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Ex Libris: The WVU Libraries Magazine

WVU Libraries

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Winter 2008

## Ex Libris, Winter 2008

West Virginia University. Library.

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# Ex Libris

Newsletter of the West Virginia University Libraries

Winter 2008

www.libraries.wvu.edu



## LibQual Survey Helps Libraries Enhance Services

Students and faculty have spoken, and the WVU Libraries have listened. The Libraries made several enhancements over the summer in response to the LibQual survey administered during the spring semester.

More computers and designated quiet study spaces welcomed students and faculty back to the Libraries this fall, and students will have more time to study at the Libraries when finals approach.

“Our students and faculty view the Libraries as a valuable resource, but we must be continually improving our services if we are to remain an integral part of their academic experience,” said Frances O’Brien, Dean of Libraries. “We believe our users will appreciate the enhancements.”

LibQual is one instrument the Libraries use to learn where changes need to be made. The survey measures library services in terms of user expectations and user

desire for longer operating hours topped the list of concerns.

As a result, the Downtown Campus Library now offers more computers. Thirty new laptop computers bring the total of laptops available there to 60. Also, when not in use as a classroom, Room 136 now serves as a computer lab and provides another 30 computers. These computers are in addition to the 180 desktop computers available at carrels throughout the library.

Cell phone usage has become a growing nuisance in most public spaces, even libraries. Although infractions may be few, they can be disrupting. Students needing a quiet

space to study can head to the Robinson and Milano reading rooms, which have been designated “Deep Quiet Zones” so talking and cell phones are prohibited. At Evansdale, the second floor was already designated as a quiet space.

Finally, the Libraries studied its operating schedule. Although the Libraries had already pushed back closing from midnight to 2 a.m. Sunday-Thursday during the semester, students still want to see the Libraries open 24 hours. In response, the Downtown Campus and Evansdale libraries will both be open 24 hours throughout Dead Week and Finals Week.

Along with constructive criticism, students and faculty also praised what they appreciate about the Libraries. An undergraduate shared about receiving help from a reference librarian on a research project.

“(She) took a lot of time to help me find exactly what I was looking for. She pulled books and helped me to navigate/learn to use online databases and was extremely helpful in my search for information,” he wrote.

One graduate student was extremely pleased with the remote access to journals and the inter-library loan capabilities. He called them major contributors to his



The new Health Sciences Library and Learning Center opened its doors in January 2007.



A student studies in the James & Ann Milano Reading Room. The Milano and Robinson reading rooms have been designated “Deep Quiet Zones.”

perceptions.

In early April, a random sample of undergraduates, graduate and professional students, and faculty received e-mail notices and directions to the web-based survey instrument. Respondents answered 33 multiple-choice questions and had the opportunity to provide written comments.

A lack of computers at the Downtown Campus Library, noise from people using cell phones, and the

success at WVU.

“The library is the most important place that I benefited from most during the whole period of my Ph.D. study at WVU,” wrote a faculty member of the Davis College of Agriculture, Forestry and Consumer Sciences. “Above all, I found the staff caring and understanding and very helpful in all aspects of my endeavor.”

For students on the Health Sciences campus, the survey came during their first semester in the new Health Sciences Library and Learning Center. Several students shared their appreciation for a much-improved facility.

“The new library at Health Sciences is very nice, and corrected the problem of never having enough computers for all students to have access when needed,” wrote a Health Sciences graduate student.

This is the third time for the Libraries to participate in LibQual. Responses from previous years led to changes in library holdings and services. Provost Gerald Lang used LibQual comments and discussions with students in making several popular decisions. These include extending library hours to 2 a.m. and adding Eliza’s, a coffee shop, to the Downtown Campus Library.



Barbara LaGodna

## WVU Librarian Named State Association President

Barbara LaGodna, a reference librarian for West Virginia University’s Evansdale Library, was named president of the West Virginia Library Association during the organization’s fall conference in Morgantown.

In the post, she will guide the group which represents librarians and staff from public, academic, K-12, and special libraries around West Virginia.

