Friends of NIU Libraries Provide Additional Storage Space for Digital Collections

Northern Illinois University Libraries have purchased four 500 GB storage drives, to be added to the Libraries’ new digital projects server, with $1,570.28 provided by the Friends of the Libraries. This represents a critical upgrade of the library’s existing technical infrastructure.

At present, many digital objects in the collections of the University Archives and Regional History Center and the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections are at risk of loss, as they are stored on media (ex. CD ROM, DVD, Flash drive) intended only for temporary use. Research has shown that these types of media can often break down over time, and are themselves subject to loss due to their small size and fragile nature. Many of the library resources presently at risk are unique, one-of-a-kind items, including born-digital manuscripts and images. Analog materials, such as the libraries’ well-known collection of nineteenth century dime novels, remain in very fragile condition, but have not been digitized due in part to a lack of available storage space on library servers. The new hardware will enable the libraries’ Department of Rare Books and Special Collections and the University Archives and Regional History Center to address this situation by the use of a state-of-the-art digital environment for the archiving, long-term preservation and, where appropriate, online presentation of digital materials.

Drew VandeCreek
Director of Digital Projects
Founders Memorial Library

Save These Dates for Friends’ Events!
Thursday, September 1, 2011 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm.
Wine and Cheese Party
Rare Books and Special Collections Department, Founders Memorial Library 402.
This event is by invitation only.

Wednesday, October 5, 2011 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm
“Future Power Sources to Meet Our Energy Needs”.
Theodore Krause, Chemical Sciences and Engineering Division, Argonne National Laboratory.
Staff Lounge, Founders Memorial Library, lower level.
This event is free and open to the public.

Tuesday, November 1, 2011, 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm
“A Tale of Polar Canaries, Humanity’s Future and Some NIU History”
Ross Powell, Board of Trustees, Professor and Distinguished Research Professor, Department of Geology and Environmental Geosciences.
Rare Books and Special Collections Department, Founders Memorial Library 402.
This event is free and open to the public.
SF Teen Read reaches out to local teens through STEMFest

On June 28, a group of area teens gathered in the Rare Books room of Northern Illinois University’s Founders Memorial Library to discuss the novel Uglies by Scott Westerfeld. Uglies is the first book in the SF Teen Read series, a cooperative venture between NIU STEM Outreach and DeKalb County libraries. SF Teen Read uses science fiction as a vehicle to promote reading and celebrate science: teens read age-appropriate novels, and then discuss the books and the science behind the fiction with experts from NIU. In Westerfeld’s novel, he presents a world where the government gives youths movie-star beauty when they turn sixteen, but this seeming generosity hides a terrible agenda. The teens discussed this vision of the future with Dr. Sharon Smaldino, an internationally recognized expert in educational technologies and lifelong science fiction enthusiast from NIU’s Department of Educational Technology, Research, and Assessment.

Even once the discussion ended, there was more to learn! NIU Rare Books and Special Collections staff and gracious hosts Angela Schroeder and Annie Oelschlager brought out a bounty of science fiction novels and pulp magazines for the teens to peruse. These stories were foundational works in the same tradition of social science fiction as Uglies, and the teens appreciated the opportunity to see these rarer editions.

You might think that the SF in SF Teen Read stands for science fiction, and you’d be right, but SF also stands for STEMfest, a massive annual expo hosted by NIU that features an incredible variety of hands-on exhibits and demonstrations geared to excite youth about careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Young people come from all over the state to participate, and over 3,000 people attended in 2010. In 2011, organizers expect over 5,000 visitors. This year’s STEMfest will also include special science fiction events, such as a book nook featuring nonfiction and fiction books on science and technology, an essay contest for high school students, and a possible visit and reading by a science fiction author.

SF Teen Read would like to thank Dr. Sharon Smaldino and Rare Books and Special Collections staff Lynne Thomas, Angela Schroeder, and Annie Oelschlager for contributions to this discussion! Our next SF Teen Read discussion meets on August 16, when we discuss Feed by M. T. Anderson with Dr. Angela Grippo, assistant professor of Neuroscience and Behavior in NIU’s Department of Psychology, and Alex Eddy, internet marketing expert from the Marketing Department in NIU’s College of Business!

