



# LIBRARY

A Newsletter of the  
Oberlin College Library

# PERSPECTIVES

NUMBER TWENTY-FOUR

MAY 2001

## Information Literacy Initiative Takes Off

There has been a great deal of excitement about information literacy on Oberlin's campus in recent months, fueled in large part by a grant received last year from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, "Integrating Information Literacy into the Liberal Arts Curriculum" (see *Library Perspectives*, February 2000). The three-year grant, awarded to the Five Colleges of Ohio (College of Wooster, Denison University, Kenyon College, Oberlin College, and Ohio Wesleyan University), supports efforts between faculty and librarians who work collaboratively to incorporate information literacy into existing courses, new courses, or course sequences.

Last spring each of the five campuses chose a single pilot project to start the grant off. Work on the pilot projects was carried out over the summer and the fall '00 term. Oberlin's pilot project involved Daphne John, Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology, and Cynthia Comer, Head of Reference and Instruction, who revised Sociology



*Cynthia Comer and Daphne John*

211, Social Research Methods. They developed information literacy content and exercises over the summer and taught the course in the fall.

In carrying out this project Ms. John and Ms. Comer set specific "Goals

for Student Learning" related to information literacy. These goals were incorporated into the course through a series of presentations and labs (which were accompanied by assignments). Student feedback on the information  
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## Digital Developments

### Electronic Journal Center Expands

The OhioLINK Electronic Journal Center (EJC) has significantly increased its holdings in the natural sciences with the addition of journals from the Royal Chemical Society, American Chemical Society, the American Institute of Physics, the Institute of Physics, and the MCB University Press.

The EJC, which now provides access to more than 3,600 unique journal titles by fourteen different publishers, ranks consistently among the most often searched OhioLINK databases. More

than two million articles have been downloaded from the EJC since its inception in April of 1998. The end of this growth is not in sight—negotiations with additional publishers are currently underway.

### Ebooks Collection Grows

More than 16,000 electronic books are currently available to OhioLINK users as a result of an expanded agreement with netLibrary, a major purveyor of electronic books. To find an Ebook in OBIS, conduct an author search us-

ing "netlibrary" as the author. Ebooks can be "checked out" for a period of a week, and during that time they are unavailable to other users.

OhioLINK has also negotiated an Ebook agreement with ABC-CLIO, a major publisher of reference works.

### Sanborn Maps Available

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, large scale street plans produced by the Sanborn Fire Insurance company from 1867 to 1970, have been added to the  
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## Erlers Receive Life Memberships



*Friends President Terry Carlton, Trustee George Bent, Louise and Paul Erler, and Ray English*

Paul and Louise Erler, both of the Oberlin Class of 1932, were awarded life memberships in the Friends of the Library at the organization's annual dinner on November 4, 2000.

The Erlers, who live in Princeton, New Jersey, have been generous supporters of both the Library and the Friends of the Library for many years. They served as members of the Library mini-campaign steering committee in

the early 1990s. Mr. Erler has also chaired the Friends of the Library membership committee since 1996. In addition to their generous annual gifts, the Erlers recently established a two-life gift annuity that will ultimately benefit the Friends of the Library. This is the first planned gift specifically designated for the Friends organization. The Erlers' award was presented by College trustee George Bent.

## Friends Establish Graduate Library School Scholarship

At their annual meeting on November 4, the Friends of the Library Council established an annual scholarship in the amount of \$2,500 that will go to an Oberlin graduate who has been accepted at an accredited school of library and information science. While the scholarship may be awarded to any graduate who shows promise in the field, preference will be given to applicants from diverse cultural backgrounds.

The new Friends scholarship complements the prestigious grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services that the Library recently received to establish a model undergraduate internship program designed to attract students from diverse cultural back-

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## Friends Research Awards Announced

The Friends of the Library has initiated a student research awards program. Two annual awards, in the amount of \$500 each, will be given to Oberlin College students for outstanding papers or projects, in any subject, that demonstrate excellent research using library resources. Nominations for the awards will be made by Oberlin College faculty.

