On January 30, 2009 in the Regional History Center of Founders Memorial Library, the Library Memorial Quilt Committee unveiled a quilt that they had created in honor of the victims of the campus shootings on February 14, 2008. The invitees included all of the people who had contributed in some way to the project. Afterwards the committee hosted a small reception in the Rare Books and Special Collections room, which Lynne Thomas had graciously offered us.

Last March, in response to the tragedy, staff members from the University Libraries of Northern Illinois University formed a committee to sponsor this project. In April of 2008, the committee, along with the help of student workers, handed out fabric squares to the greater NIU community. 163 completed squares were returned. During the summer, the committee created an overall design for the king-size quilt and arrived at a solution for its permanent display. Members of the library committee would stitch the squares into panels, which would then hang as if they were a single quilt within the glass-partitioned wall of the Regional History Center. At the same time, the management of Jo-Ann Fabrics kindly lent the committee a sewing machine, and the members were then able to do all the sewing in the library. Then in October of 2008, the committee received an Opportunity Grant from the DeKalb County Community Foundation to help defray the costs of displaying and preserving the quilt.

In designing the quilt, the committee sought to balance not only colors and textures but also to best display the sentiments of the contributors, who include students, staff, faculty and alumni of NIU as well as community organizations and local K-12 students and teachers. In addition, the quilt is unified by including the emblems of police and fire departments of neighboring communities. The fabric of the quilt itself is cotton, and all of the white batting and backing was washed and ironed by volunteers. To better preserve the quilt, professionals from the NIU Anthropology Museum lent their time and expertise to create a second muslin backing for the panels so that none of the fabric squares touches the wooden frames of the windows. They also devised a way for the panels to fit perfectly in the windows. In addition, the quilt is protected within the climate-controlled interior of the Regional History Center. Other archival measures include special filters that will be placed over the fluorescent lights to preserve the color of the fabric.

Quilts and other memorial projects allow people to come together during times of crisis to show support for the community. They tell a story about our capacity to offer comfort and healing. As we remember the victims of the tragedy, we are grateful to the many Huskies who contributed to this quilt. On your next visit to the library, we hope you will stop by to see it.

The Library Memorial Quilt Committee: Stacey Bivens, Pat Galvan, Rebecca Martin, Sherry Patterson, Lesly Schoo

By Rebecca Martin
Thoughts on the future of libraries:

When I was preparing to interview for the position of Dean of Libraries for Northern Illinois University I anticipated that I may be asked to address the question on what is the future of libraries. That started me to think about what the traditional role of libraries was, what has changed and what the future may indeed bring.

The underlying role of libraries basically from the time of the Library at Alexandria is to acquire, preserve and make information available to information seekers. The medium of information has changed over time, from clay tablets to scrolls to illuminated manuscripts to print to electronic and finally to born digital items. Despite the medium, libraries have and continue to acquire, preserve and make information available to those who seek information.

Libraries have evolved and continue to evolve. The physical building of the library has changed. Originally libraries preserved and kept information. Information was made available, but only for use within the library under the watchful eye of the librarian who often times was the only person who knew how to locate the information that the information seeker sought. Lending of materials to take out of the library is a relatively new concept in the history of libraries. The librarian was an effective medium between the information and the seeker. Who among us could ever actually figure out how to efficiently and quickly use a card catalog or paper indexes? Now how do most people begin an information search? Most seekers start on the internet using an internet search engine. Information is no longer confined to the physical library building and the librarian is no longer the obvious choice of whom to contact in pursuing information, yet librarians continue to be the best source for finding information despite the existence of the internet. The challenge is to make the librarian more visible in the process of information seeking, no small task when you consider that a lot of research is done on the internet outside of the library building.