Steven A. Torres Roman
Teen Librarian
DeKalb Public Library
Hello Friends of the Library near and far! This little corner of Founders’ Type continues to provide you with the latest from the Regional History Center, which houses the archives of NIU and valuable historic records from the greater northern Illinois area.

We have a prized gem in room 400 of Founders Memorial Library—known as IRAD, the Illinois Regional Archives Repository System is made up of seven repositories throughout the state. One of these seven offices is located in the Regional History Center, sharing our reading room and shelves to aid in providing the most comprehensive research facility of the history of northern Illinois. Supervised by the Illinois State Archives, each IRAD office maintains and provides public access to government records generated from its local counties. The records span the mid 1800s through the early 1900s, although it is up to the discretion of the individual counties as to how much and what they give to IRAD. The NIU IRAD houses the materials of the northernmost 18 counties of Illinois, excluding Cook. Included are birth, death, and marriage certificates; records of deed, probate, and naturalization; and civil and criminal court case files.

The Illinois Secretary of State’s Office maintains a database of the historical materials holdings online (http://www.ilsos.gov/GenealogyMWeb/iradsrch.html), which allows researchers to discover if a document exists within the IRAD System. They can then contact the corresponding IRAD office via phone or mail where staff locate the records and provide patrons with photocopies. Researchers in northern Illinois are also encouraged to visit the Regional History Center to view the microfilm or paper records in person. While many individual counties charge for this research, IRAD at NIU only asks patrons to pay the price of the copies. In a world where prices are rising exponentially it really is quite a steal to have this service for a few coins.

IRAD records are most beneficial to genealogists, but the staff has also received requests from television shows, authors, professors, and graduate students. We are continually surprised by the broad spectrum of research our patrons conduct; IRAD recently saw a PhD candidate who traveled from the east coast to look at court records referencing slavery and unfree labor. It is amazing to me that such an interesting topic could be extracted from the endless shelves of archives that we house. As always, we welcome you to take a look for yourself! Come and visit us this fall.

Katharine White, Curator of Manuscripts, Regional History Center
The Dean’s Corner

I would like to use this opportunity to reflect on the current state of affairs in Academic Libraries and Higher Education. Whenever I speak or write on this topic I begin to feel that the message I deliver concerning funding and Higher Education falls upon deaf ears, as this has become almost a mantra which like background noise is not noticed, or, ignored. The fact of the matter is that investment in Public Higher Education has been declining for at least 30 years. As states scramble to balance their budgets and control spending, social services and their programs, health and education have all been placed upon the chopping block and continually have had their funding reduced. This is also true at the Federal level. Currently Public Higher Education in Illinois receives only about 23 - 25% of its funding from the state, compared to almost 85% in the 1960’s. This is not unique to Illinois, but is the case in most other states as well. Unless and until the state of Illinois controls spending and increases revenue, the percentage of funding from the state for Higher Education will most likely continue to erode to the point where the statement publicly funded higher education becomes an oxymoron.

Ironically this is occurring at a time when traditional factory work and work that does not require a higher education degree or training has been moving offshore. Numerous studies have demonstrated that people entering the job market with a Higher Education background or degree have a higher salary potential than those without a Higher Education background. The national call has been to retrain as well as create a more educated workforce in the United States to compete with an ever expanding and competitive global economy, yet the funding to do this has not materialized, but rather been reduced. What has happened is the burden of education has been placed upon those that seek Higher Education. Nationwide, tuition increases, which public higher education is increasingly dependent upon to survive, have ranged from 18% - 25% over the past four years which puts the ability to achieve higher education out of the reach of more and more and continues to erode the ability of the U.S. to be competitive in the global economy.