“I’m excited about this wonderful opportunity to serve my colleagues and library users throughout the state,” LaGodna said. “We all know that libraries are essential to our communities; my goal is to work to enhance these important resources.”

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# Ex Libris

## Helvetia: A Home in the West Virginia Hills

In 1869, a group of Swiss immigrants traversed the rugged wilderness of West Virginia to discover the pristine hills and valleys of southern Randolph County. They had finally found a place to call home.

The settlers soon erected a single log cabin and named their new community Helvetia, which was the original name of their native Switzerland. As word spread, more Swiss and German immigrants began relocating to the mountain village. Together, these families created a unique community based on the customs of their homeland.

Almost a century and a half later, their rich traditions still thrive thanks to some dedicated townsfolk, annual celebrations that draw crowds from states away, and photographs that chronicle the town's development.

"A lot of the history has been photographed. We've been very fortunate in that respect," said Nancy Krogh, the town's librarian. "Photographs are extremely important because they tell a story in themselves."

For the past two years, the WVU Libraries have been making a portion of that story available to the world through *West Virginia History OnView*, which provides online access to the digital version of historical photographs housed in the West Virginia and Regional History Collection.

So far, nearly 350 photographs taken during the early years of Helvetia have been added to the database. Users can browse through pictures of family and town gatherings, holiday celebrations, fairs, moments from daily life, and landscapes.

That photograph collection will soon be complemented by an extensive local archive of the town's historical materials. Anna Schein, an associate curator of the WVRHC, learned about the project when Krogh invited her to demonstrate *West Virginia History OnView* in the new archives' log addition to the library this fall during the 93rd Annual Helvetia Fair.

At the WVU Libraries, Schein is in charge of the Printed Ephemera Collection, which is estimated to contain more than 100,000 items, from pamphlets, brochures and isolated periodicals to news clippings, event programs, advertisements, menus, and more. She believes that printed materials, such as these, work together with photographs to paint a clearer picture of

daily life a century ago.

"Academic research benefits tremendously from studying the past," Schein said. "We live in a western academic society which establishes the historical record best by using written archival documents and photographs as evidence to reconstruct the past."

Schein is helping Helvetia to establish an archive by facilitating collaborative efforts between the local community, WVU Libraries and WVU's Cultural Resources Management and Public History programs. She has already enlisted the help of Larry Sypolt, with WVU's Cultural Resources Management Program, who will work with Eleanor Betler and the Helvetia archives team to receive, organize, and process archival materials. She will also help to organize Helvetia's printed ephemera collection.

Another benefit of the collaboration involves the Libraries' *OnView* database. With many of the photographs from Helvetia lacking full descriptions, Schein hopes to enlist help from the Helvetia community to identify more people in the pictures and enrich the Libraries' records.

Happenstance has already started her toward her goal.

This fall, Schein assembled a photo exhibit based on Helvetia at the request of the University's Multicultural Programming Committee. The committee chair wanted to feature a unique culture in West Virginia as part of WVU's Multicultural Day. Schein immediately decided to spotlight Helvetia because of the memorable experience she had at a fair there last year.

Her Helvetia exhibit caught the attention of Daniel Koerner as he walked through the Mountainlair, WVU's student union, on his way to class. The WVU junior and Helvetia native pointed at a photograph of Helvetia's Star Band and identified one of the men as his great-grandfather.

"I was quite surprised," Koerner said. "I looked over and thought, 'That's definitely Helvetia.' It's not what I expected to see in the Lair."

Koerner, of course, likes that particular picture because it includes his great-grandfather, a German immigrant who settled in



*Daniel Koerner was surprised to spot this photograph while walking through the Mountainlair. His great-grandfather, the man on the far right of the picture, played the snare drum for the Helvetia Star Band.*

Helvetia early in the 1900s, spoke mostly German, eagerly waited for his German-language newspapers to arrive, and played snare drum.

The snapshot also offers a glimpse into life in small-town America around that time. While these individuals were struggling to make their way in an isolated and rugged environment, they still found time to devote to their neighbors and to leisure.

"They worked hard through the week to get what little they had, and Sunday was their day to go to church, relax, and enjoy themselves," Koerner said. "I think as a society we're getting away from that too much. We're getting way too fast-paced."

