himself). Frank Wright’s engraving presents a whimsical illustration of Don Quixote reading to his trusted steed Rocinante.

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This Newsletter is issued four times a year. It is distributed to all Library Associates, members of ARL, the Georgetown University Board of Directors, Board of Regents, Board of Governors and selected others.

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FROM THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN

The Library’s Excellent Staff

One of the pleasures I have each year is reading the self-evaluations our staff members write, and then their supervisors’ commentaries. I learn a great deal about our year’s activities across all levels of the Library, and I take great pride in our staff’s accomplishments. We do have an excellent staff, and in these evaluations their fine work shines through.

We also have a second measure of staff excellence, completely unrelated to a person’s job description, self-evaluation, or performance review. In 2005 we instituted the Library Staff Excellence Awards, affording the opportunity for staff members to be nominated by their peers for special accomplishments. We established criteria for nominations as well as specific categories of awards: the Team Spirit Award honors a team or task force that completes a project resulting in cost savings or enhanced services for the Library; the Lauinger Library Award honors an individual that has gone above and beyond in some way to contribute to the goals of their division; the Kindred Spirit Award honors an individual who made a significant contribution to the entire campus community or engaged in a significant collaboration with other departments across campus; and the University Librarian’s Award recognizes leadership in the advancement of Library goals. Every year save one since 2005, we have awarded the Excellence Awards at a celebration to which all Library staff are invited.

The 2011 winners pictured above received a cash award in addition to their certificate, and while all award categories were represented, each winner represents proactive leadership in a variety of ways. Most winners are surprised by the recognition their colleagues have given them; and some “unsung heroes or heroines” are finally sung. The diversity of accomplishments by this year’s winners reveal some of the inner workings of a contemporary university research library. To name just a few:

• a team of Library experts migrated the Special Collections Research Center’s electronic records from an aged database to a new and robust system, enabling us to bring more of our special collections to light for researchers;  

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A Career in Oman

The Oman papers of James H. Critchfield (1917–2003) have been donated to the Georgetown University Library by Lois Matthews Critchfield. A decorated World War II Army officer, Critchfield joined the CIA in 1948. He was the chief of the CIA’s Near East and South Asia division in the 1960s and a national intelligence officer for energy in the early 1970s. He retired from the CIA in 1974 and set up a consultancy on Middle East energy resources. Originally contracted to advise the Sultanate of Oman on oil policy, Critchfield’s consulting firm, Tetra Tech International, gradually expanded its role to include the development of the nation’s water and maritime resources. The Oman papers, the bulk of which date from 1974–1991, include correspondence to and from Critchfield; technical reports and files from TetraTech regarding its work developing the oil, natural gas, water, and mineral industries in Oman; a fine series of color photographs from the 1970s and 1980s providing a visual record of life in Oman; and a number of maps. The papers have been cataloged and are available to researchers.

--ST & SH

Transformative Publishing: The Spring Scholarly Communication Symposium

This April the Spring Scholarly Communication Symposium presented “Transformative Publishing: Academic Libraries, University Presses, and the Future of Scholarly Communication.” The panel discussed current and future publishing collaborations between research libraries and university presses, looking at critical factors that have led to successes—as well as continuing uncertainty regarding differing interpretations of copyright, fair use, open access, and the Google Settlement; the evolution of multiple ebook aggregations with a variety of business models; the emergence of patron-driven acquisition; anxieties over budgets and university subsidies.

The discussion was moderated by Richard Brown, Ph.D., director of the Georgetown University Press and current President of the Association of American University Presses. Speakers included:

• Patrick Alexander, director of Penn State University Press and co-director of Penn State’s Office of Digital Scholarly Publishing;
• Raym Crow, senior consultant for The Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC); and
• Artemis Kirk, University Librarian, Georgetown University.

The Symposium aims to present important issues of scholarship to faculty and staff at Georgetown and develops timely topics for discussion and debate. The entire program can be viewed online at http://tinyurl.com/4yz2cl8.
An Educator in Panama

The Special Collections Research Center has cataloged the personal papers of Esther Neira de Calvo (1890-1978), a prominent educator, politician, diplomat, and women’s rights advocate from the Republic of Panama. This rich collection includes correspondence, photographs, manuscripts, speeches, and awards, beginning with her student days in Panama, Belgium, and the United States (1903-1912) and continuing throughout her lifetime. It provides a fascinating perspective on 20th-century Panamanian history and inter-American cooperation, and contains material from Eva Perón, Eleanor Roosevelt, Carrie Chapman Catt, and the Alfaro family of Panama, to name a few notables.