What does this mean locally and to the NIU community? Northern Illinois University has many facets of infrastructure, teaching and research competing for a limited amount of fiscal resources. Laboratories need to be built and maintained, buildings need upkeep and renovation, salaries need to be paid and students need a plethora of services to be able to complete their degree. Libraries need to be funded to support the research, teaching, and learning of the NIU community. Unfortunately libraries seem very innocuous to many. People are aware libraries exist, but in an age of online search engines and billions of web pages, libraries are not the first thing that comes to mind for research in higher education, including those who fund higher education.

Fortunately there are some who do remember the critical mission of libraries, and the Friends of the NIU Libraries is representative of these champions. Without the dedication and commitment of the members of the Friends, some of what is offered the NIU community in the way of teaching and research would not be available. An example can be found in this issue’s column by Dr. Nicole Clifton. Without the Friends and their financial support Dr. Clifton would not be able to bring history to life in her classes, making use of original manuscripts for study and teaching.

I do not have an answer to the problems in funding for Academic Libraries and Higher Education, but I do thank those who make the choice to fund libraries and higher education to help ensure a future for those who seek higher education.

Patrick J. Dawson
Dean of Libraries
The Decline and Fall of the Book?

Academic libraries have many more resources than just books. Typical undergraduates today, if they think of a library like Founders’ at all, still envision stacks and stacks of books. Future undergraduates, however, may think of books very differently. My 20-something son recently asked me to put the Barnes and Noble “Nook” on his early holiday gift list. To hide my surprise at his request, I quickly ask him to explain the differences between the Nook and Amazon’s better known “Kindle” device. My son simply said that “well, the Nook is cheaper.” Perhaps he knows me too well. I will make sure that a digital book reader is under the tree for my son, but our exchange started me thinking about my fears for the future of the printed book.

To begin, let me stress that I have great respect for technology. There is no way the academic world could exist these days without e-mail. Laptops and smart phones are technological wonders that really have made most of our lives better. I do not own a tablet computer, but I have been very impressed with their capabilities. It is possible that I might like reading a book on some kind of digital device. I don’t think, however, that reading an e-version of a book will give me as much pleasure as reading a printed one. I also worry about the loss of an important, elemental connection that humans have with each other across time that would be radically altered if printed books disappear.

The best example that I can provide of the powerful sensation of possessing and engaging a printed book involves my two favorite orators of the 19th Century. According to John Stauffer’s Giants: The Parallel Lives of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln (New York: Twelve Books, 2008), both Lincoln and Douglass first learned about the elements of public speaking by reading Caleb Bingham’s The Columbian Orator. Stauffer notes that “the Orator was one of the most popular books in America. From 1797 to 1860, Bingham’s work went through some twenty three editions and in many American homes it was one of a handful of essential books, along with the Bible, a spelling book and a farmer’s almanac.” (pp. 62-63).

Through the great kindness of a friend, I own a copy of The Columbia Orator. My copy was printed in Boston in 1817. According to one appraisal, this edition of Bingham’s work is likely worth $125. The value of this book to me, however, is not that it is “rare,” but that it is just possible that Abraham Lincoln or Frederick Douglass may have owned the very same edition of Bingham’s book that I possess. The thought that I could be reading the very same pages that once inspired Lincoln or Douglass is truly humbling. The great pleasure that I receive in holding and slowly—very slowly turning the pages of this old printed book simply cannot be duplicated by the glowing shiny plastic face of a Nook or a Kindle.

The Friends have an exciting set of programs planned for Fall 2011. We encourage all Friends members to continue their love of all books by planning to attend as many programs as possible.

Ferald Bryan
President, Friends of NIU Libraries
Friends of NIU Libraries Expand Southeast Asia Collection

The Donn V. Hart (Southeast Asia) Collection received a generous grant of $9,690 from the Friends of NIU Libraries to purchase two important microfilm sets. The first set, “America in Protest: Records of Anti-Vietnam War Organizations” (51 reels, $8,160) provides primary documents on the history and organizational development of the anti-war movement in America during the Vietnam War. The second set, “Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs, Cambodia, 1960-January 1963” (9 reels, $1,530), provides primary documents on the political, social, and economic development of Cambodia and its controversial leader, King Norodom Sihanouk, during the 1960s.

