ChatRef Service Begins

Starting in mid-August the Library began providing a new online reference service that allows librarians to communicate with students, faculty, and other researchers via the Internet. With the new service, known as ChatRef, librarians are able to answer questions and offer guidance in real time to researchers who are working in offices, dorms, computer labs, or at home. Librarians can deliver electronic documents or use "push" technology to send web pages from their screens to those of the researchers. In some cases the librarian and researcher can "co-browse" the Internet and use electronic databases simultaneously. Researchers need only their Internet browsers (such as Internet Explorer or Netscape) in order to use ChatRef, and can initiate a ChatRef session simply by clicking on the ChatRef button on the Library's homepage.

The new service is a direct response to the fact that many library users conduct substantial portions of their research from outside the library. According to electronic services librarian Megan Mitchell, who coordinated the implementation of the service at Oberlin, "ChatRef enables us to provide assistance to our users where they are. It's the logical extension of our services, given the complexities of the electronic information environment."

Oberlin is entering this new arena through a cooperative project involving OhioLINK libraries. Librarians from more than forty OhioLINK institutions are taking turns staffing the service, which is continued on page 7

Digital Audio Reserve Pilot Project Begins

This fall the Conservatory Library will experiment with the distribution of sound files over the campus network, using the ERes electronic reserve system. Students enrolled in Music History 101, Introduction to the History and Literature of Music, taught by Charles McGuire; and Music History 255, Music in the Nineteenth Century, taught by Claudia Macdonald, will be able to complete their reserve listening assignments online at any time from any campus network location. As is the case with other materials available via ERes, a “hard copy” of the recordings will be available on reserve at the Conservatory Library.

The family of Richard Miller Murphy, including his wife Jean MacDonald Murphy, is funding this pilot project. Murphy was Professor of Music History and Literature at the Oberlin Conservatory from 1946 to 1978.
First Friends of the Library Scholarship Awarded

Catherine Pellegrino

The Friends of the Library has awarded the inaugural Friends of the Oberlin College Library Graduate Library School Scholarship to Catherine Pellegrino. Ms. Pellegrino graduated from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music with the B. Mus. degree in fall of 1988, having majored in clarinet performance and music theory. She will enroll full-time in the School of Information and Library Science at the University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill beginning in fall 2002.

Ms. Pellegrino attended Yale University between 1992 and 1999, where she did graduate work in music theory and received both her masters and doctoral degrees. She was a Visiting Instructor in Music Theory at Oberlin in 1997-1998, and subsequently taught undergraduate courses in music theory and history at University of the South (Sewanee). She is currently a library assistant in public and technical services in the Natural Resources Library at North Carolina State University.

In materials accompanying her award application Ms. Pellegrino notes “I am changing careers from college teaching to librarianship because I believe that librarianship combines two characteristics that I have come to discover are essential to my satisfaction with a career path: a service ethic and intellectual breadth.” She says further, “The opportunity to learn about diverse fields of study and to have my knowledge continually challenged and broadened is one of the primary attractions of library work for me.”

Friends of the Library Update

The Friends of the Library provided exceptionally strong support for the Library during the 2001-2002 year. The organization also continued to sponsor a variety of programs for the education and enjoyment of members.

The Friends Council, at its fall 2001 meeting, increased the amount allocated for the acquisition of library materials to a total of $28,000. Based on the recommendation of the Acquisitions Committee, the Friends purchased several items for Special Collections, a number of major reference works, a variety of materials to support the study of the Middle East in response to the events of September 11, a portion of a microform collection on World War I, two major series on architecture, books on photography, and videocassettes and DVDs to support the new film studies program and faculty in the Conservatory.

Programs sponsored during the year included a provocative talk at the annual dinner by Nicholson Baker, author of Double Fold: Libraries and the Assault on Paper, and a special lecture by Nicholas Basbanes, author of Patience and Fortitude: A Roving Chronicle of Book People, Book Places and Book Culture. The Friends also co-sponsored with the Oberlin Public Library an engaging presentation by Hispanic novelist Denise Chavez.