For Koerner, growing up in a close-knit community like Helvetia meant stopping to talk when you pass someone on the road and helping neighbors in need. It's a mindset he appreciates when he goes home on weekends.

It also includes community gatherings, monthly dances, and traditional festivals like Helvetia Fair and Fasnacht, which has Swiss roots and has been compared to Mardi Gras. The highlight of the celebration is the burning of old man winter in effigy to welcome the coming spring.

The folk traditions are comforting to Koerner. He is glad to be from a town that places such an emphasis on preserving its past.

"It's your heritage. It's who you are and where you came from," Koerner said. "You have to know where you came from to appreciate what you have."

### *West Virginia University Libraries Visiting Committee*

Diane Hackney-Oliver, Charleston

Vaughn L. Kiger, Morgantown

Hubert E. Martin, Morgantown

Brooks F. McCabe Jr., Charleston

R. Samuel Oliver Jr., Charleston

Betty Lou Ramsey, Belington

John E. Stealey III, Shepherdstown – Chairman

Richard R. Strother, Washington, D.C.



*Daniel Koerner, a WVU student, talks with Ann Schein about the Randolph County town of Helvetia.*



## American Library Association Recognizes Asimov Collection

Science fiction fans will be delighted to know the West Virginia University Libraries feature a nationally recognized Isaac Asimov Collection.

Earlier this fall, the American Library Association named the WVU Libraries' electronic exhibit of Asimov books and items its Digital Collection of the Week. ALA spotlighted the collection in AL Direct, its online newsletter.

"We are sharing a unique resource globally. This is the ideal of the information age," said Beth Toren, Web Services Librarian. "People from all over the world have left messages in the guest book, and I get Asimov reference questions from all over the world from people of all ages."

The online display features images and descriptions of some of the more than 600 books, games, audio recordings, videos, and wall charts included in the WVU Libraries' Asimov Collection.

Asimov, probably best known for his short story *I, Robot* and his trilogy *Foundation*, was a prolific

writer of both science and science fiction. Readers dubbed Asimov the Great Explainer because of his skill at making complicated subjects easy to understand.

The Asimov Collection began in 2002 when alumnus Larry Shaver donated to the libraries his Asimov collection containing more than 600 books, games, audio recordings, videos, and wall charts.

While a buzz surrounding the collection already existed, interest exploded after the digital exhibit launched in 2004. Today, people from around the globe still regularly sign the site's guestbook, Asimov fan sites direct readers to the digital exhibit, and several other Asimov collectors have donated rare books and portions of their collections to the Libraries.

"This has been one of the Libraries' most successful examples of the importance of our digital projects in helping readers and researchers locate the resources they seek," said Harold M. Forbes, Rare Books Room Curator.

To view the digital Asimov Exhibit, go to <http://www.libraries.wvu.edu/exhibits/asimov/>.



Harold Forbes, Rare Books Room Curator, and Beth Toren, Web Services Librarian, played key roles in developing the Isaac Asimov Digital Collection.

## Bender Excels in National Association

The Medical Library Association has named Virginia

Bender, education coordinator and information services librarian at the WVU Health Sciences Center Library, a distinguished member of its prestigious Academy of Health Information Professionals.

The AHIP recognizes medical librarians based on their involvement in the field and professional organizations and their efforts in continuing education.

"It's very rewarding to me to be recognized by my peers for my professional development and career accomplishments," Bender said. "It makes me value the



Virginia Bender

support of my colleagues and the opportunities that are available to me in working in the health sciences library field."

AHIP has three levels of membership: member, senior member, and distinguished member. To reach the top tier, one must have first clocked at least 10 years as a medical librarian. A points system then grades prospective members based on criteria such as serving in a professional organization, presenting non-work-related lectures, publishing articles, and pursuing continuing education opportunities.

"Achieving status as a Distinguished Member of AHIP is quite an accomplishment," said Susan Arnold, Interim Director of the Health Sciences Library. "Virginia has always made an effort to become involved in professional activities that were related to her current job responsibilities."