Any student research project, with the exception of honors theses and projects done by graduating seniors, is eligible. Students who have been nominated will be asked to submit both a copy of the final project and a short essay discussing the research processes and strategies used in completing the project. The Friends of the Library Awards Committee will select the winners.

## Friends Meeting Highlights

At their annual meeting on November 4, the Friends of the Library Council and the general membership approved support for a student award to recognize excellence in the research process as well as an annual library school scholarship for an Oberlin graduate (see related articles, this issue).

Also approved was a proposal to help expedite the process for making purchases for special collections with Friends funds. The new policy will assure that important items can be acquired as they become available on the market throughout the year. The meeting also included reports on Friends finances, acquisitions (see related article), programming, membership, and honorary and life members.

Minutes of the Council and membership meeting are available from the Friends Web site, <http://www.oberlin.edu/library/friends/>, or from Friends of the Library, Mudd Center, Oberlin, OH 44074.

### 2000-2001 Friends of the Library Council

Terry Carlton, President  
 Dina Schoonmaker, Vice President  
 Nathan Haverstock, Secretary  
 Paul Erler '32  
 Carol Ganzel  
 Erik Inglis '89  
 Norman Jung '56  
 Al McQueen '52  
 Gordon Neavill '66  
 Carl Peterson  
 Mary E. (Molly) Raphael '67  
 Richard Rubin '71  
 Scott Smith '69  
 Anne Trubek

#### *Ex-Officio and Appointed Members:*

Ann Sherif, Chair, General Faculty Library Committee  
 Eric Carpenter, Collection Development Librarian  
 Jessica Grim, Reference Librarian  
 Ray English, Director of Libraries

## Fellowship Program Off to a Great Start



*IMLS Fellows: Marion Parker, Camille Newman, Maria Paz Esguerra, Natalie Wills, Miguel Villafana, Denise Grollmus*

The six Oberlin College students who started in the Library's Diversity Fellowship Program in February come with a wide range of interests, backgrounds, and experiences – but their interest in exploring libraries – the how,

why, where, who, and what of them – is one thing they all have in common.

The Diversity Fellowship Program, sponsored with a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services

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## New Friends of the Library Acquisitions

The Friends of the Library Council authorized at their November meeting the expenditure of \$20,000 of Friends' funds to enhance the Library's collections.

Purchases will include materials to support existing and newer curricular areas, major reference works, videocassettes and DVDs, access to an online scholarly community, primary source materials, and rare books.

### Curricular Support

Funds will be used to further develop our existing collections in the areas of Japanese art, Latina/Latino American history, Islam in Southeast Asia, the Golden Age of Spanish Literature, and to develop the collection for the new interdisciplinary Film Studies Program.

### Major Reference Works

*Encyclopedia of Analytical Chemistry: Applications, Theory, and Instru-*

*mentation*, edited by Robert A. Meyers. 15 vols. Wiley, 2000. Includes over 600 extensively referenced articles on all aspects of analytical chemistry. All articles have been peer-reviewed to insure the highest standards of scientific accuracy and relevance.

*Encyclopedia of Astronomy and Astrophysics*, edited by Paul Murdin. 4 vols. Institute of Physics Publishing, 2001. With 800 contributors and almost 3,000 entries, this encyclopedia is a comprehensive reference source on astronomy and astrophysics.

### Videorecordings

Friends' funds will be used to acquire several videos that will support classroom teaching in philosophy. One series features W. V. O. Quine (OC '30), who has been described as "the most influential American philosopher

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## Friends Trip to Clements Library on May 14

The Friends of the library are sponsoring a field trip on May 14 to the William L. Clements Library at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. The Clements Library has an outstanding collection of books, manuscripts, and maps on American history and culture from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Director of the Library, John C. Dann, will introduce the Library and describe its collections.