The Friends Council held a special meeting on April 13, 2002 to consider the report of a special projects committee. The committee was established at the November 2001 annual meeting to recommend ways to use a portion of the substantial fund balance continued on page 4
From October 7 to November 8 the Library will host a major exhibition of medieval and renaissance illuminated books drawn from the collections of John M. Lawrence and Oberlin College. Mr. Lawrence, of Wooster, Ohio, is a life-long collector of medieval manuscripts and has generously lent the majority of items in the exhibition. "The Lawrence Collection's breadth is particularly remarkable," said Erik Inglis, assistant professor of art. "It spans virtually all of Europe, with fine examples from England, France, the Low Countries, Germany and Italy, ranging in date from the 12th to 16th centuries. The collection thus provides an excellent overview of book production and decoration from the High Middle Ages into the Renaissance. Additionally, Mr. Lawrence's interest in both manuscripts and early printed books makes his collection especially revealing about the transition from script to type, a watershed in Western history."

Medieval manuscripts are hand-written books, on parchment or paper, which date primarily to the era before, or the period contemporary with, early printing. During the Middle Ages, book production was a collaboration between patrons, calligraphers, artists, and book binders. Medieval illuminators embellished these manuscripts with colored inks and paint, with gold and silver. The time, money and materials devoted to books reflected the prestige accorded to their texts and function; religious manuscripts thus received the most elaborate decoration. Their beauty in turn made the book itself a rare and precious object. We continue to value medieval books today as precious historical records of culture, art, and religion. Illuminated manuscripts provide us with the medieval world's vision of itself, from routine, everyday activities to events of cosmic importance.

The exhibition will feature approximately 80 individual leaves and complete books that are broadly representative of European manuscript production. It will include examples of illuminated Bibles, private devotional manuscripts like psalters and books of hours, and books used in church during mass (antiphonals, graduals, and missals).

Mr. Lawrence will present a gallery talk on the exhibition on Wednesday, October 9, at 4:30 p.m. The exhibition has been scheduled in conjunction with this year's Harold Jantz Memorial Lecture, which will be delivered by Jeffrey Hamburger on October 14 (see related article in this issue).

The title of the exhibition is: "Pages from the Past: Illuminated Manuscripts from the Collections of John M. Lawrence and Oberlin College. An Exhibition of Manuscript Leaves and Books from the Middle Ages and Renaissance."
**New Digital Resources**

The full text of the *New York Times* (including obituaries, letters, recipes, and editorial cartoons!) is now searchable online back to 1851 through the ProQuest Historical Newspapers Collection ([http://www.il.proquest.com/](http://www.il.proquest.com/)). When retrieving results from a search of the database, individual articles are reproduced on the screen as if they were clipped from the paper; it is also possible to see images of complete pages of the paper, including advertisements, and to browse these pages.

*Oxford Reference Online* ([http://www.oxfordreference.com/](http://www.oxfordreference.com/)) includes the full text of over 100 dictionaries and reference works covering the spectrum from the humanities to the natural and social sciences. The site is completely cross-referenced, making it possible to execute a search in all sources, in titles in a particular subject area, or in individual works, such as the *Oxford Dictionary of Art*, *Dictionary of Ecology*, *Dictionary of Philosophy*, or the *Dictionary of Twentieth Century World History*. This resource, from one of the largest publishers of reference works, will be revised regularly and new titles will be added each year.

*Environmental LexisNexis* provides improved web-based access to the literature for Environmental Studies. This online database includes abstracts of thousands of journal articles and conference papers and links to selected full text of news sources, journals, and reference materials. Environmental LexisNexis also provides access to federal and state codes and case law, federal agency regulations and decisions, and state waste site data and hazardous materials information.