Esther Neira de Calvo began her educational career in Panama in 1913. She served as Inspector General of Education from 1923 to 1927. She was directress of Panama’s Normal School, the only teacher’s training school for women in Panama (1927-1938), and of the Lyceum, a university preparatory school for women (1938-1945), an institution she organized and established. During the Second World War, she also coordinated cultural affairs for the Ministry of Education of Panama. Founder and president in 1923 of the National Society for the Advancement of Women, she also founded in 1945 the Women’s Patriotic League in Panama. That same year, she was elected nationally to the Second Constituent Assembly, where she contributed to the drafting of the Constitution of Panama which was enacted in 1946.

Neira de Calvo moved to Washington, D.C. in 1949 when she was named executive secretary of the Inter-American Commission of Women by the secretary-general of the Organization of American States (OAS). She worked in that capacity until 1965, then served with the rank of ambassador as the alternate representative of Panama to the Council of the OAS from 1966-1968.

This new collection adds to the many source materials already available concerning Panama and the Panama Canal in the Special Collections Research Center, one of the finest such collections in the United States. Read more about the Panamanian collections in the online version of Special Collections at Georgetown, A Descriptive Catalog at www.library.georgetown.edu/search-special-collections/subjects: click on “Diplomacy, International Affairs and Intelligence.”

--ST

History Award

The recently published three-volume A History of Georgetown University has been named Best in Show at the Washington Book Publisher’s 2011 Book Design and Effectiveness Awards. Washington Book Publishers is a professional organization for the Washington-area book publishing community. The History competed with books entered by 45 publishers. This is the first time that Georgetown University Press has been honored with the Best in Show Award.

A majority of the images used in the History, authored by Emeritus Professor Emmett Curran and celebrated at last fall’s Library Associates event Beacons of Learning: Lauinger Library and Georgetown University, were taken from the University Archives, part of the Special Collections Research Center in Lauinger Library.
The Rare Books Room holds a number of historical periodicals, including a run of my favorite 19th-century weekly: Knight’s *Penny Magazine*. English publisher and writer Charles Knight (1791-1873) was a fervent advocate for universal education and, for a time, a publisher for the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge. He understood that the average working person of circa 1830 could not afford publications priced in guineas, pounds, or dollars, but could afford pennies. Thus was born the *Penny Magazine* and “Reading for All,” as described in the first issue on March 31, 1832:

What the stage-coach has become to the middle-classes, we hope our Penny Magazine will become to all classes—a universal convenience and enjoyment. The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge have considered it proper to commence this publication, from the belief that many persons, whose time and whose means are equally limited, may be induced to purchase and to read it. . . . There are a great number of persons who can spare half an hour for the reading of a newspaper, who are sometimes disinclined to open a book. For these we shall endeavor to prepare a useful and entertaining Weekly Magazine, that may be taken up and laid down without requiring any considerable effort.

The ultra-modern technology of the time informs the tale of this magazine. For his numerous publications, Knight employed state-of-the-art steam-powered printing presses and paper manufactured on a Fourdrinier machine. Reduced labor costs and reduced taxation on paper contributed to the *Penny Magazine’s* affordability. It filled a void for the (19th-century) modern reader. It did not print serialized novels; it did not print the day’s news. It did print brief, heavily illustrated articles on general interest topics such as travel, geography, biography, art history, and industry. It was the first publication of its type, and it was a phenomenal success, enabling Knight to produce additional educational publications, such as *The Results of Machinery* (1831) and the *Penny Cyclopedia* (1833-1844).

By the end of the *Penny Magazine’s* 14-year run, it had provided almost 3,000 images and more than four million words for its readers, including Georgetown College students. The College’s 19th-century Society Libraries subscribed to the American edition, printed in New York by J. S. Redford almost concurrently with the London weeklies. There is a catalog slip for the *Penny Magazine* in the Philodemic Society archives (now held by the Georgetown University Archives), and it is possible that the volumes in our Rare Books Room were originally collected for the Philodemic Society’s student library.

