

CHECK IT OUT

WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

October 2006

THE INFORMATION COMMONS—YEAR TWO

The Information Commons in Olin Library opened to students and faculty in the fall of 2005 after a hectic summer of rewiring, carpet installation, and furniture selection. The Information Commons has since become a very popular place for students to gather when working together as well as individually on various academic projects. On the one year anniversary of the Information Commons debut, we would like to remind students of the tremendous amount of academic resources that are available within the physical Information Commons as well as other areas nearby.

Located on the first floor of Olin Library in the Campbell Reference Room, the Information Commons as currently configured is a pilot program with the hope of expanding its resources to include group study and classroom space as funding permits. It represents the library's contribution to a larger endeavor campus-wide to bring various resources together to encourage lifelong learning and scholarship by providing access to technology help and the Student Academic Resource Network. The Commons area was constructed to include additional desktop computers that link to the campus computer network and the data resources

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WESLEYAN
UNIVERSITY

From the University Librarian

PROUD TO BE A LIBRARIAN IN THE BIG EASY

"Libraries are the laboratory of freedom and the biggest bargain on earth." —Former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, paraphrased from her speech to American Library Association, New Orleans, June 24, 2006.

The front page of *The New York Times* of June 24, 2006, featured a background article on the opening day of the American Library Association convention in New Orleans. The ALA convention is usually one of the top ten conventions in the country in terms of the number of attendees and money spent in the host city. New Orleans and other associations held their breath to see if "The Big Easy" could handle 17,000 librarians.

The ALA convention of June 22–28, 2006 was the largest convention in New Orleans since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita struck the city in August and September, 2005. I was especially gratified that ALA made the decision not to move the convention. New Orleans has always been a popular spot for the annual convention because the city is just plain fun, relaxed, and friendly—and convention convenient. But this year many of the city's restaurants, hotels, and shops were not yet open for conventioners, and airport flights in and out of the city were still limited.

I am pleased to report that Wesleyan was represented at the ALA convention by Diane Klare, head of reference; Jessie Steele, library assistant in the Library Office and in Serials; Suzy Taraba, university archivist and head of special collections; Pat Tully, associate university librarian; and myself.

Yes, we did go to meetings—a lot of them! Libraries are in a period of change paralleled only by the move from hand-typed catalog cards to OCLC-shared cataloging in the 1970s. I attended a session entitled "The Long Tail: The Internet, Culture and the Mega-Store." Author and economist Chris Anderson spoke about how technology can enable us to move from mass market publishing to niche

or peer-to-peer distribution of information, which is important not only for bookstores but also for how libraries provide access to information. From my perspective the most valuable sessions were two day-long sessions on statistical assessment of library services and collections.

I am pleased that Jessie Steele was the second paraprofessional from the Library who has attended an ALA convention to participate in the special track, "Empowerment 2006." While this track mostly covers the nuts and bolts of library operations, Jessie's favorite session was "Beyond Katrina: Politics, Race, and Law," in which local scholars approached the hurricane's aftermath from multidisciplinary perspectives. Pat and Diane attended such sessions as "Digital Rights Management and Institutional Repositories," topics that will be discussed at Wesleyan this year; "Information Overload and the Quality of Your Life," (need I say more); and "The Catalog Transformed: From Traditional to Emerging Models of Use." It is fairly clear that our next OPAC (online public access catalog) will look much different than the present one, and it will provide seamless access to all types of information, be it a traditional book, an unpublished scholarly paper, or a film. Suzy Taraba was honored to be chosen a member of the important Association of College and Research Libraries Budget and Finance Committee—a crucial but often exhausting assignment. Her comment about New Orleans is shared by all of us: "While many places were full of librarians, the French Quarter seemed pretty subdued . . . Some favorite places, like the Café Madeleine at Jackson Square, were boarded up and showed no signs of returning . . . Two rival shops, both run by elderly women—one

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Cajun, one African American—had merged. They weren't selling much, but they were taking care of each other. To me, this alliance epitomized what I experienced of the French Quarter during its first big conference after Hurricane Katrina."

Many people in New Orleans thanked the 17,000 librarians for coming to their city, including the T-shirt joints in the French Quarter with specially made shirts that read "Librarians Do It by the Book." Among those who thanked us in person were Mayor Ray Nagin, Anderson Cooper from CNN, Madeleine Albright, Governor Kathleen Blanco, and First Lady Laura Bush. We ended up spending over \$20 million in the Big Easy. And yes, there were a lot of musicians and musical programs in the Convention Hall, with old and new jazz musicians.

