Every library, there are books of timeless utility, interest, and cultural importance. There also are books on current topics and areas of scholarship that may or may not continue to be relevant over time. To make space for new books, it is necessary for the library to periodically withdraw older books that no longer serve the needs of library users.

This semester, Wesleyan University Library is in the planning stages of a weeding project that will free up badly needed space in the libraries. In recent years, the library has completed three weeding projects, each of limited scope. One was the weeding of additional copies of books that were no longer needed. Two others were the weeding of print volumes of many journals and reference works now available online. But as quickly as these projects made shelf space available, it was filled with new books!

Both the Art Library and Olin Library are almost out of shelf space, and the Science Library’s free space is very limited. Given the probable shift in the next several years to purchasing more electronic books and fewer print books, it does not necessarily make sense to physically expand the library. But space must be created, and weeding is a way to do this.

To accommodate several years of collection growth, the planned weeding project is of wider scope than previous projects. Although our planning is not yet complete, here are the main components of the project:

**WHAT TO WEED:** We will first develop criteria to evaluate whether or not a book might be weeded. Factors may include:

- How many times the book has been checked out in the past five years
- How many copies of the book are in the collection
- The physical condition of the book
• Whether the book is available from Trinity College or Connecticut College, our CTW Consortium partners

• Whether the book is available from other libraries that lend through interlibrary loan, and how many libraries hold the book

• Whether or not the book is available in electronic form, and how usable that form is to our students and faculty

• For a book available in electronic form, whether parts of the book (for example, graphs or pictures) are included or omitted from the electronic version.

CREATING, REVIEWING LIST OF POTENTIAL “WEEDS”:
Using these criteria, we will create a list of books that might be weeded, sorted by subject. Each librarian will review the list of potential weeds in their subject areas, and determine which should be kept in the collection.

GETTING FACULTY FEEDBACK: Because faculty and their students are the primary users of the library’s materials, it is critical for faculty as well as librarians to review the list. In order to ensure that we do not weed books that are still useful in assignments or research, faculty will have the opportunity to review the list and let us know what books we should keep.

PROCESSING BOOKS TO BE WEEDED: When the list of books to be weeded is finalized, the books will be removed from the shelves, deleted from the library’s online catalog, and marked “withdrawn.”

DISPOSING OF THE WEEDED BOOKS: Depending on the subject, age, and physical condition of the weeded books, some will be donated to other libraries in need, others put into the Friends of the Wesleyan Library book sale and still others recycled.

MOVING SPACE TO WHERE IT IS NEEDED: The shelf space created by weeding will almost certainly not be where it is needed. So the books will be shifted to move the space to subject areas in which we anticipate the most growth occurring in the next several years. The shelves will then be relabeled and print and online stacks guides updated.

Weeding a library collection is a challenging, labor-intensive, and time-consuming project. The reward is having a collection at Wesleyan that meets the changing curricular and research needs of our students and faculty.

“Plant and your spouse plants with you; weed and you weed alone.”
— Author Unknown

— PAT TULLY, UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN —

With apologies to T. S. Eliot, April may not be the “cruelest month” in 2011 after all. April is National Poetry Month, and, throughout the spring semester, the exhibitions area in Olin Library will be a showcase for some of our superb holdings of 19th- and 20th-century American and British poetry. The resources of Special Collections & Archives include literally thousands of books of poetry, as well as archival collections and manuscript materials related to poets. A selection of these riches will be highlighted in two related exhibitions.

The first exhibition, Building Wesleyan’s Poetry Collections: Frank Kirkwood Hallock (1882) and Caroline Clark Barney (1895), focuses on the two alumni collectors whose gifts shaped Wesleyan’s outstanding 19th- and 20th-century poetry holdings. Frank Hallock, a member of the class of 1882 who became a psychiatric doctor in Cromwell, Conn., was a devoted book collector. He gave his collection of more than 1,600 volumes in honor of the opening of Olin
Library in 1928. Dr. Hallock’s approach was to focus on 16 of his favorite literary authors, several of them poets, and to collect just about everything he could find by and about each of them. He drew the line at high-priced rarities, and he bought many of his books at bargain prices. We know this because he kept elaborate notes, using a price code, to keep track of his purchases. Nevertheless, the Hallock collection includes some books highly coveted by book collectors, such as the first edition in original boards of Wordsworth’s two-volume collection of poems (1807).

