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Newsletter

Friends of the Connecticut College Library

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Winter Newsletter 2010

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Winter 2010 Newsletter

Friends of the Connecticut College Library

Charles E. Shain Library ↻ Greer Music Library ↻ Linda Lear Center for Special Collections & Archives

Renovation and Renewal

Changes in Library Bring Expanded Space for Books, Revitalized Space for Students

Space in libraries is always at a premium, which often forces librarians to choose between allocating room for books or saving it for patrons. Several important projects at the Charles E. Shain Library this summer left us with the best of both worlds: space for collections growth for twelve to fifteen years and new areas for quiet and group study.



Compact shelving on the lower level of Shain Library.

The source of this new space was the installation of movable compact shelving in the lower level. Just as the alumni were departing campus at the end of Reunion 2010, contractors began work to install over 26,000 feet of shelving. Less-used collections were consolidated into this compact shelving opening up thousands of feet of new shelf space on the second and third levels.

Some of the shelves were left empty, to be filled by collections in the future. Some shelves were torn down altogether to create new open space in the library. With the introduction of compact shelving in the general stacks (these stacks were installed in the Linda Lear Center for Special Collections & Archives in the recent renovation), the Charles E. Shain Library joins other peer institutions in the region and across the country in adopting these units. This achieves one of the primary objectives sought by faculty and students -- keeping all of Connecticut College's book collections on campus.

The changes brought about on the second and third floor of



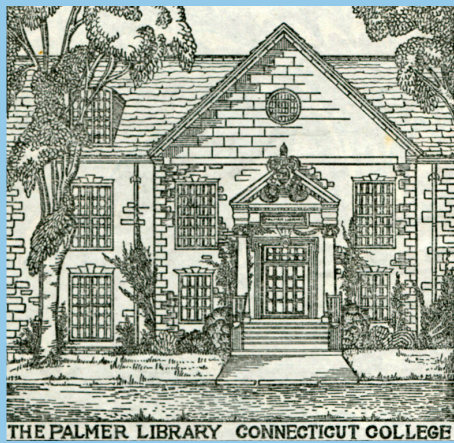
Lower level quiet group study space.

the library have tremendously increased its attractiveness as a space for both quiet and group study on campus. As part of a 2009 anthropology class, Professor Catherine Benoit's students spent the entire semester observing and interviewing students about their use of Shain Library. From their observations and subsequent interviews, they determined that the library was falling short of student expectations in three ways: the lack of group study space, the lack of natural light in Shain Library, and occasional weak wireless internet signals

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Reading area with half-height shelving on the second floor.



THE PALMER LIBRARY CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

Friends of the Connecticut College Library

<http://www.conncoll.edu/is/10875.htm>

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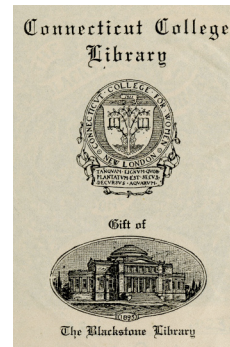
Spring Exhibition Schedule

As Connecticut College begins a year-long celebration of its hundredth birthday this spring, the Charles E. Shain Library is offering some opportunities to look back on our history. The exhibitions in the Shain Library this spring are being planned to help the College celebrate its big anniversary.

Creating a New Library: The First Books at Connecticut College

January 17-March 18, 2011

Opening in January will be an exhibition marking the first books officially added to the College library. The eminent American historian Shelby Foote once described a college as a collection of buildings surrounding a library, highlighting the importance of the library to the operation of the school. If that is the case, a huge, and largely forgotten debt is owed to the town of Branford, Connecticut. In 1925, Branford's Blackstone Library made a gift of several hundred books to the



Connecticut College for Women to help it build a research and teaching collection for the students and faculty. Although many of the books are no longer part of the library, the first book added to the collection, Frederic Marvin's *Poems and Translations*, is still a treasured item in the Linda Lear Center for Special Collections and Archives. This exhibition will feature that book, other surviving examples of Branford's generosity, and other important books added to the collection in the first months. Together they will help paint a portrait of education in the earliest days of the College.