Bender has served on numerous committees of the Mid-Atlantic Chapter of the Medical Library Association, as well as serving as Website Content Committee Chair for the Collection Development Section of the Medical Library Association. She has co-edited a newsletter column for the Nursing & Allied Health Resources section of MLA. In addition, she has been a regular

publisher of book reviews and has recently co-authored an article on psychology-related resources that was published in the *Journal of Electronic Resources in Medical Libraries*.

Bender believes the recognition will further bolster the Libraries' reputation for keeping current with technology and striving to meet the information and educational needs of its users.

"We're very excited about what we're doing. All of us at the Health Sciences Library make it a priority to work to accomplish the University's mission. We realize the important part we play for students, faculty, and staff," Bender said.

Prior to coming to WVU 12 years ago, Bender worked in public libraries in Ohio, Oklahoma, and Montana. She received a Bachelor's of Art in English and history and a Master's of Art in English, both from Slippery Rock University, and a Master's of Library Science from Kent State University.

Two other WVU faculty members belong to AHIP: Jean Seibert, also a distinguished member; and Arnold, a senior member.

## WVU Librarian Named State Association President

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LaGodna brings a unique perspective to the job. Before becoming a librarian, the Morgantown native graduated from WVU with a degree in social work and served communities in southern West Virginia. The experience gave her a better understanding of the issues facing people in her home state.

Looking back on that time, LaGodna believes being a librarian is quite similar to being a social worker. Both fields, she said, involve helping others and providing them with the knowledge they need to lead happy and successful lives.

Her new role will have her again thinking beyond campus to those around the state. A main responsibility for WVLA is being an advocate for the state's libraries, and the group's top priority is developing and maintaining effective library services that meet the informational and educational needs of West Virginians.

The local library is often where people turn to first to research health concerns or search for career-related advice. For many, the library provides their only access to a computer connected to the Internet.

"Computers and up-to-date resources must be available at all libraries so people can find the

information necessary to help them function," LaGodna said.

Mary Strife, Director of the Evansdale Library, is excited to see LaGodna elected to lead WVLA and is confident the state association is in good hands. She said LaGodna has earned a reputation for always being calm, steady, and thorough.

"If Barbara gets frazzled, she doesn't show it," Strife said. "Also, she does things immediately and never procrastinates."

Prior to coming to WVU in 1997, LaGodna was the Head of Cataloging for the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in social work from WVU and her Masters in Library and Information Science from the University of Kentucky.

LaGodna is the fourth librarian from WVU to serve as WVLA president in recent years. She will hold the position through 2008.



University Marshall and Evansdale Library Director Mary Strife leads the procession for WVU President Michael Garrison's inauguration. She is followed by Gov. Joe Manchin, WVU Board of Governors President Steve Goodwin, and President Garrison.



## Governor Appoints Forbes to State Commission

Governor Joe Manchin has appointed Harold M. Forbes, Associate Curator of the West Virginia & Regional History Collection, to serve on the West Virginia Archives and History Commission.

The Commission oversees the activities of the State Historic Preservation Office, the West Virginia Division of Archives and History, and the State Museum.

"It is really quite an honor," Forbes said. "I can see, having met the other people on the Commission, that the members are carefully selected."

The State Historic Preservation Office is responsible for identifying, recognizing, preserving, and protecting



Harold Forbes

West Virginia's historic structures, objects, and sites. The Division of Archives and History concentrates on collecting, preserving, and making available the state's historic publications and records. The State Museum, located in the State Cultural Center adjacent to the Capitol, displays historic pieces and other state treasures.

One focus of the Commission that particularly interests Forbes is the consideration of nominees for national historic places. It's a new arena for Forbes, who has spent the past three decades concentrating on the documentary aspect of history.

The rigorous process of being named a historic place starts with a nomination by an individual or group. The State Historic Preservation Office receives and studies the nomination for accuracy. If it meets all of the guidelines, the Commission then looks at the building or site from a broader perspective. If it passes their criteria, it heads to the National Register of Historic Places for a final decision.

"It has to go through a lot of hurdles," Forbes said. "If it reaches the National Register, that's a pretty good

indication that it's worthy."