**OhioLINK Switches to EBSCO**

Over the summer, OhioLINK negotiated new licenses that will replace the databases Periodical Abstracts, Newspaper Abstracts, and ABI/Inform with comparable databases supplied by EBSCOHost. In making the switch to EBSCO, OhioLINK is able to provide coverage of more journals and newspapers and more access to full text articles. In addition to the three major databases described below, we will have continued on page 7...

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**Book Artist Richard Minsky Featured in September**

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**Friends Update** continued from page 2

that the Friends have accumulated in recent years. At the special meeting the Council resolved to authorize the Membership Committee to spend up to $10,000 to increase membership levels and it also authorized the Acquisitions Committee to spend up to $30,000 to acquire a discrete collection either for Special Collections or for a targeted area of the Library’s general collections.

The Friends had a total of 715 current members in 2001-2002, including 529 regular members, 82 who donated to other Library funds or gave gifts-in-kind, 68 student members, and 32 life members, and 4 honorary members. A total of $34,042 was contributed to the Friends during the year.

Minutes of both the November 2001 and April 2002 meetings of the Friends Council are available online at: [http://www.oberlin.edu/library/friends/Default.html](http://www.oberlin.edu/library/friends/Default.html)
Ohio Artists Treasure Trove

For fifteen years Mary Haverstock has worked tirelessly on the Ohio Artists Project in an inconspicuous office on the fourth floor of the Main Library. The story that began in 1985 with the “loan” of the Library office space by then Director of Libraries Bill Moffett ended quite dramatically this past June when the last files relating to the project were shipped to the Smithsonian American Art Museum / National Portrait Gallery Library.

The goal of the Ohio Artists Project was to produce a reference work that would fill a notable gap in the history of Ohio artists. That book, Artists in Ohio, 1787-1900: A Biographical Dictionary, was published by Kent State University Press in 2000, and is now held by over 150 libraries across 30 states, as well as Canada and the UK. The book, “prepared under the auspices of the...

Volunteer Spotlight: Elizabeth Rumics

The first word that comes to mind for Special Collections Librarian Ed Vermue when he thinks of Elizabeth Rumics is “indispensable.” Indeed, it takes a very special person to be the kind of volunteer that the Library is so fortunate to have in Ms. Rumics, who for the last six years has been donating about 15 hours per week of her time to assist in Special Collections. She has been engaged in a variety of projects in Special Collections, including a transfer of materials to the College Archives and indexing historical Oberlin newspapers. Her volunteer work also allows Special Collections to keep regular open hours for public access.

The experience that Ms. Rumics brought with her to Oberlin is varied and impressive. She earned her masters degree from Columbia University’s School of Library Service in 1957, while employed at the Fordham University Library. In subsequent stages of her career she was a member of the reference and reader services staffs at Columbia, Oberlin, and Upsala College. At Columbia she was a colleague of Eugene Sheehy, legendary editor of the seminal Guide to Reference Books. From her time at Oberlin she has especially fond memories of College Librarian Eileen Thornton. Following her retirement from Upsala in the mid-1990s, Ms. Rumics returned to Oberlin, which she says “seemed the logical place” for a number of reasons, including the wonderful access to musical performances offered by the Conservatory.

Thinking back on her career in librarianship, Ms. Rumics remarks on her transition from working at a large research institution (Columbia) to smaller schools (Oberlin and then Upsala) that “there’s a world of difference between university librarianship and college librarianship.” She found working in the college environment to be rich and satisfying, in part because of the way in which college librarians actually use the entire library collection as a tool to assist students.

In her current volunteer position Ms. Rumics is primarily responsible for a project to index Oberlin’s historical newspapers, which began with papers from 1906 and is now up to 1923. She enjoys the project because it gives her a unique window into Oberlin’s history and a sense of connection with the community. She notes that a project such as this can play an important role in bridging the “town-gown” gap, since the index is used and appreciated by community members as well as scholars. Ms. Rumics’ other work involves assisting patrons with Special Collections materials, updating catalog records and shelf list cards, and responding to requests for photocopies of materials.

