President’s Column

Dear Friends,

Yes, Friends, our organization is alive and well! To follow up our fall program by Lee Schreiner, we’re planning several diverse programs this Spring for your enjoyment and enlightenment. In developing these programs, we continue to reach out to various segments and interests of the community and to interpret broadly the Friends’ mission of encouraging the appreciation of books and other literary materials.

Kicking off this program season, on Thursday, March 31, Stephen Wright, Associate Dean for Public Services in the University Library, will discuss science fiction writer Philip K. Dick. In April, Dr. Anis Contractor, Assistant Professor in Northwestern University’s Institute of Neuroscience, will speak on the biological basis of memory.

Finally, as a collaborative program with the Department of Biological Sciences and the Center for Black Studies, we are negotiating a visit from United States astronaut, Dr. Robert Satcher. Dr. Satcher has a Ph.D. in chemical engineering and a medical degree from Harvard University. At the time of his selection to the astronaut program he was Assistant Professor at Northwestern University Medical Center. The date for this visit will be announced as soon as it has been confirmed.

As you know, another Friends mission is to assist the University Libraries in enhancing its resources and services. Thus, in addition to our programs, the Friends Board is considering various fundraising and publicity ideas. For instance, before next Fall, you may see on campus plastic bags with a Friends logo. Friends’ very effective liaison with the University Library, Lynne Thomas (who is also the Library’s Curator of Rare Books and Special Collections), is working with the Library’s Preservation Committee to purchase these plastic bags for use on bad weather days at Founders’ circulation desk. The bags will serve the dual function of protecting Library materials and promoting the Friends organization. The logo is now in the developmental stage.

Among other fundraising ideas under consideration is one that is of particular interest to me: selling square footage of the old, very interesting first-floor carpet in Founders Memorial Library. Many of our members and others in the NIU community join me in retaining a lasting memory of this carpet. If, indeed, a section of the carpet is due for replacement, this may be a unique opportunity for us!

Thank you for your continuing support of the Friends of the NIU Libraries. See you at our next program, March 31!

Best wishes,

Linda Schwarz
President, Friends of the NIU Libraries

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https://www.ulib.niu.edu/friends/
The Board of the Friends of the Library held a meeting on December 1, 2004. These are the minutes from that meeting.

Friends of the Library
Board Meeting, Holmes Student Center, Hunt Room
December 1, 2004

Present: Kathy Wright, Linda Schwarz, Barbara Johnson-Wint, Art Young, Rosalie Hewitt, Glen Gildemeister, Lynne Thomas, and Byron Anderson

1. The meeting got underway approximately at 12:40 p.m. Linda Schwarz, President, made some introductory remarks.

2. Report of the Program Committee
   a. Past programs to date for this year were mentioned.
   b. Future programs focused on three inquiries made by Barbara Johnson-Wint, four other possibilities from a previous meeting, and a likely confirmation by one speaker, Stephen Wright, once a date is set this spring. The Board agreed that a $200 honorarium could be offered to a non-NIU speaker.
   c. [UPDATE: Stephen Wright is scheduled on Thursday, March 31st, title: “The Shadow of Philip K. Dick”; Anis Contractor is scheduled for Thursday, April 14, title: “The cellular and biological basis for memory”–LT]
   d. Programming ideas centered on Jeff Chown, faculty member in the Department of Communication, presenting a film-related topic. Glen will ask Jeff if he would be willing to do a presentation for the Friends program series.

3. Library Preservation Committee request
   The Preservation Committee submitted a request asking whether or not the Friends group would be willing to purchase some plastic bags (with a Friends logo) for use at the Circulation Desk on bad weather days. The bags would help protect books during inclement weather and promote the Friends group. The Board agreed to purchase on trial 1,000 bags and assigned the decision on style and design to Lynne and the Committee. The approximate cost will run between $250 to $500.

4. Treasurer's Report
   Glen passed around copies of the Financial Summary Report for October of FY 2005. The report was divided into two parts: the Endowment fund and the Friends Assets, Revenues and Expenses. The endowment as of September 2004 is growing steadily, and the expendable fund balance for this year will be held until the Friends Board decides what to purchase for the library this fiscal year. The purchase may be made in relation to the upcoming celebration on April 7, 2005 of the library's purchase of its two millionth volume.

