



# LIBRARY LETTERS

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## Update from the University Librarian

### *Now What???*

So, the long-sought-after renovation of Leyburn is finished and the question naturally arises: what next?

One obvious project, and one that is repeatedly suggested by students and faculty, is improvement to the floors below the main level, which remain, to a great degree, artifacts of the 1970s. Given the current economic climate and the many capital projects on the University's wish list, it is unlikely that a project on the scope of our recent one is going to occur any time soon. On the other hand, we are making plans for spot improvements to the lower floors as funds become available, including funds from donors and other outside sources. For several months, John Tombarge, head of public services, has been working with an advisory committee of students, who have helped us set some priorities for attention to the lower levels. Among the suggestions are fresh paint in some of the study rooms, power strips to provide additional electricity for laptops and more comfortable furniture in selected places. The students also put a high priority on acquiring patio furniture for the terrace outside Leyburn's new entrance on the Commons side of the building.

A second major initiative over the next several years must be continued development and improvement of the Library's Web site and online catalog (Annie). The Library's physical space remains important, but our virtual presence on the web is equally critical; these days, it is the primary portal through which many users "enter the library." The challenge with online gateways is that, as technology develops and improves, what was acceptable yesterday is now too slow, too hard to use or too restrictive. Many of our users are accustomed to using highly sophisticated and personalized web resources (Amazon.com comes to mind) and now expect similar tools to be available from their libraries. Our challenge is to expedite the work of our users while at the same time ensuring that what they find is quality information both in our own collections and elsewhere. Accordingly, in the months to come we'll be focusing on what we can do to improve our web presence and developing an action plan in that direction.



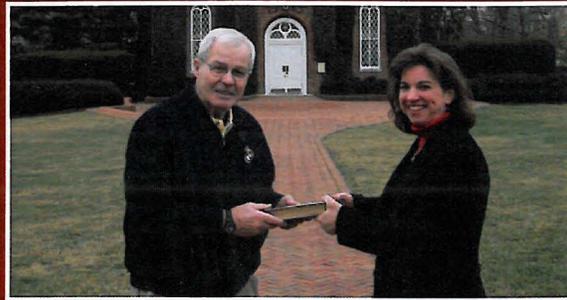
*Merrily E. Taylor, University Librarian*

Finally, our third major challenge – and one we would not necessarily have chosen – will be finding ways to meet the academic needs of students and faculty in a period of constricting resources. Like many of our peer institutions, we've experienced a budget cut as a result of the economic downturn and the University's need to plan for reduced revenue. This cut will mean reductions in journals and databases, and fewer monographs purchased. But the needs of existing academic programs continue, and new programs arise. Our task in the upcoming academic year will be to make these reductions in a manner that is least disruptive to the work of our community. A difficult assignment, but I am confident that our knowledgeable and committed library staff, in collaboration with faculty, can manage this.

Merrily E. Taylor  
*University Librarian*

## Did You Hear the One about the Book Overdue for 145 Years?

On Feb. 28, Mike Dau and his wife Paula, of Lake Forest, Ill. made a special stop on their way to vacation in Florida to return a book missing from the library at Washington and Lee for 145 years. Harry Goodheart, Class of 1966, the owner of Goodheart Books in Tryon, N.C., facilitated the donation by arranging communication between Mr. Dau, owner of the book, and Laura Turner, technical services librarian at the University Library. The book, *History of the War in the Peninsula and in the South of France* by W. F. P. Napier, was volume one of a four-volume set. An undated inscription in the book by an unknown Union soldier refers to the book being removed during Hunter's Raid in June 1864. On the title page, the handwritten "Washington College" mimics the title page of volume 2 that remained in the library collection. The bindings of the returned volume and volume 2 also are identical. The other volumes of the library's set are bound differently and came to the library through another gift in the early 20th century. Mr. Dau was excited to see the match between volumes 1 and 2, with his only stipulation on the donation that he not be charged overdue fees for returning it.



Mike Dau hands the infamous book to Laura..

Jeff Hanna, University executive director of communications and public affairs, started a barrage of media interest with a press release about the return of the book. The story landed on the front page of the *Roanoke Times*, and the library and the University have been interviewed by news media such as the BBC, NPR, *The Washington Post*, *Chicago Tribune* and NBC and CBS affiliates. It is amazing that one overdue book could get that much attention, international and national. The \$50,000+ fine was waived.

## Leyburn Library – The Crossroads of the W&L Campus

If you haven't seen the renovations at Leyburn Library, you may be the only one. The place is jammed with people, and most of them are students. The newly renovated main level, with its comfortable furniture, small group study rooms, great lighting and expanded technology, has proven as popular as everyone thought it would be.

It's not just individuals and small groups that are finding the new space pleasing. The café area has been used by groups wanting to hold receptions. The most recent group was from the art department, hosting a reception for the opening of their new student-curated exhibit in Leyburn.

Leyburn will now have rotating art exhibits, both from the art department and from the Reeves Center and the University Collection. You can go to the library's homepage sidebar, click on "Exhibits", and find out what exhibits are on display at Leyburn.



Students help arrange an art exhibit.