The visit to the Library will begin at 1:30 p.m. and will last approximately two hours. Participants on the trip will also have time to visit some of the antiquarian and used bookshops in downtown Ann Arbor and lunch in an area restaurant.

Transportation will be provided in vans (leaving Oberlin at 8:00 a.m.). Those wishing to drive to Ann Arbor may meet the group at the Library at 1:30 p.m. For reservations, contact Sandy Austin (440-775-8285, Ext 234) by May 7.

## Special Collections Open House Commencement Weekend

The Friends of the Library will sponsor an open house and reception in the Library's Special Collections Department on Saturday afternoon of Commencement-Reunion Weekend.

Treasures from the collections will be on display, including illuminated manuscripts, incunabula, and other fine examples from the history of printing holdings. Ed Vermue, Special Collections Librarian, will also present a brief overview of the collections.

The open house will be held in the Goodrich Room on the fourth floor of Mudd Center from 3-5 p.m. on Saturday, May 26, with the reception on the adjacent sun deck. Mr. Vermue's presentation will begin at 4 p.m.

## A Tribute to Jean Binford



Jean Binford

On May 11, 1966 Jean Binford walked into the Oberlin College Library, then located in the Carnegie Building, and started work as an Administrative Assistant in the Serials Department. Precisely 35 years later, on May 11, 2001, Jean will walk out of the Library on the last day of her employment with the College. What the Library – and the College – will lose with Jean Binford’s retirement is more than just the invaluable experience of Oberlin’s senior cataloger, her razor sharp eye for detail, and her understanding of the nuance and intricacy of cataloging; we’ll lose a treasured member of the Library family, a colleague who has earned the respect and admiration of everyone she’s worked with over the years – and the love of quite a few.

When asked what is most important to her about the 35 years she’s spent on the job, Jean says, without hesitation, “the education.” She’s not talking about taking courses for credit, or even about mastering the complexities of cataloging. She’s talking about the education *in life* that she’s gained through handling, browsing, and reading in the many thousands of books that have come

across her desk over the years. And that’s what she’ll miss the most, that very particular avenue for staying in touch with “everything that’s going on in the world.”

When Jean started working with monographs in 1968, she really started to become excited about the work she was doing, and to love and take very seriously the process of cataloging— “this thing of trying to find out what the book is about.” It is that intensive and highly intelligent focus on her work that has made Jean such a superb and respected cataloger.

In her years of service to the Library Jean has seen numerous Library Directors come and go; from the “classical, learned” Eileen Thornton (1956 to 1971), to Ted Johnson (1971-1978), who Jean recalls initiated a “massive self-study” in which all Library staff were involved, to William A. Moffett (1978-1990), fondly remembered as “WAM,” who, according to Jean, “really turned around public services” in the library and whose energy, charm, and controversial ideas were typically either loved or reviled (Jean, it so happens, thought WAM was great).

Jean’s contributions to the College have hardly been limited to her work for the Library. Most prominent on the list of her contributions to the greater community is her instrumental role in the founding of OCOPE (Oberlin College Office and Professional Employees), and her mentoring of writing students as a “senior advisor” in the Creative Writing Program.

When Jean started work at Oberlin there was no organized bargaining unit for non-faculty employees on campus. In 1968 she joined a just-forming group of College employees who felt that something should, and could, be done to address the inequities in salary and benefits in the clerical, technical, and service employee groups. The first contract for Administrative Assistants was signed in 1971, and 2001 marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of OCOPE. Reflecting on that organizing effort, Jean notes that she is both terrifically proud, and still incredulous, after all these years, that they were actually able to *do something* to create change.

“The Library feels like a living thing; it has a spirit, provided by the books, and the people who work here who love the books.” – Jean Binford

Jean’s work with the Creative Writing Program in the late '70s and early '80s involved working closely with individual students to help develop and hone their writing. To this day Jean is in touch with some of the students she mentored through that program.