5. Fundraising and Publicity ideas
   a. Offer for sale through the Rare Books/Special Collections Room book bags, coffee mugs, and other items with a Friends logo. These could promote the Friends group and encourage membership.
   b. Create a Book Collecting Award for those with interest in some aspect of collecting books. Award would go to the one who submits the best paper on their topic. Initially, Friends would do a pilot run of the award.

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c. Sell square footage of the infamous, first-floor carpet in Founders. There is a section due for replacement, and the old carpet could be cut into one-square-foot sections, framed and sold. The carpet has made a lasting impression on many NIU community members and could prove to be a sellable item.

d. [UPDATE: Rare Books and Special Collections has been re-designing their website. Since we are also responsible for the Friends website, we are planning to re-design it as well. Charles Larry has designed a new logo for the Friends. Lynne Thomas requested opinions, etc. on the logo before going ahead with the re-design—LT]

6. Founder's Type
The Friends newsletter, Founder's Type, has been on hold awaiting additional information. The next issue will be Winter 2005.

7. New Business? No new business was brought forward.

Meeting adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

Submitted by Byron Anderson, Secretary. Updated by Lynne Thomas, Faculty Liaison.

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Friends Lecture:

Social Change as Reflected in the Sheet Music of World War I

Lee Schreiner, Sheet Music Collector

Thursday, Nov. 11, 2004, Rare Books and Special Collections (Founders 402)

Friends of NIU Libraries Program Series
November 11, 2004

The topic of "sheet music" may not generate much excitement on the surface, but Lee Schreiner managed to dig up a fascinating account of the subject. Schreiner, who teaches high school physics in Rockford, has a hobby of collecting old sheet music. His presentation for the Friends Program Series, Social Change as Reflected in the Sheet Music of World War I, focused on just one portion of his total collection.

Schreiner, who is not a musician, believes that sheet music is able to open the world to the past in ways that no other medium can. Much of the sheet music came from individuals who used small town publishers for the printing. These individuals had a story to tell, and the stories tended to reflect attitudes of the day, for example, attitudes toward minorities, current events, and of course love. Sheet music of the World War I era was very popular, occurring in the days before television, especially during the 1920s, 30s and 40s. The music was complemented by the existence of small-town opera houses and other live musical venues that existed during the era.

Collecting since 1974, Schreiner got started after a renter on his property left behind a piece of sheet music that struck a chord so to speak. Schreiner displayed a broad spectrum of well-preserved sheet music covers, covering pre-war pieces such as "There's No Need to Borrow Trouble, Because There's Plenty Here For All," to pieces during the war such as "If You Can't Enlist, Buy a Liberty Bond," and finally to post-war pieces such as "Let's Knock the Bull Out of the Bolsheviki."

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The federal government got involved in sheet music after the declaration of war. Individuals in the Wilson administration began to recognize the propaganda potential of the medium, and joined with other organizations such as the Security League and the American Preparedness League to produce music that could be used to persuade people to support the war. Sheet music went from the pre-war "We Take Our Hats Off To You, Mr. Wilson," a song that praised Wilson for his neutrality, to the "Hoe a 'Little Bit' in Your Own Back Yard," a song that encouraged the war effort by asking citizens to plant a victory garden. The government enlisted artists, most notably Norman Rockwell, to produce works of art for the covers making sheet music more appealing than ever. Interestingly, anti-American sheet music was illegal during the war and could land a person in jail, though some pieces, such as "I've Got the Profiteering Blues," complained that not everyone was getting ahead in the booming war-time economy.

Sheet music should be considered primary source material. Surprisingly, there has been no real academic study of this medium. Schreiner said that he would like to find a permanent home for his collection someday, and mentioned NIU's Rare Books and Special Collections room for this purpose. Undoubtedly, the collection would be a significant addition to the research and scholarship in the areas of history, music, art, popular culture, and other areas of the social sciences.

Byron Anderson, Secretary

Two Millionth Volume Celebration: Two Million Penny Drive

Dear Friends of the Library,

With a gift of $10,000 in 1895, Jacob Haish helped launch one of the most vital resources for teaching and learning at NIU – our university library. And how that gift has grown! Earlier this academic year, Founders Memorial Library acquired its 2-millionth volume, placing us in exclusive company among university and academic libraries in the United States. In the coming months, you’ll hear more about the activities and celebration planned to commemorate this historic occasion. The first of these activities will begin in early February, and for that we need your help.