But that's not all. More classes are being held in the library. "We have such a small group, it's a shame not to use this great room while we fit," said Jeff Barnett, professor of romance languages, speaking of using one of the group study rooms for his Latin-American studies course.

Admissions is proud to show off the newly renovated library and uses the multi-purpose room frequently for prospective parents and students.

Career Services has hosted Q&A sessions in the café area, "because it's so popular and centrally located," according to one counselor.

Student government selected Leyburn for its recent elections for the same reasons. Students can walk in one door and out the other and transact work in between.

As one student was overheard to say, "I wish it wasn't so popular." Librarians and staff haven't gotten to that point yet.

## Friends of the Library Update



As of March 30, 2009, we have had 292 individuals and couples join the Friends. Our goal is 300 by July 1. Won't you help us? Annual membership is just \$25 for current faculty, staff and students; and \$10 for anyone who has graduated in the last ten years. Give a gift membership. Just eight more members to reach our goal. To receive a membership form, contact Karin O'Callaghan at x8642 or [ocallaghank@wlu.edu](mailto:ocallaghank@wlu.edu).

We promise to make it worth your time and money.

Speaking of which, don't miss Bill '61 and Stuart Buice (she's a Duke grad) at 3 p.m. on May 2 in Northern Auditorium. They will talk about the ups and downs, ins and outs, mistakes and successes of being two-interest book collectors in the same house. Otherwise known as "who gets the prime shelf space?"

## Book Sale

As you know, the Library holds a book sale annually, with a lot of good buys. Usually the sale is in the Fall, but due to the renovation, we had no space, so it's going to be May 1-4. The sale starts at 8:30 a.m. on May 1 and runs 24 hours a day until 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, May 5. On Mon., May 4, any remaining books are half price.

Some of the books on sale are duplicates of ones already in the collections. Almost all of them come from the private collections of professors and alumni. There will be lots of 19th- and 20th-century American and European history and politics titles for sale.

And, just for members of the Friends of the Library, there is a preview sale on Thursday, April 30, from 4 - 7 p.m. Friends members have first crack at the books on sale and then the books are off-limits until Friday morning. We will have a master list of Friends members at the desk to confirm membership before a sale...hint, hint!

We still are going to have our annual Book Sale in the fall for Parents' Weekend; this one is a more select affair on Reunion weekend.

## Food for Fines

Through the end of the year, Washington and Lee students can pay their University Library overdue fines with canned goods. All food items collected are donated to W&L's **Campus Kitchens** project.

How much is a can of peas or soup or stew worth in overdue fines?

\$1-5 in fines = 2 cans

\$6-10 in fines = 4 cans

\$11-20 in fines = 8 cans

\$20-50 in fines = 16 cans

And NO, beer is not a "canned good."



There are some limits to this "bartering": (1) this arrangement applies only to current W&L students; and (2) all **lost** library materials have to be paid for with cash, check, general debit or charge.

## Survey Results

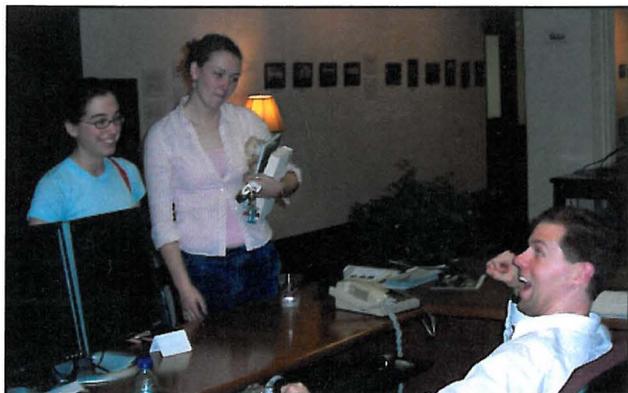
You may recall the Library conducted two separate surveys at the end of the 2008 academic year: one with Faculty and one with Students. These surveys are part of the Library's ongoing self-assessment program, and complete information can be found on the library Web site at [library.wlu.edu/about/assessment/](http://library.wlu.edu/about/assessment/).

We were pleased with the time taken by so many to help better the Library, its services and its collections. Thirty-six percent of faculty responded and 10 percent of students. The survey results were very helpful in determining where the University Library should focus energy and resources to improve. Another survey of students is planned for 2009/2010, while faculty will be surveyed again the following year.

"Overall evaluation of the libraries showed that 95 percent of faculty and 78 percent of students using Leyburn were satisfied or very satisfied, and 88 percent of faculty and 82 percent of students using Telford were satisfied or very satisfied," according to John Tombarge, head of public services.

## Kyle Felker Moving to Greener Pastures

Kyle Felker, the University Library's technology coordinator and reference librarian, has accepted a fellowship in the Ph.D. program at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. We will all miss his help and his infectious smile, and we wish him the best. Kyle's last day will be July 31.



*Kyle fields a reference question with his usual panache.*

**FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

Steve Harrington  
James C. Holland  
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Martha Ann Spencer

**IN MEMORY OF**

Sam Bendheim III '57  
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**BOOKS AND GIFTS-IN-KIND**

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