The materials, which pertain not only to Vietnam and Cambodia but also to the United States, serve as important primary sources for the study, teaching, and research of Southeast Asian studies as well as those interested in the history and politics of America. The two purchased microfilms are particularly useful to the Southeast Asian studies program at NIU, which includes several faculty members whose research and teaching are related to the Vietnam War and Cambodia. One of the courses in the History Department, for example, focuses exclusively on the Vietnam War (HIST 469 – The Vietnam War). The Donn V. Hart Collection is one of the top collections for Southeast Asian studies in the country, and the only one of its kind in the state of Illinois. Materials obtained for this collection thus serve not only students and faculty at NIU, but also scholars outside the campus who may access materials through interlibrary loan. As of this writing, NIU is the only institution in the state of Illinois that holds these two microfilm sets.

We are grateful for the generous support from the Friends of NIU Libraries, which over the years has helped the Don V. Hart Collection continue to be an excellent and unique library collection.

Hao Phan
Curator, Southeast Asia Collection
Founders Memorial Library

Member Benefits:

Receive a 10% discount on merchandise at the following stores:
- Ed Ripp Fine Art Books, Chicago

Receive a 15% discount on merchandise at the following online stores:
- Arcadia, (www.arcadiabooks.net)
- Coming soon: Friends tote bags! (watch your mail, the Friends website, or our Facebook page for details.)
2011-2012 Friends of NIU Libraries
Board Members and Officers

Ferald Bryan (president)
Mary Lincoln (vice president, program chair)
Sharon Dowen (treasurer)
Gary Gresholdt (secretary)
Patrick Dawson (ex officio)
Lynne M. Thomas (Faculty & Program liaison)
Drew VandeCreek
Ruth Anne Tobias

Michael Spires
Anne Kaplan
Linda Schwarz
Jerry Zar
Byron Anderson
Carla Montgomery
Dee Coover

Thank you to our Life Members
(donating $1000.00 or more)

Adra Baker-Gallagher
Paul & Jean Burtness
Glen & Dawn Ericksen
Deborah Erickson
James Erman & Lydia Vitello
Glen & Jamie Gildemeister
Elroy & Urla Golden
Deanne Holzberlein
Samuel & Corinna Huang
E. Nelson & Marilyn S. James
William C. Johnson
Yvonne Johnson
Barbara & David Johnson-Wint
Harriet Kallich
Ron Klein
Josephine Korcek
Mike Korcek

Judith M. Looney & John Jefferson
Scott & Kathy Miller
William & Josephine Monat
Carla W. Montgomery
Charles & Mary Munroe
Todd & Joanne Nebel
James Block Pick & Rosalyn Laudati
Ron & Barbara Provencher
Gordon Rasmussen
Lawrence Rast
Larry & Judy Sill
Sally Stevens
Peggy Sullivan
Rebekah Wilson
Arthur & Pat Young
Jerrold & Carol Zar
Paleography Class Researches Special Collections’ Documents

Graduate students in Nicole Clifton’s paleography class in spring 2011 discovered new information about several manuscripts in Northern Illinois University’s Rare Books and Special Collections. The course, which covered the history of European handwriting from the late classical period to the seventeenth century, was cross-listed in the English and History departments. Besides getting an overview of handwriting styles, students selected individual manuscripts to study closely.

Noah Blan, an M.A. student in the Department of History, identified a battered parchment page that Special Collections had acquired so visitors could handle it and learn what parchment feels like. The piece had been used in binding another book, as was common practice in the Middle Ages when a book began to fall apart or was no longer needed. Blan found that it is a page from a Cistercian book, with fragments of two different texts: parts of the Commentary on the Gospel According to Mark, and of Arnold of Bonneval’s Treatise on the Seven Words of the Lord on the Cross. Blan transcribed the Latin texts and translated them. Now visitors to Special Collections who are curious about the writing on this scrap can read Blan’s translation.