The use of libraries has also evolved. There was a time when the library was a temple of knowledge, and as a temple silence was strictly enforced. Along with the silence, there was no place for food or drink in the temple. The purpose of the temple of knowledge was for silent contemplation of the information that was being consumed. Now look at libraries, both public and academic. Libraries are alive with people. Yes there are still those who prefer that the library be a silent monastic temple of knowledge, but the majority of library users have been influenced by the revolution in the interaction of information and food and people through Barnes & Noble and Borders bookstores. Libraries more and more are replacing the single station study carrel with tables to allow for group collaboration, the hard library chairs with comfortable seating. In some ways this is reflective of the way students are taught and learn now. More and more students from an early age are encouraged to work in groups and study in groups and this carries over to the time that they enter higher education. Yes, there is still competition for good grades, but often the competition is among groups, not individuals.

Libraries are in the process of evolving into social networking centers. In many libraries there are movie nights, game nights, pizza parties and other activities that would make the earlier generations of librarians jump up and say HUSH! There is a challenge here however. The challenge is to accommodate the learning and study styles of both the individual who wants a quiet place and the groups that want an interactive space.
So what then is the future of libraries and librarians? If you look at the past and see how libraries and librarians have changed and evolved a safe bet is that libraries and librarians will continue to change and evolve to meet the expectations of information seekers. However what will remain a constant is that libraries will continue to acquire, preserve and make information available in whatever medium that information delivery takes on in the future and that librarians will continue to be an integral part of the information process.

What has changed and evolved at the NIU Libraries in the last few months? We allow covered drinks in the building and there is even a café on the lower level. We are working to strike a balance between group study and quiet study. We are in the process of acquiring more comfortable seating. We are also involved in the acquisition, preservation and making available electronic and born digital items. Finally, we are encouraging librarians to go out to the information seekers and set up office hours in the departments they serve. Yes the NIU Libraries are changing and evolving and it will be a continual process.

Patrick Dawson

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**Announcements:**

*The Friends book sale is in need of books! Please donate you old books to the NIU Library. Contact Jane Farmer (815) 753-9869 to arrange donations.*

*Don’t forget to visit the Founders Cafe on the lower level of Founders Library!*

**Save These Dates:**

February 26, 2009- Faculty Wine Tasting in Rare Books and Special Collections from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

March 5, 2009- “Picturing Hemingway” presented by Redd Griffin in Rare Books and Special Collections at 7:30 p.m.

April 9, 2009- Pizza with author E.E. Knight at Pizza Villa, 824 W Lincoln Hwy, DeKalb, IL, at 6:00 p.m. Co-sponsored by the DeKalb Public Library.

April 18, 2009- “Death by Chocolate: Chicago-Area Mystery Writers Discuss their Work” in the Hearthside Room at the Ellwood House Visitor Center at 1:30. Featuring Sweet Dreams Desserts.

May 3, 2009- Book Appraisal Fair in Rare Books and Special Collections from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Featuring Thomas Joyce of Thomas J. Joyce & Co. and the Chicago Rare Book Center, and William Butts of Main Street Fine Books, in Galena, IL.

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**A Note from NIU library’s Circulation department:**

NIU Annuitants/retirees can contact Cliff Golden or Madelyn Nelson at the Circulation desk to have your accounts updated to provide full library privileges for life. You must have I.D. and your OneCard. For more information contact Cliff Golden at 815-753-0343 or Madelyn Nelson at 815-753-9846.
Mark Twain made the Mississippi Valley of the nineteenth century an integral part of American historical memory in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, and *Life on the Mississippi*. The Mark Twain’s Mississippi Project has gathered a significant set of primary source materials from the collections of member institutions (Northern Illinois University Libraries; The Newberry Library; the St. Louis Mercantile Library; and Tulane University Libraries) to provide World Wide Web users with an opportunity to compare Twain’s observations and characterizations of life on the nineteenth century Mississippi with the historical record. In addition to Twain’s celebrated Mississippi works themselves, collected materials include steamboat passengers’ travel narratives and descriptions of individual cities, plantations, and other notable sites along the river, as well as a significant number of period images portraying these scenes.