Forbes joined the WVU Libraries in 1973 as assistant curator for the WVRHC and was named associate curator in 1981. In 1994, he added the title of curator of rare books. The Morgantown native earned both his bachelor's and master's degrees in history from WVU and his master's in library science from the University of Pittsburgh.

He credits his longevity at WVU to his sense of purpose and belief that he's found his calling in life.

"My interest in history and its preservation just occurs naturally to me," Forbes said. "All my family has lived in and loved living in West Virginia for many generations, and working with West Virginia history seemed a natural path for my career."

## Alum Remembers the Libraries

By Dr. Thomas P. Ofcansky

During my years at West Virginia University (1976-1981), I spent much of my free time in the Wise Library conducting research for term papers and my dissertation, which West

Virginia University Press published in 2002 under the title of *Paradise Lost: A History of Game Preservation in East Africa*. Additionally, I embarked on a long-term bibliographic project of British East Africa (Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda). The Wise Library staff, particularly the late Robert F. Munn, supported my endless requests for inter-library loans.

In 1985, Garland Publishing released British *East Africa, 1856-1963: An Annotated Bibliography*. Apart from these activities, I recommended numerous book purchases to Professor Munn who, with very few exceptions, always approved them. The Wise Library also microfilmed some materials that I acquired while researching my dissertation.

After leaving West Virginia University, I eventually secured a position with the Department of Defense; my brief was East Africa (Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda) and the Horn of Africa (Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, and Sudan). In 1998, I joined the State Department with the same duties. Both organizations afforded me the opportunity to undertake temporary duty assignments in Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. Despite my oftentimes hectic work schedule, I continued to publish books and articles about East Africa and the Horn of Africa.

In recent years, the number of books about East Africa and the Horn of Africa have proliferated significantly. Prices of individual volumes also have soared. In a small way, I have endeavored to repay the WVU Libraries for their support when I was a student at West Virginia University by donating hundreds of volumes that have been deemed useful to WVU's curriculum. Additionally, I have arranged to bequeath my library to the WVU Libraries and to establish the Dr. Thomas P. Ofcansky Endowment for East Africa Resources. This endowment will generate funds to purchase materials to benefit future generations of students and faculty.

## Honor with Books

Searching for a way to celebrate a special occasion, honor a friend, family member, or favorite professor, or acknowledge an accomplishment? WVU Libraries' Honor with Books program is the perfect way to provide a lasting tribute to special people in your life.

For as little as \$100, you can honor the person of your choice. Every \$100 increment will fund the acquisition of one new book selected by a WVU Librarian.

Names of the honoree and the donor will appear on a bookplate inside the book's front cover and in the

computer display of the Libraries' online catalog. We will endeavor to fulfill any preferences regarding subject matter for books purchased. All gifts are tax-deductible, and notification of gifts can be sent to the honoree or the honoree's family.

Help strengthen the collection of the WVU Libraries by making a gift to the Honor with Books program. For more information, contact Monte Maxwell at (304) 293-4040 Ext. 4004 or email monte.maxwell@mail.wvu.edu

## Establishing a Legacy

The WVU Libraries are a very popular place these days. Students fill our study rooms and line up to use our computers. Our librarians are usually busy fielding questions from students and faculty, both in person and through instant message chat sessions. And even when the doors close, students take advantage of our online resources to do research and to get their assignments done.

The future of the Libraries is very important to the future of WVU. Making the resources, services, and staff readily available for learning is our mission. That is as valuable a part of the educational process as it has ever been.

Looking to the future, you may consider a personal way to assure that the WVU Libraries continue to provide the support which students, faculty, staff and the community need. There are a number of options,

including a gift in a will or revocable trust. Using the wording of "to the West Virginia University Foundation for the benefit of the WVU Libraries" in your will's gift provision will make it happen.

You may choose to specify that your gift will be for academic journals, technological resources, facility improvements, collection acquisition and preservation, or discretionary use.

Designating the WVU Foundation as the beneficiary of a retirement account or transferring ownership of a life insurance policy to the Foundation can also benefit the Libraries in the future. An agreement about how the gift will benefit the Libraries can make sure that your gift will do exactly what you want.