Connecticut College and Women's Education

March 28-June 10, 2011

This April 5th, Founder's Day, will be the hundredth birthday of Connecticut College. To mark the occasion, the Shain Library will be hosting an exhibition examining the development of women's education, especially at the collegiate level, in the United States. Connecticut College's role in that history and the transition to coeducation will be featured prominently. In May, we will shift the focus of the exhibition to display photographs and documents that celebrate and reflect landmarks in the history of the College.



Exhibits in the Chu Room

The Chu Room continues our recent tradition of hosting loaned exhibits during the academic year that seek to portray the extraordinary diversity of modern Asian art. We will feature a new exhibit of contemporary art from China opening in mid-February. An exhibition of works from the Chu-Griffis collection will be installed in May.



New Acquisitions

There have been several new acquisitions in the past year using funds supported by the Friends of the Library. Miles Ladin, a 1991 Connecticut College alumnus who has been living and working in New York as an artist and photographer, made the last copy of his *Lunch Poems* available to us this summer. Miles' photography is widely collected and is held by institutions such as the Library of Congress, London's Victoria and Albert Museum, and the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The Lear Center for Special Collections & Archives now owns both of Miles' limited edition books and we look forward to continuing our association with him. *Lunch Poems* is an homage to the midcentury New York poet Frank O'Hara. It features photographs of Manhattan street scenes, especially of workmen toiling outside of tony addresses. You can see many of Miles' other projects, including his series of portraits of glitterati and political figures and his beach photographs, at his website <http://www.milesladin.com>.



Margery Hellman's limited edition artists' book of Walt Whitman's poem "A Noiseless, Patient Spider" is another important addition to our collection. This marks the first work by Hellman or the Holburne Press to the substantial collection of contemporary artists' books held in the Lear Center. The Shain Library has a significant collection of editions of Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, including seven of the nine editions published during the author's lifetime (Whitman was constantly adding to and rearranging the poems in this collection) and many fine press editions released subsequent to his death, as well as a large collection of photographs and ephemera related to Whitman. Hellman's contribution is of unique value in our Whitman collection, using letterpress and embossing techniques and objects such as string and folded paper to playfully illustrate Whitman's literary figures.



Digital Developments

Over the past year, the Shain Library has been exploring ways to broaden the reach of research and collections at Connecticut College. One of our most effective tools for achieving this is Digital Commons, a means of publishing the College's scholarly work to the world. Some Friends of the Library may already be familiar with Digital Commons because it hosts our newsletters and occasional publications, as well as other publications from the College's Information Services.

The other major collection held in Digital Commons are the honors theses voluntarily submitted by graduating seniors. This collection spotlights the high quality of academic work engaged in by our students and internet users are taking notice. Several of the theses have been downloaded over two thousand times, with many honors papers being accessed on average at least once a day.

As colleges and universities struggle with the high cost of scholarly publishing and researchers seek to reach as many readers as possible, resources such as Digital Commons become an affordable and effective way for faculty to communicate research to colleagues. Scholarly publishers, especially in the sciences, have become surprisingly flexible in recent years, allowing researchers to publish their findings on campus websites even when the copyright is held by an academic journal. The library is getting the word out about the possibilities offered by our Digital Commons and the faculty have been very receptive. In the coming years we hope to have a broad array of our very best research posted online and freely available to the public.