I think that all the convention attendees believed that we made a contribution to the rebirth of the city after the disastrous events of last year. Diane Klare and I volunteered for one day of community service in the hard hit Ninth Ward. I would like to end my report with Diane's account of her experience.

"I had the opportunity to work on building homes in the new Musicians Village located in the Upper Ninth Ward of New Orleans. This project was conceived by Branford Marsalis and Harry Connick Jr., who are working with Habitat for Humanity to bring music back to the New Orleans area

Early Friday morning, our group boarded a bus for our trip to the Habitat site . . . We drove through miles of streets in the Ninth Ward with boarded up homes, still marked by the spray-painted codes indicating the number of bodies found inside, pets alive or dead, and the dates of the various agencies that had inspected the houses

Our group spent the day (which was very hot and humid) painting both the interiors and exteriors of the new homes, putting in insulation, and roofing. We were also treated to live jazz for almost an hour at lunch time by some of the musicians who will be living in the homes. These new homes, raised approximately three feet off the ground, were painted yellow, green, white, and other bright colors, and stood in stark contrast to the surrounding area we had seen on the way. But they also reflected the hope and upbeat personalities, particularly of the people connected with this project, I met while working on this project and in New Orleans during my entire stay."

— BARBARA JONES, UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN

NEW INDEXES AND DATABASES

Listed below are a few of the new indexes and databases that Wesleyan has acquired since the previous listing that appeared in the October 2005 issue of this publication. The beginning of the academic year is the best time to make students and faculty aware of new resources that we offer. The librarians encourage users to try out both the new databases, as well to familiarize themselves with the others in their field that will be valuable for their research. Please contact a reference librarian for help in using any of the databases to which we subscribe.

• **Smithsonian Global Sound** is an online encyclopedia of world music traditions. It includes American folk, blues, country, American Indian, jazz, classical, Broadway, spoken word, sounds, and children's music. This database offers digital downloads, and it also includes the Folkways catalog, the International Library of African Music, and music records on the Asian subcontinent from the Archives Research Centre for Ethnomusicology. Users may search by genre, instrument, geographical location, and cultural group. There is also the option to play either a single work or the entire album.

• **American State Papers (1789–1838)** is the digitized full-text of legislative and executive documents from the first 14 American Congresses. The American State Papers is continued by the **U. S. Congressional Serial Set**: 15th Congress (1817) through the 96th Congress (1982). The Serial Set is also available from the Wesleyan University Library's **Indexes and Databases** page. The **Congressional Serial Set** is now available through the 1890s and the digitization project will be complete through the 96th Congress in 2010. Students and scholars of American history and politics will find these databases to be crucial primary data on all aspects of American history including foreign relations, finance, commerce and navigation, and military and naval affairs as well as general political, social, cultural, and ethnic history. This vast body of material may be searched by subject, standing committee author, and publication category or by Congress.

• **The European Intellectual History Database** was conceived and has been produced at Wesleyan University since 1998 as a joint project of the Library, the History Department, and Information and Technology Services. The database offers annotated links to currently available Web sites that deal with all aspects of European intellectual history from ancient Greece to the Enlightenment through postmodern thought. The database, still a work in progress, currently contains approximately 1,500 Web sites carefully selected and critically annotated by Alan Nathanson, who serves as collector, editor, and cataloger of the project as well as other Web sites collected and submitted to him by professors at other universities and advanced history students at Wesleyan. The project is headed by Cecilia Miller of the Wesleyan History Department, and it receives technical support by Mike Roy and Mary Glynn of ITS. Researchers in this vast area of study will find encyclopedic and biographical Web sites to major thinkers, links to the full-texts of their writings and biographical sites, as well as scholarly criticism, images, and graphics. The database may be searched by Library of Congress subject headings, keywords, and other search fields. The user may then read the annotation, and click directly on the URL to access the Web site directly. Anyone interested in further information about the European Intellectual History Database should contact either Cecilia Miller in the History Department or Alan Nathanson in Olin Library.

— ALAN J. NATHANSON, BIBLIOGRAPHER/REFERENCE LIBRARIAN

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF GOVERNMENT INFORMATION

In 1906, through the efforts of Congressman George Lilley, Wesleyan University Library became a depository for U. S. Government publications. We celebrated our depository centennial during Wesleyan's Homecoming/Family Weekend. In commemoration of this anniversary Judy Russell, superintendent of documents, spoke in the Smith Reading Room of Olin Library on October 20.