The Oberlin College Library has been extremely fortunate to have volunteers like Elizabeth Rumics and Emiko Custer (see Perspectives #11, article on East Asian Studies collection), who contribute significantly to library services by generously donating both their time and their considerable expertise.

Note: The text continues on page 7.

Library Perspectives

Ray English
Jessica Grim
Megan Mitchell
Editors

A newsletter for users and Friends of the Oberlin College Library, Library Perspectives is issued two times a year. Printed from an endowed fund established by Benjamin and Emiko Custer.
Over 150 library staff, faculty, students, administrators, members of the Friends of the Library, and other guests attended a gala luncheon on May 1 in the Root Room of the Carnegie Building. The occasion marked the presentation to the Library of the 2002 Excellence in Academic Libraries Award from the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL).

Mary Reichel, President of ACRL, presented the award to Ray English, Director of Libraries at Oberlin. Other speakers at the luncheon included Scott Smith ’69, a representative of Blackwell’s Book Services, the award sponsor; Ann Sherif, Chairperson of the General Faculty Library Committee; Clayton Koppes, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences; Maria Paz Esguerra, a library student assistant and participant in the Library’s diversity internship program; and Nancy Dye, President.

"The Oberlin College Library was chosen for this award because of the outstanding quality of its services, collections, and programs, and the dedication of the Library staff to excellence in all that they do. This award is a national tribute to the leadership that the Library staff at Oberlin provides."

Mary Reichel

"A library, like the one we have at Oberlin, represents the sustained work of many people over time, not just the Library staff. The library, more than any place on a college or university campus, represents the combined efforts of the entire academic community. Although this award is made to the Library staff, it’s also an award for the entire Oberlin community, one that can be a genuine source of pride for us all."

Ray English

"We have an extraordinarily dedicated Library staff that goes the extra mile, that remains current and up-to-date, that is continually willing to adapt to the fast-changing world of libraries. All of us at Oberlin are in the debt of today’s Library staff and the Library’s very long tradition of excellence."

Clayton Koppes

"The Library has been my second home. If I’m not in class, or not sleeping, I’m either doing schoolwork in Mudd at my special table, or I’m working in the Science Library. My most rewarding experience of all has been being an IMLS diversity fellow."

Maria Paz Esguerra

“There is a lot of truth to that old adage that to make a college or university you need three things: you need faculty, you need students, and you need a library. I think that will always be the case, although libraries are certainly looking different, feeling different, and have all manner of different services and resources. A library is a fundamental humanistic institution, a fundamental humanistic space, that will always be essential to educating every generation of students and all of the members of an academic community."

Nancy Dye
Ohio Artists
continued from page 5

Oberlin College Libraries" and compiled and edited by Ms. Haverstock, Jeannette Mahoney Vance, and Brian L. Meggitt, is over 1,000 pages long and includes entries for over 10,000 artists.

For a period of time when the project was winding down, it looked as though the archival materials that supported the project (including over 10,000 separate files of approximately 40 linear feet) would have to be split, with selected materials being sent to interested libraries and archives in places like Cleveland and Columbus. But as word was received that the archive might be dispersed, the Smithsonian contacted Ms. Haverstock and arranged to have the full collection of materials sent to them.

Because the archive was so large, the Smithsonian requested only that it be shipped in parts over time. (Ms. Haverstock has the highest praise for the staff of the Oberlin post office, who came repeatedly to the loading dock of Mudd during a four-month period to collect the heavy boxes and send them off.) The archive will be incorporated into the American Art Library's vertical files, by artist name, where they will be available to students, researchers, and scholars.