To learn more, call Monte Maxwell at (304) 293-4040 ext. 4004 or email monte.maxwell@mail.wvu.edu



## WVU Libraries' ETD Program Draws International Visitors

The West Virginia University Libraries Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Program (ETD) is so successful and widely respected that it draws visitors from as far away as the Middle East.

Yaqub Ali, chief librarian of the International Islamic University Islamabad in Pakistan, is currently in the process of developing an ETD program and has selected WVU's program as a model to emulate.

Ali visited WVU Libraries this fall to learn more about the University's program.

"I wanted to get some guidance from those institutions that have done a good job," Ali said. "WVU is the most prestigious and most active institution in this field."

WVU became a pioneer in the field when it established its ETD program in 1998. It is the second school in the world to require electronic submission of theses and dissertations.

Since then, WVU has required all master's theses and doctoral dissertations to be submitted electronically and then posted on the Web according to the student's directions. As of fall 2007, WVU's ETD collection has almost 3,500 documents: 2,145 theses and 1,340 dissertations.

"We are proud of that legacy and have taken on a leadership role in the ETD global movement," said John Hagen, Manager, Institutional Repository Programs and Coordinator for the ETD Program. "Helping other schools, particularly those in developing nations, to achieve successful ETD program implementation has been an integral part of the University Libraries' international scholarly outreach program."

IIUI's program is currently in the pilot stage. Students are now given an option of whether or not they want to submit an electronic version of their work to be posted on the university's ETD Web site. Ali hopes to use the ideas and information that he gathered on campus to make necessary changes and enhancements to their program in order to fully implement it in fall

2009.

During his visit, Ali met with members of WVU's ETD/IR task force and library department heads for extensive discussions about procedures, policies, and other issues concerning ETDs.

One of his challenges at IIUI has been conveying the benefits of digital publishing to students and faculty. Chief among them is increased access and visibility for the researcher's work.

Traditionally, printed documents go on the shelf in a university's library and are rarely read by anyone not on campus. However, a research document posted on the Web is open to the world. The increased access leads to advances in research and greater recognition for original researchers.

"If the institution is doing good work and research, it is in the best interest of that institution that their work should be on the net so that the world community can know what they have done in their field," Ali said.

Ali is the fourth international visitor to come to campus to study the University's ETD program. He was preceded by Susan Copeland, Robert Gordon University, Scotland, in 2006; Doctors Sumant and Beena Goel, Digital Dissertation Foundation of India, 2005; and Simon Bevan, Cranfield

University, England, 2004.

Hagen credits much of the success of the ETD program to Provost Gerald Lang, who played an integral role in the program's foundation and continues to provide leadership and encouragement.

"Provost Lang's foresight has been crucial to the important role WVU plays in the worldwide ETD movement. He saw the value of a policy of mandatory electronic submission of theses and dissertations long before other universities, thus making WVU a pioneer in this field," Hagen said.



Yaqub Ali, chief librarian of the International Islamic University Islamabad; Libraries Dean Frances O'Brien; and John Hagen, coordinator for the ETD Program pose following Ali's presentation.

## WVU Historical Photo Database Surpasses 24,000 Images

The WVU Libraries' online database of historical photographs continues to grow in size and popularity.

*West Virginia History OnView*, which provides online access to the digital version of historical photographs housed in the West Virginia and Regional History Collection, has recently topped 24,000 digital images and caught the attention of the blogosphere.

"People are finding out about us because we've been discovered by the blogs," said Dennis Newborn, Head of Systems for the WVU Libraries.

The largest boost came from a Web site called the Scout Report, which highlights new and interesting sites. A favorable review from it in late spring translated into a huge spike in traffic to *West Virginia History OnView*. The site recorded nearly 45,000 visits during May, Newborn said. There have been about 300,000 visitors since the site launched in 2005.

The database has also been mentioned in a guide to digital collections published by the University of New Hampshire and blogs such as WordPress.com and Technorati.com. Several sports blogs have become fans of the OnView site because it contains numerous historic sports photographs.