— ERHARD KONERDING, GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS LIBRARIAN

available to all students on campus. This means that in addition to the Library's online resources and easy access to print resources, users can use desktop PC or Macintosh computers loaded with Microsoft Office applications, datasets for the social sciences and natural sciences, and have networked access to individual student accounts on the Wesleyan University server. With the growing popularity of laptop computers, additional desk space is provided within the Information Commons to bring in laptops to access the wireless network available at Wesleyan. All the computers within the Information Commons are linked to three black and white printers, a color printer, and a scanner located in close proximity.

Traditional in-person reference service, as well as online reference service through **Live Help**, is provided at the library reference desk by reference librarians from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. most days of the week. These services are augmented by the Information Technology Service desk, which is staffed by trained students from Information Technology Services who can assist users with software and other computer issues from noon to midnight.

The final component of the Information Commons is access to the Student Academic Resource Network (SARN) information and referral desk. Peer advisors from SARN are trained to refer students for focused assistance to a variety of student needs and intellectual enrichment. Campus resources and participants available through SARN include the Writing Workshop, the Math Workshop, the Career Resource Center, the Language Resource Center, the Life Sciences Mentored Study Groups, the Dean's Tutoring Program, the Health Professions Partnership Initiative, and the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Program. Some of these programs are located in the library as well, while others are located in nearby satellite locations.

Bringing all these resources together in one location allows for coordinated services for students whether the assistance they seek is in-person or electronic. The collaboration and exchange of ideas made possible over the past year by the physical set-up within the Commons area has benefited faculty and students alike. Since the services are designed to assist students and faculty with their academic pursuits, the library continually seeks input from users for ways we could improve upon the current resources available. Feedback is welcome at www.wesleyan.edu/its/InfoCommons/InfoCommonsFeedback.html.

— DIANE KLARE, HEAD OF REFERENCE

MIDDLETOWN HISTORY IN WESLEYAN SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AND ARCHIVES

Located in the heart of Middletown, Wesleyan University has a history that is entwined with the city's history. To help document our shared past, Olin Library's Special Collections and Archives department houses a rich collection of materials about Middletown history. The Middletown Collection is frequently used by Wesleyan students researching their "home away from home." It is also used by local residents interested in the history of Middletown.

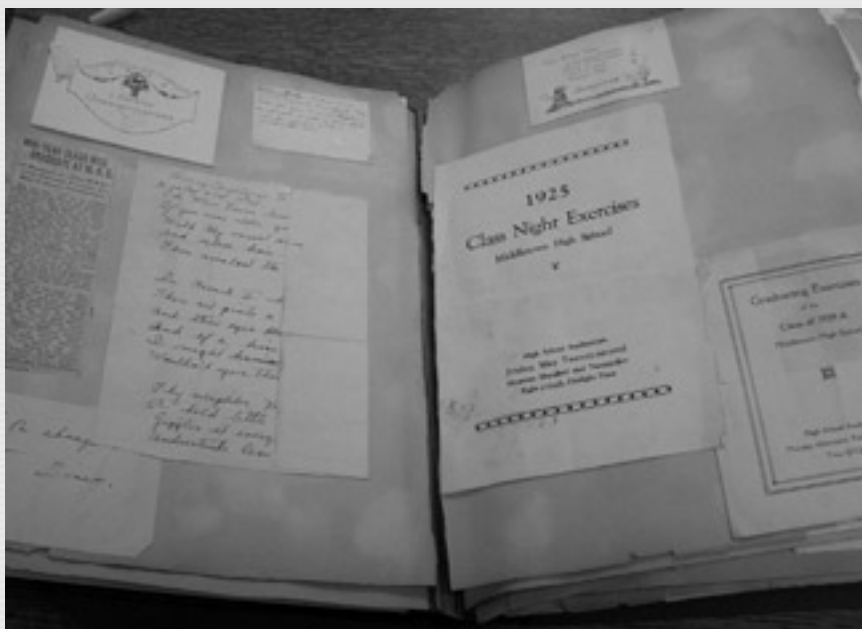
In addition to books, atlases, directories, and student papers, Special Collections and Archives recently acquired five scrapbooks created by Middletown resident and Wesleyan employee Marian Vaine. The books include programs from Middletown High School and Wesleyan University, and offer a glimpse into the life of a woman who grew up and lived in Middletown from the 1920s through the 1950s. The affectionate notes to and from friends, as well as her souvenirs of travel in New England, contributes to an understanding of her experiences during this time period.



Scrapbooks like these can be used to explore the lives of past residents of Middletown. Ron Schatz, professor of history at Wesleyan, actively uses our Middletown materials to introduce his students to doing original research with primary sources. Former Wesleyan students have studied everything from colonial Middletown to modern "town and gown" relations. Copies of their research papers are retained by Special Collections and Archives, providing additional sources for future local history scholars.