This spring, I led a discussion to introduce the history of the book to a graduate class in the Special Collections Research Center. Several buildings on campus, including Lauinger...
Library, had lost electrical power that morning, an extremely rare event. Just before the discussion, the room lit up again. This was fortunate, but I did regret the lost opportunity to discuss reading without the convenience of electricity. As we examined books from the manuscript period, and then from the early years of printing, one student asked: “Why? Why do we need these physical books in our age of mass digitization?” (Remember, the electricity had returned.) Beyond digitization’s electrical dependence, as a rare books librarian I explained that I respond to the touch of the press on the page; the vibrancy of the illustrations; the texture of the paper, parchment or vellum; the luxury or simplicity of the bindings; the many hands of ownership over time; and especially the idiosyncrasies of copy. Not all copies (even of the same edition) are alike; one digital copy of a single title is never sufficient to illuminate the history of a given “one book.”

But there is historical 19th-century precedent for the mass dissemination and mass consumption of words and pictures so commonplace today. Thanks to Charles Knight, words and pictures were widely available, on two continents, for a penny.

--- KO’C

Excellent Staff, continued

- a staff member planned a way to alleviate critically overcrowded shelves in Lauinger by analyzing circulation patterns and sending less frequently used volumes to our offsite facility;
- a librarian calculated the costs-per-use of the Library’s online resources subscriptions and provided bibliographers with the data to make appropriate renewal decisions; and
- a graphics specialist expertly scanned and photographed materials from the Archives for numerous publications, including the new three-volume set by Emmett Curran, *A History of Georgetown*.

I hope we will always be able to continue what has now become a wonderful tradition for our staff—not only for the obvious rewards, but also for the understanding that leadership can exist throughout the organization, irrespective of a particular job function; and that each year, a number of colleagues notice that leadership. Our program may become a model for the university for the future, but whether or not it does, we know that our aspiration always to provide excellent service to our users is realized every year.

--- AGK
The Science of Chocolate

This February the Library Associates were treated to chocolate and a lesson in chocolate science and manufacturing when the Library presented *The Science of Chocolate* with the help of the Blommer Chocolate Company. The Blommer Chocolate Company, founded in 1939, is the largest processor of ingredient chocolate and cocoa-related products in North America, with five manufacturing facilities in the U.S. and Canada. Georgetown University’s Blommer Science Library, which opened in 1962, bears the name of Henry J. Blommer (C’26), and four generations of Blommers have attended Georgetown.

Company President and Chief Operating Officer Peter W. Blommer (C’85), Vice President of Operations Stephen J. Blommer (C’89), and Corporate Manager of Sensory and Product Guidance Rose Potts brought their knowledge, expertise and chocolate samples to a large and appreciative audience in Copley Formal Lounge. They talked about chocolate’s countries of origin, its romance, the many stages of processing cocoa beans, and the health benefits of chocolate. And of course, there were comparative tastings. Those who missed the event can see it at www.library.georgetown.edu/digital/lecture-hall.

The Civil War and Georgetown University

The Library marked the Civil War’s sesquicentennial in March with two exhibitions in Lauinger Library and a Library Associates event featuring three expert perspectives from Professors of History Chandra Manning and Maurice Jackson and University Archivist Lynn Conway.

Professor Chandra Manning focused particularly on contraband camps, which held 4,200 runaway slaves in the District of Columbia in 1862. She noted that while conditions in those camps varied widely, they did have some positive effects, including giving Union soldiers the opportunity to get to know black men and women on a day-to-day basis rather than as an abstraction, often for the first time in their lives. Professor Maurice Jackson talked about Washington D.C. and its environs, just before, during and in the wake of the Civil War. He discussed the tensions between white populations and free blacks in the District in the years leading up to the War, the first units of black troops fighting for the Union, and those who fought for the emancipation of slaves within the District. Lynn Conway discussed the impact of the Civil War on Georgetown College, its students and the broader College community through archival photographs, letters and documents of the time. The oldest known photograph of the Georgetown campus, letters from students who felt the need to leave the College at the onset of the War, and photos of occupying troops were just part of her presentation. One of the legacies of the Civil War, she noted, was the choice of the colors blue and grey by the Boat Club setup committee in 1876, to represent North/South unity among the boys of the College.

See the entire event online at www.library.georgetown.edu/digital/lecture-hall.
Reveries, continued

The north wall of the exhibition features World War I posters commissioned by the American Library Association, which established the Library War Service in 1917. The Service established 36 active military tributed library 500 additional the war. These by John Sheri-and Charles are accompanied wood engraving of the main of the New York Throughout the exhibition the calming presence of books and the intimate acts of reading and reflection are depicted in a variety of individual and group settings, revealing the central role of reading in personal enrichment and in education.

--LLW