Caroline Clark Barney, class of 1895, was a schoolteacher who attributed her love of poetry to her studies with Wesleyan English professors Caleb T. Winchester and William E. Mead. Barney focused her collecting interests on poetry, building a private library of about 400 volumes. A few years before her death in 1948, she offered her books to Wesleyan, with the provision that faculty and librarians would choose those that complemented the existing holdings. In addition to her books, Barney bequeathed the proceeds from her estate, which totaled more than $65,000, for the “purchase of books of poetry for the library.” This extremely generous gift enabled Wesleyan librarians and faculty to build a first-rate collection of poetry in Olin. Among the many strengths of the collections purchased using the Barney fund are nearly complete holdings of the works of William Butler Yeats and his sister Elizabeth Yeats.

In the second half of the semester, Poetry at Wesleyan will be on view. This exhibition will highlight the prize-winning poetry series published by the Wesleyan University Press, poetry readings at Russell House and elsewhere on campus, and faculty and student poets. In conjunction with the poetry exhibitions, the Friends of the Library will sponsor a WESeminar at Reunion/Commencement, as well as other events during the semester. Building Wesleyan's Poetry Collections will be on view in the exhibition area on Olin’s first floor, east corridor, from February 5 through March 4, 2011; Poetry at Wesleyan will be on view from March 21 through May 22, 2011.

— SUZY TARABA, HEAD OF SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AND UNIVERSITY ARCHIVIST —

Today Wesleyan is well-known for its science faculty and their groundbreaking research, but did you know that Wesleyan has been in the forefront of scientific discovery since its first decade? The University Archives, part of the Special Collections & Archives department in Olin Library, contains a wealth of information about Wesleyan’s scientific past. Last semester Professor Paul Erickson’s class, “Science in the Making: Thinking Historically About Science,” made use of some of the primary sources available at Wesleyan as they studied broader trends in the history of science. Students in this course, which is cross-listed in the history department and the Science in Society program, are using the information they gathered to create a class web site.

One of the earliest examples of the University’s involvement with science dates to 1836, when President Willbur Fisk traveled to Europe to acquire scientific equipment. One of his major purchases was a seven-foot telescope with a six-inch aperture, purchased in France for 6,000 francs. A beautiful “Columbian orrery,” or planetary model, also was acquired in 1836. Wesleyan’s early investment in complex scientific apparatus is a testament to the University’s commitment to research by its faculty and students. The Willbur Fisk Papers in the Archives include the original bills of sale of the telescope and other equipment.

Another valuable collection of archives is the professional and family papers of Wilbur O. Atwater, class of 1865 and a nutrition scientist of international renown. He served as a professor at Wesleyan from 1873 until his death in 1907. During that time, he established the first agricultural experiment station in the nation in Judd Hall, and he also did pioneering research in food energy values through his development and use of the respiration calorimeter. We can thank Professor Atwater for our understanding of the calorie.

Other students are studying science buildings on campus, including Van Vleck Observatory, Shanklin Hall, and Judd Hall. In addition to being the home of Atwater’s research, Judd Hall also was the location of the Wesleyan Museum, an eclectic collection of natural history artifacts. The University Archives has the papers of this museum, which operated from 1871 to 1957. The annual reports and accession registers provide insight into the types of research being conducted by scientists in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

More modern collections include an Anti-Nuclear Protests Collection, which features the papers of several student groups active in protesting nuclear arms and nuclear power plants during the 1970s and 1980s. The intersection between science and social movements is an important aspect of the history of science, and can be traced in this collection and others.

“Science in the Making” is one of a number of courses that incorporates archives and rare books into the curriculum. Students and faculty enjoy having a “hands-on” experience with historical materials.

“Studying history in the seminar room is perfectly suited to analyzing exemplary works of scholarship and arguing ideas,” says Professor Erickson. “But ultimately there is no substitute for having the opportunity to encounter the raw materials of historical scholarship—personal correspondence, institutional records, architectural plans, notebooks, ephemera, collections of photographs, and films—first-hand, and then struggling to make sense of it all. It’s like the difference between reviewing a concert and teaching yourself to play an instrument.”