Of the lessons learned over the past 35 years, Jean admits that it was sometimes a struggle to “learn how to make [the workplace] a place of peace and happiness,” but she feels it’s imperative that people working together over a

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## Heather Smith (Re)Joins Library Staff

Although Heather Smith began her job as Reference Librarian/Diversity Intern Program Coordinator in January 2001, she is not new to Oberlin or the Library system. Originally from Meadville, Pennsylvania, Heather earned her BA in English from Oberlin in 1996. As a senior she was honored as a Metcalf Student Assistant for her outstanding contributions to the Circulation Department of the Conservatory Library. Upon graduation, she worked as Stacks Maintenance Coordinator in the Conservatory Library and as the Business Manager for the Oberlin College Press until 1999, when she began working on her Master of Library Science degree at Kent State University. The focus of her research project has been a content analysis of the information about library instruction, information literacy, and user education programs presented on the Web sites of liberal arts college libraries.

As a Reference Librarian providing reference service in the Main Library Heather is building on her experiences as a graduate reference assistant at Kent State University. It's in her role as Coordinator of the Diversity Intern Program that she is charting new territory. She works closely with the Li-



*Heather Smith*

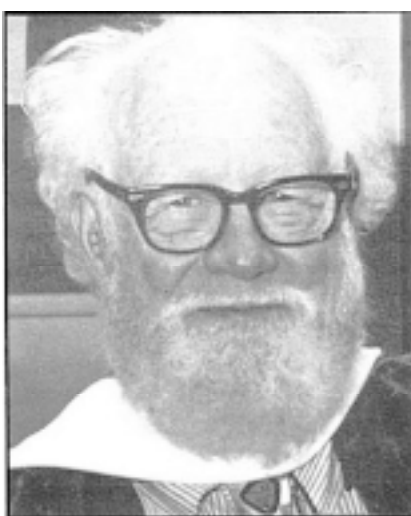
brary Diversity Committee and other members of the Library staff helping with the design and implementation of the internship curriculum. It's a position that requires Heather to call upon her creativity, flexibility, and organizational skills to ensure that the students in the program are learning about various aspects of librarianship in a way that is responsive to their interests and needs.

“One of the most enjoyable parts of my job has been getting to know the student fellows. I've also been very impressed with the energy and commitment being put into the fellows program by so many of the Library staff. The program is truly a collaborative effort, and the student fellows are reaping the benefits of the staff's collective expertise.”

## In Memory of Ralph Ellsworth

Ralph Eugene Ellsworth '29, one of Oberlin's most distinguished alumni librarians, died on November 12, 2000 in Boulder, Colorado at the age of 93.

Considered by many to be the “father of modern academic libraries,” he was an internationally known consultant on the design of college and university library buildings. He championed the modular form of library construction, which allows great flexibility in building usage over time, as library functions and collections change and grow. His 1963 “Report on the Library Situation at Oberlin College” was instrumental in the College's decision to build a new central library. Mudd Center, which



*Ralph Ellsworth*

opened in 1974, was constructed along the general outlines of his recommendations.

Ellsworth was Director of Libraries at the University of Colorado from 1937 to 1943 and from 1958 to 1972. He also served as Director of the University of Iowa Library from 1943 to 1958. He was the author of over 50 journal articles and 10 books related to academic libraries. He served on the executive boards of both the American Library Association and the Association of Research Libraries and was twice elected President of the Association of College and Research Libraries. He received an honorary degree from Oberlin in 1983.

## Conservatory Library Celebration

Conservatory faculty, students, and staff celebrated the completion of the expanded and renovated Conservatory Library at a gala event and reception on Tuesday, December 12.

Robert Dodson, Dean of the Conservatory; Ray English, Director of Libraries; and Deborah Campana, Conservatory Librarian presented remarks

on the occasion.

The project provides an additional 6,000 square feet of usable space for the Conservatory Library, a new electronic resource center, a technology classroom, a conference room, attractive user spaces, and over two decades of growth for the collections (see *Library Perspectives*, September 2000).