As part of the activities to commemorate Founders Memorial Library surpassing 2 million volumes in total holdings, the 2 Millionth Volume Committee is planning to hold a 2 million penny fund raising challenge. A penny doesn’t sound like much, and indeed it isn’t. But if each of our 20,000 students and 4000 faculty and staff contributed the equivalent of 100 pennies, we’d more than double the amount of the original seed gift from Jacob Haish. All monies collected will be deposited in an NIU Foundation account with the goal of creating a permanent endowment ($25,000 minimum) for enrichment of future library collections. At this time, we are asking for offices and/or individuals willing to host a collection site. The committee will provide advertising posters and collection vessel (probably a 3½ or 5 gallon plastic water bottle) and periodic service to empty the collection container. The site host would be responsible for maintaining the posters, placing the collection container in an accessible site, securing the container at the end of each business day and over weekends, and contacting us for pick-up service whenever the container reaches some threshold. Of course, any additional help in promoting this fund raising amongst your staff, faculty or students would also be greatly appreciated.

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Our goal is to launch the 2 million penny fund raiser in early February, giving us 5-6 weeks of collection time before the formal celebratory activities. Please consider volunteering your unit’s office as a collection site. If you would like to host a collection site, or would like more information, please contact either Mary Munroe, Associate Dean of University Libraries (mmunroe@niu.edu) or me (akrmenec@niu.edu).

Sincerely,

The 2-Million Pennies Subcommittee
Andrew J. Krmenec, Professor and Chair, Department of Geography
Mary Munroe, Associate Dean of University Libraries
Susan Mini, Professor and Chair, Department of Physics

Honoring May Kyi Win
--Gregory H. Green, Southeast Asia Curator

Every two years scholars of Burma Studies gather together with other interested participants to hold the International Burma Studies Conference. This past October, NIU’s Center for Burma Studies played host to the conference which drew well over one hundred participants from around the world. For two days, from October 22-24, the conference held numerous panels covering a variety of topics including religion, ethnicity, minority relations, gender, languages, literature, politics, history, music, art and archaeology.

In addition to the above listed panels, this edition of the Burma Studies Conference included a special tribute panel for the late May Kyi Win, former Curator of the Donn V. Hart Southeast Asia Collection. Held in the Rare Books and Special Collections Room of Founders Library, the tribute attracted most, if not all, of the conference participants. The room overflowed with those who wished to pay one last tribute to May Kyi Win, their beloved friend and energetic librarian. As witnessed by the comments made during the program, she truly was everyone’s friend and every Burma scholar’s librarian.

Speakers at the session included a range of people who had been touched in one way or another by May Kyi Win, including former colleagues, professors, students, and friends. With each speaker more and more of May Kyi Win’s many qualities became evident. She was at once a devoted friend and caregiver, an excellent librarian, and forever a student of Buddhism and Burma Studies. Those comments presented at the tribute, and many more sent in by friends and colleagues, were gathered together ahead of time and preserved in a beautiful keepsake volume available to participants before and after the program.

Another aspect of the special session adding to its unique atmosphere was the exhibit of books, manuscripts, and maps surrounding the participants during the proceedings. The exhibit, entitled, Envisioning Burma: Selections from the Burma Collection at Northern Illinois University Libraries, displayed a wide assortment of materials to show the diversity of the collection, from rare and priceless manuscripts carefully stored in the Rare Books and Special Collections area to more common publications held in the general Southeast Asia Collection. The display will likewise be preserved in a forthcoming commemorative catalogue.

In all, the program was a great addition to the conference and much appreciated by its participants. Catherine Raymond, Director of the Center for Burma Studies, said, “It was tremendously moving to meet and hear all of the people coming from all over the world who have been touched by May Kyi Win during her lifetime.”
Life Members

Adra Baker-Gallagher
Glen and Dawn Ericksen
Glen and Jamie Gildemeister
E. Nelson and Marilyn S. James
Barbara and David Johnson-Wint
Ron and Karen Klein
William and Josephine Monat
James Block Pick
Gordon Rasmussen
Peggy Sullivan
Russell and Betty Wood
Jerrold and Carol Zar

Paul and Jean Burtness
Deborah Eriksen
Deanne Holzberlein
Yvonne Johnson
Martin and Harriet Kallich
John Jefferson and Judith M. Looney
Todd and Joanne Nebel
Mark Richard and Alice Priebe
Lawrence Rast
Rebekah Wilson
Arthur and Pat Young

Life Members have generously donated $1000 or more to the
Friends of the NIU Libraries.