Jennifer Holland, from the Department of English, tackled a large document, the Indenture between Richard Heather, Husbandman, and Nicholas Sawyer, Yeoman, involving a land transfer in Yateley, now in Hampshire, in the seventeenth century. This document is part of a collection with a surprising history. An unknown man dropped off several documents at the De Kalb Public Library, which passed them on to NIU’s Special Collections. The documents had at one time been owned by Hamill and Barker, Chicago dealers in rare books and manuscripts; most of this collection went to the Lilly Library in Indiana. Holland contacted the Yateley Society, a local history organization in the U.K., and learned that a previous transfer of the same land is recorded in the Hampshire Record Office, and that NIU’s document probably records the acquisition of land on which to build potteries. Pottery was a major industry in Hampshire in the seventeenth century. The Yateley Society was very interested in Holland’s find.
Two other History M.A. candidates, Bethany Aidroos and Robert Fulton, tackled a pair of French documents from the same eighteenth-century official, Louis Phélypeaux, the French Secretary of State under Louis XIV and Louis XV. Fulton’s document was an extract from the official registers, presented in the form of a letter appointing an official in charge of taxation for a region of France. It was written by a secretary, and signed simply “Phélypeaux.” Fulton is researching official French communications under Louis XIV. He notes that at the time this document was written—in the minority of Louis XV—the government was trying to recover from the financial crisis of 1709-16. The new appointee, while rising out of the minor provincial nobility by this royal appointment, would be under pressure to collect taxes efficiently. Aidroos transcribed a personal letter attributed to the same Louis Phélypeaux, to a young officer, counseling him not to ask for a raise, lest this make his superiors unhappy with him; the writer refers to his own “chagrin” on having to retire. There is also a postscript about Phélypeaux’s health: “gout and rheumatism have forgotten about me in the past two years.” The signature is in the same hand as the letter, so the entire letter was written by Louis Phélypeaux, not by a secretary. The two pieces together show both the official and the personal side of a French nobleman.

Photo: [Document, 29 may 1717, from Louis Phélypeaux, marquis de la Vrillière, French Secretary of State under Regent Philippe D’Orléans, appointing a Lieutenant General in charge of taxation]

Photo: [Letter, 17 janv. 1709, from Louis Phélypeaux, marquis de la Vrillière, Louis XIV’s Secretary of State, advising a young officer not to ask for a raise]
All of the above documents are single sheets. Special Collections also owns some small notebooks in which readers collected verse and prose that caught their fancy. Amber Rzepka, a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of English, took on the task of transcribing a commonplace book that belonged to Eliza Mayer (1844-1920), of Baltimore, in the 1860s. The book itself may have been imported from France, since its spine is stamped with “Copie de Lettres.” Besides copying passages that she admired from her reading, Eliza also inserted newspaper clippings and dried flowers. The library’s catalogue suggested that Eliza Mayer was the daughter of Brantz Mayer, a scientist and historian, but Rzepka’s research reveals that Eliza was actually Brantz’s niece, the daughter of his brother Charles. Eliza later married the Reverend Robert Boyd van Kleek. One of their daughters, Mary van Kleek, attended Smith College, studied the working conditions of women in factories, and became a social reformer. Eliza Mayer’s commonplace book suggests a rather conventional and pious young woman: she copied popular sentimental verses, parts of a religious tract, and excerpts from essays on nature. Rzepka notes that most of the excerpts were from very recently published works, indicating that Eliza “was an avid reader,” that she was educated and leisured enough to have the time to read and take notes, and that she corresponded with other ladies (including her cousins) with similar interests. “However,” Rzepka observes, “the fact that her daughter went on to be an important social reformer and advocate for women’s rights shows a radical shift in the attitudes of young women in the mid-nineteenth century to those of the early twentieth century.”