For example, athletics enthusiasts can browse through pictures of the University's basketball and football teams from years past. There are action shots from games, player and team portraits, and pictures of facilities. Especially of interest are photographs of Jerry West, the last game at the Field House, the construction

of old Mountaineer Stadium, and a shot of new basketball coach Bob Huggins from his student athlete days.

Along with sports, subject matter ranges from the coal and timber industries to daily life in communities across West Virginia over the past century. Many visitors use the site to reminisce over photographs showing the shops, restaurants, and attractions that once lined the main drag of their hometown. If you live in West Virginia or have some connection to the state, you're bound to find something there.

"As a West Virginian who now lives in northern Arizona, *West Virginia History OnView* provides me with an instant link to my roots," said Mike Blevins, who relocated to Sedona, AZ, last year. "I've shared the Web site with many of my friends and family."

Blevins said that old photographs intrigue him because they convey rich stories about the people, places, and things in them. What might look like a simple shot of people standing outside of a building or gathering for a meal actually hints at what life was like for the average West Virginian back then.

"I strongly believe that every image we preserve from our past will be of keen interest to the future," Blevins said.

That notion lines up with the mission of West Virginia and Regional History Collection, which has amassed more than 150,000 images relating to West Virginia. The *OnView* site has enabled the WVU Libraries to open up that treasure trove to the world.

"Few other institutions nationally are currently able to offer the combination of quality, quantity, and searchability that our site offers," said John Cuthbert, Curator of the WVRHC. "We are among the vanguard in this field."

Building an easy-to-use searchable database requires a dedicated team of project staff. The photographs are scanned by student employees in the WVRHC who are also charged with creating initial catalog records for each picture. Both the scans and records are reviewed, edited and enhanced as necessary by WVRHC photographs unit manager Lori Hostuttler. A final review is conducted by Libraries Cataloger Gordon Ernst who provides additional subject headings to ensure accurate and comprehensive searches.

The detailed cataloging and descriptive information for each image enables users to perform instantaneous searches on any word or combination of words.

Someone seeking a picture of a steamboat on the Monongahela River passing under the Westover Bridge could find it by typing in "steamboats," "rivers," or "bridges." Or, if the photo has a description, a search would lock onto a word in that paragraph, such as the name of the boat, its owner, or any other identifying feature included.

*West Virginia History OnView* can be reached by going to the WVU Libraries homepage, [www.libraries.wvu.edu](http://www.libraries.wvu.edu), and clicking on the *West Virginia History OnView* link at the bottom right of the page.



Bookshelf

If you are interested in helping with an immediate need, the following are a few items that would be valuable resources or our students and faculty. We will recognize your generosity by affixing a book plate in the volume that you help us to purchase. It can bear either your name or that of a favorite professor or loved one. A book plate serves as a wonderful lasting tribute.

*Sustainable Agriculture and Food*, volumes 1-4  
Earthscan Publications, 2008, \$1,120

*Conservation*, volumes 1-4  
Earthscan Publications, 2008, \$1,120

*International Encyclopedia of Social Policy*, volumes 1-3  
Taylor & Francis, 2006, \$595

*Encyclopedia of Activism and Social Justice*, volumes 1-3  
Sage Publications, 2007, \$495

*Encyclopedic Dictionary of Polymers*  
Jan W. Gooch, Author; 2007, \$479

*Companion Encyclopedia of Geography: from local to global*, volumes 1-2  
Taylor & Francis, 2007, \$395

*The Settlement Issue in Turkey and the Kurds: an analysis of spatial policies, modernity and war*  
Joost Jongerden, Author, 2007, \$167

To help fund any of the items listed above, contact Monte Maxwell, development representative, at (304) 293-4040 Ext. 4004 or monte.maxwell@mail.wvu.edu

*Ex Libris* the Newsletter of the WVU Libraries  
Winter 2008 \* West Virginia University

Frances O'Brien/Dean

Myra N. Lowe/Associate Dean

John Cuthbert/Curator, West Virginia and Regional History Collection

Mary Strife/Director, Evansdale Library

Susan Arnold/Interim Director, Health Sciences Library

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