— VALERIE GILLISPIE, ASSISTANT UNIVERSITY ARCHIVIST —
FRIENDS UPDATE

ough economic times can call forth creativity and generosity, and that is what has happened with the Friends of the Wesleyan Library this year. Thanks to new and renewing members, the group has been energetically pursuing its mission to support the library by providing thought-provoking programming, funding projects that make collections more accessible to the community, and advocating for funding projects that make collections more accessible to the community, and advocating for

The first Friends event this fall was a continuation of the Adaptation Series, an ongoing collaboration with the Center for Film Studies examining the translation of literary texts to the screen. The committee selected Stanley Kubrick’s Paths of Glory (1957), a stark portrayal of trench warfare during World War I. The screening on September 9 in the Goldsmith Family Cinema was preceded by brief talks by Erhard Konerding, government documents librarian, on World War I, and Marc Longenecker ’03, programming and technical manager, on Kubrick’s visualization of the Humphrey Cobb novel.

For the annual Constitution Day talk on September 17, the Friends were privileged to host the Honorable Mark R. Kravitz ’72, P’00, United States district judge. Judge Kravitz’s talk, “Constitutional Decision Making at the Forefront of Technology: How Courts Decide Cases Where There Is Little Guidance,” focused on student social networking, the First Amendment, and the ability of schools (particularly high schools) to discipline students’ online behavior.

On October 2, Friends members joined together with students and library staff for our largest event of the year, the annual library book sale and silent auction. This event is truly a community celebration. More than 4,000 books filled the lobby of Olin Memorial Library, with book lovers and dealers lining up an hour before the doors opened, prospective students and their parents rushing back to browse after their Wesleyan tour, football fans stopping in at half-time, and students happily sifting through the remaining bargains for several days after the main sale. Thanks to all who volunteered their time and muscles, donated books, and shopped at the sale! The event raised about $4,000 for the library.

At Homecoming on October 22, the Friends sponsored a WESeminar by Suzy Taraba, head of special collections and university archivist, on “Food for Thought: Artists’ Books and Environmental Issues.” She discussed book artists’ responses to issues of climate change, the environment, and the commodification of food, showcasing examples from Wesleyan’s superb collection of artists’ books. The talk was in conjunction with the Olin exhibition Food for Thought, curated by Suzy Taraba and Valerie Gillispie, assistant university archivist, which highlighted Special Collections & Archives resources related to food as a social, political, and historical phenomenon.

To wrap up the semester’s events, on December 8, Michælle Biddle, collections conservator and head of preservation services, invited Friends members to an open house at Olin Library’s Book Conservation Lab (ground floor of Olin Library). She demonstrated some of the techniques used to preserve the Wesleyan collection and answered questions about book conservation. The occasion was the launching of the Friends Adopt a Book Program, which provides opportunities for people to give a gift for a special occasion or honor loved ones through a donation to support the care of noteworthy books in the Wesleyan collection. (See “Adopt a Book for Conservation” article, page 1.)

Several events are in the planning stages for the spring, including an annual meeting, as well as special projects to help the library. We hope you will be able to attend some of the events. In addition, we invite you to become involved with the group. We are always looking for new ideas and new members. If you would like to learn more about the Friends, become a member or renew your membership, donate books for the book sale or sponsor an event or project, please contact Jennifer Hadley, libfriends@wesleyan.edu or 860-685-3897 or visit the Friends website at www.wesleyan.edu/libr/friends/. We also invite you to stop by our ongoing book sale, on the first floor of Olin Memorial Library, outside the Smith Reading Room.

— Jennifer Hadley, Friends of the Wesleyan Library —

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 on recent developments in library technologies and resources available at Wesleyan to students, faculty, staff, alumni, and other Friends of the Wesleyan Library.

Articles are contributed by library staff members, and the publication is edited by Pat Tully, Caleb T. Winchester University Librarian, ptully@wesleyan.edu, (860) 685-3887.

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