Through contributions like the Marian Vaine scrapbooks, the Middletown Collection offers a wealth of information about the history of the city. One story at a time, the history of Middletown is being uncovered, rediscovered, and made available to the public.

— VALERIE GILLISPIE, ASSISTANT UNIVERSITY ARCHIVIST, SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AND ARCHIVES



FRIENDS OF THE WESLEYAN LIBRARY

The Friends of the Wesleyan Library book sale in May was a great success. Volunteers from the Wesleyan and Middletown communities joined with Library Friends to move and display over 300 boxes of books, while hundreds of buyers ranging from book dealers and passionate scholars to casual book lovers sifted through the offerings in the Exley Science Center. The sale and an additional book auction raised over \$16,000 to support the Friends' efforts to preserve library collections and make them more accessible to our users. I would like to thank all who helped with the sale, and with special thanks to board members Christina Trier and Greg Petropoulos, who spearheaded the effort.

The Friends' first set of note cards depicting highlights from Special Collections and Archives were featured at the book sale. The set of eight images include exquisite examples of ornate, gilt-stamped books, the Lincoln Memorial under construction, and a frontispiece of Phillis Wheatley, 18th-century African-American writer and poet. The cards sell for \$10 a box and are available at Special Collections, the Library Office, and through the contact information below.

Because book lovers are very interested in both donating as well as buying books, the Friends have established an ongoing book sale on the first floor of Olin Library, outside the Smith Reading Room. Please stop by and browse the offerings, as new additions are added each week.

The Friends welcome new board members Nancy Healy, Steve Machuga, and Anne Thompson and thank retiring board members Robin Price and Dan Schnaidt for their interest and their service. Diane Klare, head of reference at Wesleyan, has joined the board as a liaison from the library, and I am her assistant. We will soon begin our fall membership drive and hope that you will consider renewing or joining the Friends. Membership information is available in the lobby of Olin, as well as at Special Collections and Archives and the Library Office, and on the Friends Web site: www.wesleyan.edu/libr/friends. If you have any questions about membership, the ongoing book sale or note cards, please contact me. We hope to see you at our future events.

— JENNIFER HADLEY, FRIENDS ASSISTANT AND SCORES AND RECORDINGS ASSISTANT

DIANE KLARE—NEW OLIN LIBRARY HEAD OF REFERENCE

Diane Klare, who was the science reference librarian at Wesleyan since August 2002, has been promoted to head of the reference in Olin Library. Her new appointment was effective July 1, 2006. Diane has a bachelor of arts degree in French from the University of Connecticut, and a masters in business administration with a concentration in international finance, also from the University of Connecticut. She worked as a senior financial analyst at the Fleet Financial Corporation from 1985 until 2001. Towards the end of her tenure at Fleet Financial, Diane decided she wished to become a librarian and she completed her master's in library science at Southern Connecticut State University in 2002. In addition to her new responsibilities as head of reference, she also serves as liaison to the Economics and the Psychology departments. Diane has an incredible breadth and depth of knowledge in a wide variety of fields, she is very friendly and approachable, and she looks forward assisting faculty, students, and other library users with their reference questions and their research projects.

— ALAN J. NATHANSON, BIBLIOGRAPHER/REFERENCE LIBRARIAN



LIBRARY DEPARTMENTAL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

OLIN LIBRARY, FRONT DESK	685-2660
REFERENCE AND RESEARCH	685-3873
CIRCULATION DEPARTMENT	685-3877
RESERVE OFFICE	685-3852
INTERLIBRARY LOAN.....	685-3876
ACQUISITIONS DEPARTMENT	685-3834
CATALOGING DEPARTMENT	685-3845
SERIALS DEPARTMENT	685-3888
ART LIBRARY	685-3327
PSYCHOLOGY LIBRARY	685-2770
PRESERVATION DEPARTMENT	685-3875
SCIENCE LIBRARY	685-2860
SCORES AND RECORDINGS	685-3898
SPECIAL COLLECTIONS/ARCHIVES....	685-3864
WORLD MUSIC ARCHIVES.....	685-3826



Check It Out is a publication of the Wesleyan University Libraries that has been published three to four times annually since 1998. Its purpose is to offer timely information to students, faculty, and staff of recent developments in library technologies and resources available at Wesleyan that will assist them in using the libraries in the most effective ways possible.

Articles are contributed by library staff members, and the publication is edited by Alan J. Nathanson, bibliographer/reference librarian, anathanson@wesleyan.edu, (860) 685-3869.

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