*Ray English, Deborah Campana, and Robert Dodson*

## Friends of the Library Acquisitions. . .from page 3

of the postwar period.” The other series features Donald Davidson, who has been particularly influential in the philosophies of language, mind, and action.

### Primary Source Materials

*The Early Modern Englishwoman: A Facsimile Library of Essential Works, Part 2, Printed Writings, 1500-1640*, edited by Betty S. Travistky and Patrick Cullen. 13 vols. Ashgate Pub. Co., 2000. This is the second part of an important collection of facsimiles of writings by early modern Englishwomen – historians, poets, and translators – whose work has heretofore been largely inaccessible. This material supports courses in history, literature, and women’s studies. The Library already owns Part 1 of the collection.

Frank Lloyd Wright. *The Disappearing City*. W. F. Payson, 1932. This work, described as a “study based upon an architect’s experience in trying to get an organic architecture born for these United States,” will be shelved in the Art Library Special Collections and used in the teaching of architectural history.

*Verdi and La Fenice*, edited by Franco Rossi and Maria Ida Biggi. Officine del Novecento, 2000. For the first time, Teatro La Fenice has published all the Verdi papers from its archives, including autographed letters, playbills, photographs of Verdi and the leading singers in his operas, frontispieces for the librettos, and first pages of scores with handwritten notations by the composer. This leather-bound volume with gold stamping will be shelved in the Conservatory Library Special Collections.

In addition to approving funds for the purchase of specific rare items, the Friends Council authorized the ongoing use of funds for acquiring materials germane to our Special Collections in areas such as antislavery, artists books, history and construction of stringed instruments, individual author collections, history of the book, and Oberliniana, as they become available on the market. Ten percent of the annual Friends acquisitions allocation (with a \$2,000 minimum) will be earmarked for this purpose.

## Yongyi Song in Oberlin

In February, the Friends of the Library, in conjunction with the Oberlin Shansi Memorial Association and the President’s Office, sponsored a campus visit by Yongyi Song, a Chinese-American librarian who had been detained by the Chinese government for nearly six months while conducting research on the Cultural Revolution.

Song, a librarian and scholar at Dickinson College in Pennsylvania, and his wife Helen Yao were taken by the authorities from their Beijing hotel on August 7, 1999. Although his wife was released in November of that year, Song was eventually arrested in December 1999 and charged with “the purchase and illegal provision of intelligence to foreigners.” At the time of his arrest Song was a permanent resident of the United States, expecting to become a citizen. The Chinese government jailed him for dealing in “state secrets,” although the material Song was collecting consisted of newspapers and other examples of previously published Red Guard documents. He was released in January 2000 as a result of increasing pressure applied on the Chinese government by the international community.

While in Oberlin, Mr. Song gave a public lecture entitled “Human Rights and Freedom in China.” He met with faculty to discuss issues related to researching sensitive topics in China and with students to explore heterodox thoughts in contemporary China. He also spoke to Library staff about Chinese government control of access to the Internet, among other topics.

*Library Perspectives*, a newsletter for users and Friends of the Oberlin College Library, is issued two times a year. Printed from an endowed fund established by Benjamin A. and Emiko Custer. Editors: Ray English, Megan Mitchell, and Jessica Grim.

## Information Literacy Initiative Takes Off. . .from page 1

literacy aspects of the course included comments such as: “I feel confident that I’ve gained much more knowledge regarding the research process.” “I feel much more comfortable doing research and know that I did a better job than I would have before taking this class.” “This has helped a lot in preparing research papers in other courses.”

There are currently several additional information literacy projects underway at Oberlin:

- A project to integrate information literacy throughout advanced Hispanic Studies courses that is being developed by Vicente Perez de Leon, Assistant Professor in the Hispanic Studies Department, and Megan Mitchell, Reference Librarian. One of the issues that the project addresses is how information production, access, and consumption affects Hispanic cultures generally.