The project web site complements these traditional library materials with several types of multimedia resources. These include original sound recordings of songs pertaining to the river, made from period sheet music. They also include an interactive map of the Mississippi Valley states (defined as all states bordering on the river), built with Geographic Information Systems technology, which features representations of census data at the county level. This map resource also breaks new ground in the field of library science in that it presents the project’s collected text and image materials through a geographically oriented graphical interface. This allows site users clicking on a link to the city of Memphis, for example, to examine all of the project’s text resources mentioning that place, in chronological order. Similarly, a click on a place link in the map can also enable users to review all image materials depicting that place, in chronological order.

In addition to these primary source materials, the project has assembled original interpretive resources, in text and video formats, providing its users with concise summaries of the scholarly literature discussing Mark Twain’s life, his work, and the Mississippi Valley in the nineteenth century. Contributors to these materials include Shelley Fisher Fishkin of Stanford University; Robert Hirst of the University of California, Berkeley; Gregg Camfield of the University of California, Merced; Peter Kastor of Washington University in St. Louis; and O. Vernon Burton of the University of Illinois. Video materials also include an original documentary film directed by NIU alumnus Marcus Leshock as a part of his graduate work in the Department of Communication.

Northern Illinois University Libraries’ Digitization Unit is currently at work on a set of lesson plans,
using primary sources from the Mark Twain’s Mississippi Project web site to address historical questions raised in the National Standards for History, to be used by K-12 teachers. This work is supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities’ Division of Education Programs. These materials will be available on the project web site in the summer of 2008.

Drew VandeCreek

St. Louis Levee

Mark Twain
Dear Friends,

It has been a busy semester, to say the least. We hosted a wine-tasting, sponsored the Muggle Ball on Halloween, and closed out 2008 with a lovely celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Friends, a well-attended evening with Peter Sagal, host of NPR’s “Wait … Wait… Don’t Tell Me.” I would especially like to thank Angie Schroeder for her tireless work on these events.

As the year turns, we have a couple of transitions to announce. Joan Metzger, who for nearly 7 tireless years has voluntarily run the Friends of the NIU Libraries ongoing book sale, has turned over those duties to Jane Farmer in the Acquisitions Department. We would like to thank Joan for making the sale such a success, and to thank Jane for agreeing to take over those duties for the foreseeable future.

Additionally, Kathy Wright has elected to step down as the Friends Treasurer. Byron Anderson has graciously volunteered to take over those duties until a new treasurer can be elected at the Friends Annual Meeting. I’d like to thank Kathy for her service and Byron for his willingness to step in.

The Friends Program Committee, chaired by Ron Klein, is hard at work to bring you exciting programs for 2009, including another faculty-and-Friends wine tasting featuring wines by Rouge Wine Cellars in Creston, IL, on February 26. On March 5, Redd Griffin, of the Ernest Hemingway Foundation of Oak Park, will present his lecture, “Picturing Hemingway.” April 9, please join us as the DeKalb Public Library co-sponsors pizza with Science Fiction author E.E. Knight as we discuss his book Choice of the Cat at Pizza Villa. We are planning a “death by chocolate” event with several Chicago-area mystery writers involved with the Chicago Blues anthology on April 18th at Ellwood House, and our annual book, ephemera and autograph appraisal fair will again be presented on May 3rd, featuring Tom Joyce from HGTV’s “The Appraisal Fair,” and William Butts, who recently appeared on PBS’s “The History Detectives” as an autographs expert. We hope that you will join us for these fantastic activities.


We hope that you are enjoying the new look for Founders’ Type. If you have suggestions for story ideas, or for additional Friends activities, we would love to hear them!

Lynne M. Thomas,
Faculty Liaison
2008-2009 Friends of NIU Libraries
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Ron Klein (vice president, program chair)  
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Thank you for your support!