Another way that Digital Commons is communicating Connecticut College's resources to the world is through the delivery of rare materials scanned and cataloged for the web. The Greer Music Library has been busy digitizing items from its collection of rare American sheet music. These scores, which are in extremely fragile condition and are often the sole surviving copy are slowly being added to Digital Commons (<http://digitalcommons.conncoll.edu/sheetmusic/>). The lyrics have been transcribed and added to the records, so that they can be searched by keyword. There are currently nearly fifty scores available to be downloaded with more coming online every month. They have proven popular too, with users accessing the collection an average of two to three times a day. This has not only made these scores available to a wider audience, but it has also helped us protect the brittle paper from the damage that naturally accompanies their use.



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an electronic archive of research and publication

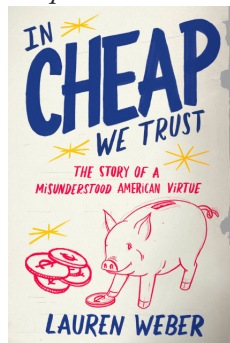
Renovation Continued

(the entire report is available at <http://digitalcommons.conncoll.edu/anthrosp/1/>).

The installation of compact shelving freed up enough space on the upper two floors to expand quiet reading space, including several open areas with carpets, sofas, and stuffed chairs. This made it possible for more students to make use of these areas, freeing up room on the first floor for students engaged in collaborative study. The library was also able to remove or reduce some of the bookshelves from the perimeter of the building, allowing the natural light to flow further into the library. Finally, the information technology team installed more wireless internet transmitters throughout the library as part of a campuswide upgrade, eliminating any internet dead zones. The end result is a building that goes much further to meet the needs of its students. The Charles Chu Asian Art Reading Room also received a facelift this summer. For the first time since its doors opened in 2001, the floors were sanded and the wooden furniture was refinished. The final phase of the project will be completed this winter when the carpets will be replaced.

Sound Lab Lecture

This year's Sound Lab Foundation speaker was financial journalist and author, Lauren Weber. The lecture coincided with the paperback release of Weber's *In Cheap We Trust*, named one of the top ten books of 2009 by the *Washington Post*.



Weber traced the history of frugality in American culture culminating in a discussion of some contemporary social movements that for economic or environmental reasons shun spending money and instead live off of the food, clothes, and consumer goods discarded by their neighbors. The lecture drew an audience of about 100 Sound Lab alumni, Friends of the Library, faculty, and students to the Ernst Common Room on the Connecticut College campus. Planning for next year's lecture will begin in a few weeks and we hope to have an announcement ready by May.

Website Updates

Change your bookmarks, the Friends of the Connecticut College Library website has moved to a new home. The shift was done to bring it into conformity with the rest of the campus websites, which received a dramatic facelift last year. The URL for the new website is <http://www.conncoll.edu/is/10875.htm>. The new site has expanded information about events, the Library Scholarship, membership, and contact information. It also contains some images from particularly prized items in the collection. The site will be updated occasionally with news and activities.

Follow the Shain Library, the Greer Music Library, and the Linda Lear Center for Special Collections & Archives on Facebook. Our Facebook pages contain basic contact information as well as announcements of lectures, events, news, collections, and other developments from the world of libraries and special collections.

Friends of the Connecticut College Library

MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Friends of the Connecticut College Library runs from January 1 to December 31, but it is never too late to join or renew your membership. The dues from the Friends are used to support the acquisition and preservation of materials, lectures, exhibitions, receptions, mailings, and scholarships.

If you wish to join, download a form at www.conncoll.edu/is/10886.htm or contact Benjamin Panciera at bpancier@conncoll.edu or by calling 860-439-2654.

Membership has the following levels, named for important benefactors at the College's founding: Bolles (\$500), Palmer (\$250), Plant (\$100), Gilderleeve (\$50), and Wright (\$25). For recent graduates there is also a Young Alumni level (\$10). All members receive the newsletter and invitations to lectures and other events. Those who contribute more than \$50 will also receive borrowing privileges at both the Charles E. Shain and the Greer Music Libraries. Those who contribute at or above the \$100 level will receive a set of Friends of the Connecticut College Library bookplates and for a gift of \$250 or more, we will personalize the bookplates.



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