- A two-part project in the English Department is being undertaken by John

Olmsted, Professor of English, and Jessica Grim, Reference Librarian. The first phase of the project will incorporate information literacy into English 220: Romantic Literature. During the second phase of the project a “clearinghouse” of information literacy materials (assignments, suggested curricula, etc.) will be developed and made available in electronic form to English faculty for the purpose of incorporating information literacy content across the English curriculum.

- A project to revise an upper level English course on American Literature from 1600 to 1800 is being worked on by Associate Professor of English T.S. McMillin and Reference Librarian Megan Mitchell. One of the goals of the revision is to have students learn how to read primary texts and think critically about the origins of American writing.

In addition to projects currently underway, Wendy Kozol, Associate Professor of Women’s Studies, Frances

Hasso, Assistant Professor of Women’s Studies, and Jessica Grim will begin work on a large-scale project to revise the Women’s Studies curriculum to incorporate information literacy components into the 100, 200, and 300 level course sequence.

Work will also begin in the coming months on information literacy projects across the Art History curriculum and courses in vocal performance in the Conservatory.

Information literacy includes understanding the value and importance of information for learning; understanding how information is produced, disseminated, and organized; developing critical thinking skills in relation to information; mastering the processes of accessing information; and knowing how to use information effectively.

## A Tribute to Jean Binford. . .from page 5

long period of time, day in and day out, must learn to accept and respect one another, and to continually work at those things.

When asked what stands out among particular events over the years, Jean mentions the time that a memo was sent to catalogers from an assistant to then-Director Johnson, saying that subject cards should hitherto be filed in the card catalog by *date of receipt of the card*. While the author of the memo had, to his mind, sound reasoning for making this change in policy, it was never instituted thanks to the good sense and loud protestations of the catalogers.

Jean believes that libraries are the “richest possible environment a person could work in” and she expresses some concern about what will happen unless libraries can manage to “stay places people can come to” to experience, and engage in, that richness. What the rest of the Library staff are concerned with at the moment is how we’ll cope with the significant reduction in *workplace* richness occasioned by the retirement of Jean Binford.

## Fellowship Program. . .from page 3

(see *Library Perspectives*, September 2000), has been many months in the planning, and numerous Library staff members have been involved, particularly in the development of the spring curriculum and planning for summer projects.

The spring curriculum is designed to give the Fellows a broad overview of libraries and librarianship. Each of the thirteen weeks of the semester has a particular theme, and includes a mix of lectures, readings, and hands-on activities. Each week is coordinated by a

different library staff member; themes include collection development, systems and technology, cataloging, reference services, information literacy, library management, special collections, and the publishing industry.

During the next major phase of the Fellowship the students will select projects of interest to them from among a list developed by members of the Library staff. Examples of projects include developing a library history Web exhibit, evaluating specific Library col-

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## Digital Developments. . .from page 1

OhioLINK Digital Media Center (<http://www.dmc.ohiolink.edu/>). Sanborn maps show the outline of each building, including the location of windows and doors together with street names, street and sidewalk widths, property boundaries, building use, and house and block numbers. These maps are used by a wide range of researchers including lo-

cal historians to locate and identify buildings and neighborhoods, urban historians to study the growth of towns and cities, and environmentalists concerned about the impact of new developments. There are 75 maps of Oberlin, Ohio in the collection. The original Sanborn maps are held by the Library of Congress.

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.

**JOIN US. BE A FRIEND.**

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.

- Annual membership categories:  \$1 Student  \$5 Recent Graduate  
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Friends contributions are tax deductible.

**Fellowship Program**

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lections, cataloging Oberlin College honors papers, and a project to preserve World War II posters, leaflets and other propaganda materials. Work on projects will occur over the course of the summer, and continue through the fall '01 semester. The final component of the Fellowship, during January term 2002, involves working with Oberlin alumni librarians in off-campus residencies in a variety of library situations.

**Friends Establish Graduate Library School Scholarship. . . from page 2**

grounds to the field of librarianship. The recipient of the scholarship award will be announced at the annual Friends of the Library dinner, beginning in the fall of 2002.

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