Clifton’s paleography course was a “Special Topics” seminar, offered for the first time in spring 2011. It frequently met in Special Collections so as to draw on its resources: manuscripts, facsimiles, trade publications for collectors and dealers in manuscripts, and reference works. Thanks to Special Collections, its Curator Lynne Thomas, and her staff, the graduate students enrolled in the course were able to spend hours working with original documents from the thirteenth to the nineteenth century, and to present the library with their findings about its holdings.

Nicole Clifton
Associate Professor
Department of English
A Note from the Faculty Liaison

Welcome back! Fall is in the air, the students are back on campus, and we have a semester of great programming on the way. This semester, the Program Committee has decided to have a “semester of science,” and in addition to our Wine and Cheese Party that was held on September 1 (trying different kinds of wine surely is a form of testing), we have lectures in October and November that will encourage us to look at the world a little bit differently.

On Wednesday, October 5 at 7:30 pm in the Founders’ Library Staff Lounge (Lower Level) Theodore Krause from Argonne National Laboratory will be speaking on Future Power Sources To Meet Our Energy Needs. Ted notes that “The U.S. currently derives about 85% of its energy from fossil fuel sources -- petroleum, natural gas, and coal. With growing concerns regarding the use of these energy sources such as the economic impact of foreign petroleum imports and the environmental impact of CO2 emissions from coal, new technologies are being developed to increase our use of renewable energy sources such as wind, solar, and biomass. In this presentation, I will give an overview of some of the new technologies being developed, such as wind mills, solar panels, and biofuels, which utilize these renewable energy sources describing their benefits, projections for their growth over the next 20 years, and the challenges they face to achieve their projected growth.”

On Tuesday, November 1 at 7:30 pm, also in the Staff Lounge, Ross Powell, Board of Trustees Professor and Distinguished Research Professor from NIU’s Department of Geology and Environmental Geosciences brings us A Tale of Polar Canaries, Humanity’s Future and Some NIU History. His description: “The world’s polar regions are acting as the “canaries in a coal-mine” as our globe warms. Unfortunately these areas are “off the radar” for much of the US population as scientists (including us at NIU) are trying to convey the urgency to act to political leaders and the general public. Warming and its effects can be controlled if we act now. This talk will cover aspects of these global warming issues and how they relate to this region. The role NIU’s scientists play in this research will be highlighted and placed in perspective of NIU’s 40 years of polar research tradition.”

Last year, we debuted an awards program for purchasing materials for the library. The awarded purchases are detailed in this issue of Founders’ Type (pgs. 1 and 6). The Friends Awards program is once again accepting submissions, through October 15. For more details and the application process, please see http://www.ulib.niu.edu/FRIENDS/Proposal%20guidelines.pdf.

We hope that you will join us in learning about green energy and global warming.

If you have suggestions for future programs, please feel free to forward them to lthomas@niu.edu.

Lynne M. Thomas
Faculty Liaison, Friends of NIU Libraries.
Yes! I/We wish to join the Friends of NIU Libraries at the following level:

- $1,000 or more Life Member
- $500 Benefactor/Corporate
- $100 Donor
- $50 Family
- $35 Individual
- $20 Student (Must show ID)

Enclosed is a gift of $______________
(Installment plans are available for large gifts)

Please charge to my
- Visa
- MC
- Discover

Credit Card Number ________________________________
Expiration Date ________________________________
Signature _______________________________________

Please charge to my
- Visa
- MC
- Discover

Credit Card Number ________________________________
Expiration Date ________________________________
Signature _______________________________________

Would you like any of the following brochures?
- Library Book Fund
- Ensuring the Future
- Friends of NIU Library

If a gift is in memory of someone, please include the purpose

NIU also offers Payroll Deduction for faculty and staff
Make checks payable to Friends of NIU Libraries

________________________________________________________________________

Name _______________________________________________________________
Address _______________________________________________________________
City __________________________ State/Zip Code ___________________________
Telephone __________________________ __________________________

Email _______________________________________________________________

Mail to: Friends of NIU Libraries, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL 60115-2868

Thank you for your support!