Although with the completion of the Ohio Artists Project Mary Haverstock has moved out of her office in Mudd, she is as actively engaged in research as ever. She is currently working on a rather large project to provide artist biographies for an exhibition related to Ohio's bicentennial celebration. She is determined, next time, to stick with something small.

Michael Dirda ’70 to Speak
continued from page 1

from Cornell University. He is currently on a leave from the Washington Post while writing a memoir on how he became a reader.

The title of his talk, which will follow the Friends dinner, is: “Looking for a Good Time: Reading, Libraries, and the World of Books.” He will also hold a book signing at the Oberlin Bookstore at 3:30 pm that Saturday.

Reference Area Redesign

This fall the reference area of the Main Library will have a whole new look. In early September all of the public computers, OBIS terminals, and laser printers will be consolidated in a new research workstation area designed to provide improved access to electronic resources and more convenient reference assistance.

The redesigned area will have new research workstation furniture and the reference desk will be moved so that it faces the workstations and the reference collection, creating more opportunities for interaction between researchers, reference librarians, and resources.

According to Megan Mitchell, Reference Librarian and Electronic Services Coordinator, “we anticipate that the workstation area, which will be highly visible as people enter the Library, will be a convenient, attractive, and comfortable space for doing research.”

To create space for the new workstation area, the southwest section of the main level of Mudd Center underwent significant changes: shelving units no longer needed for print indexes were relocated to provide additional space for the reference and government documents collections, study tables were placed to take advantage of the natural light along the west wall, and the microfiche cabinets and the reader/printers were moved to the north end of the west wall.

New Digital Resources continued from page 4

access to a variety of other EBSCO host titles:

**Academic Search Premier** ([http://search.epnet.com/login.asp?profile=web&defaultdb=aph](http://search.epnet.com/login.asp?profile=web&defaultdb=aph)) is the world's largest scholarly, multi-discipline, full-text database designed specifically for academic institutions. This database contains full text for over 3,430 scholarly publications from the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. Academic Search Premier includes full-page PDF images as well as other color images.

**Newspaper Source** ([http://search.epnet.com/login.asp?profile=web&defaultdb=nfh](http://search.epnet.com/login.asp?profile=web&defaultdb=nfh)) contains full text for 245 sources, including regional U.S. newspapers, such as the Atlanta Journal and Constitution, Boston Globe, Chicago Tribune, and San Jose Mercury News, international newspapers, as well as newswire stories, and transcripts for NPR programs such as All Things Considered and Morning Edition. This database also provides indexing and abstracts for national newspapers such as the Christian Science Monitor, Los Angeles Times, New York Times, and the Wall Street Journal.

**Business Source Premier** ([http://search.epnet.com/login.asp?profile=web&defaultdb=buh](http://search.epnet.com/login.asp?profile=web&defaultdb=buh)) provides access to 2,710 full text scholarly journals and business periodicals covering economics, finance, accounting, and international business, including the Harvard Business Review and Industrial & Labor Relations Review. The database contains PDF images for the great majority of journals, more than 200 of which go back to 1965 or the first issue published.

ChatRef Service Begins continued from page 1

open to students, faculty and staff at all OhioLINK institutions. When an Oberlin librarian is staffing the service, all queries from Oberlin-affiliated researchers will be directed to her/him.

In addition to its traditional reference service (at the reference desk, by phone, and by research appointment), the Library will continue to offer reference assistance by e-mail when ChatRef is unavailable and an instant answer is not required.

ChatRef Hours:
Monday — Thursday 9 am to 10 pm
Friday 9 am to 5 pm
Saturday 1 pm to 5 pm
Sunday 1 pm to 10 pm
Join Us. Be A Friend.

The Friends of the Oberlin College Library provide significant support for special acquisitions and programs that help the Library fulfill its fundamental role in the academic life of the College.

Members receive the Library Perspectives newsletter, invitations to Friends programs, and other privileges. Most of all, Friends have the satisfaction of supporting Oberlin’s outstanding Library.

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