JASMINE CARDI

Jasmine Cardi, Olin Library’s Access Services Evening and Weekend Supervisor, left Wesleyan at the end of November to take a new position. Working nights and weekends, Jasmine was the sole supervisor of student workers during these hours. She covered three departments in Access Services (Circulation, ILL, and Reserves departments), fulfilling requests from faculty and students for CTW, ILL, and Reserves. Jasmine was behind handling the requests and students for CTW, ILL, and Reserves. Jasmine moved to serve both students and faculty. She was a great collaborator and very easy adapter in learning many different library systems, including Alma, Docutek I-Reserve system, Trello, WorldCat, and Lljud. Jasmine’s warm and cheerful personality and her significant contributions to the libraries over the past seven years will be greatly missed. Thank you to Jasmine Cardi for her many years of service, and with her this fall, she moves on to her new career.

— EUNJOO LEE, HEAD OF ACCESS SERVICES

FROM THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN

Change is an inevitable part of life. And life in the Wesleyan University Library is no different. Nearly 20 years of service to Wesleyan, including several years as Interim University Librarian, Diane Klare is saddling up and heading west to become the associate dean and library director for the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs. After embarking on librarianship following a successful career as a business analyst, Diane began working at Wesleyan in 2001 as a reference intern. Diane’s steady hand and clear vision helped the library organization and staff survive and thrive during some very tumultuous times. Please join me in thanking Diane for all she’s done for the University and the library and with her well on this new adventure!

January also marks the retirement of Collections Coordinator Michaelle Biddle after a 35-year career in the library. The space allotted to this monthly note cannot begin to catalog Michaelle’s many contributions to Wesleyan. Watch the Spring 2019 newsletter for a feature article on Michaelle’s career and accomplishments.

— ANDREW WHITE, CALEY T. WINCHESTER UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN

FRIENDS OF THE WESLEYAN LIBRARY

In the later part of the fall, the Friends were pleased to work with student groups and departments to bring a variety of events to the library: a dinner for playwright Rohina Malik with students, a talk by Ioana Emy Matesan, assistant professor of government, and a discussion with Franco Algerian playwright Mohamed Kacimi. We look forward to further exciting collaborations in the spring.

We would like to thank Stephen Darrell ’69 for a special project donation that will fund the prizes for this spring’s Friends of the Wesleyan Library Undergraduate Research Prize Competition honoring excellence in research and writing. The donation will also inaugurate a grant for research by visiting scholars. We would also like to thank Dr. Joseph J. Fins ’82 for his special project donation in honor of College of Letters faculty past and present. These generous donations will help us accomplish even more this semester.

Beginning with this issue, we will feature a few words from Friends of the Library Board members. Please consider joining us! Paul Hadzima ’59, who made a special donation in honor of his reunion class, writes: “Working with the Friends of the Wesleyan Library over the past decade has been such a pleasure for me. It has allowed me to establish a relationship with the University that few other alumni of my ‘vintage’ (Class of ’59) have had. I’ve enjoyed the various activities of the Friends—especially those associated with the annual book sale—selling, luging, and driving! I’ve also had the opportunity to associate with people from many parts of the University community—library staff, technical staff, faculty, students, and members of the general Middletown community. Overall, I feel that I have gained much more than I have given.”

And from Michael Meere, Friends chair and assistant professor of French: “Thanks to the Friends’ presence on and off campus, and the types of events that we organize—such as the annual Constitution Day Lecture in the fall and the Undergraduate Research Prize in the spring—I like to think of the Friends of the Wesleyan Library as a link that brings together the six major groups that make up Wesleyan University: the students, the alumni, the faculty, the librarians, the staff, and the Middletown community. If you would like to join the Friends, donate books or a gift towards special library projects or events, or volunteer, please email libfriends@wesleyan.edu.

—FRANCESCA LIVERMORE, DIGITAL PROJECTS LIBRARIAN

UPDATES FROM THE DIGITAL LAB: A NEW FELLOWS PROGRAM AND EASIER ACCESS TO DIGITAL COLLECTIONS

The library has partnered with Information Technology Services to launch a Digital Scholarship (DS) Fellows program for spring 2019, offered by Technical and Digital Services and Academic Technology. Three awesome fellows have been chosen from a competitive applicant pool: Philippe Bungabong ’22, Rama Co ’21, and Sofia Sperber ’22. This spring the inaugural group of DS Fellows will engage in a series of workshops where they will develop skills in the use of technology for scholarly research, culminating in the drafting of a proposal for their own digital scholarship project, which they will undertake during the following academic year. Look for exciting things to come from this group over the next few months! You can check the Digital Scholarship page on the Wesleyan website at wesleyan.edu/digitalscholarship.

In additional news, digitized collection materials are now findable through the library’s catalog, OneSearch. To see everything we’ve digitized, search for “01CTW_WU_JSLANDORA.” To look at some fun postcards or photos, search for “Atwater postcards” or “University Photographers.” Of course, you can just search as you normally do, and relevant digital collections objects will show up in those searches. As we add objects to the digital collections site, they will be added to our catalog as well (updating on a weekly basis). You can also find a full list of all of our digital collections at our new webpage under “Digital Collections” on the library homepage.

—FRANCESCA LIVERMORE, DIGITAL PROJECTS LIBRARIAN

Therapy dog Ticket with owner Coby, from Tails of Joy, visits Olin. The Library invited Tails of Joy, WesWell, SALD, Usdan, and Res Life to put together De-stress-cember, a week-long series of events intended to help students unwind as they geared up for finals.

Drawing by Karen Xu ’22, as an assignment for ARST131 section 3.
**INVESTIGATING THE 1481 EDITION OF DANTE ALIGHIERI’S COMMEDIA**

As a Chaucer scholar Stephen Knight wrote, manuscripts present “lots of odd things you don’t expect to find,” which have momentous implications for the texts they preserve. Similar surprises are often found in printed books. The rich collection of early books preserved in Olin’s Special Collections & Archives has recently become more precious in light of new details on one of its items: the 1481 printing of Dante’s poem, with copperplate engravings attributed to the mysterious Baccio Baldini from original drawings by Renaissance painter Sandro Botticelli. Second, it is the first edition preserving the influential commentary by Neapolitan philosopher Cristoforo Landino. Third, textual variants in the extant exemplars help reconstruct the pioneering anatomy of early typographer Nicola della Magna and the role Landino himself played in Niccolò’s typographic choice. The copy George Davision (Class of 1902) bequeathed to Olin Library is notable for at least two additional reasons: its iconographic apparatus and its provenance. Like most exemplars, Olin’s copy only preserves two of the 20 original engravings: the typographer soon gave up the difficult task of associating each text and image. However, not only were two additional engravings later glued onto the incunable, but the incunable was also made unique by the execution of 11 line drawings by a later (modern) unknown artist. This shows the various owners’ continuous effort to fulfill the original project of unifying Dante, Landino, and Botticelli (via Baldini) in a single volume. It is this series of owners on which more light has shed through several autographic examinations of the book and an inquiry into the “dark wood” of auction catalogs. It was well known to Olin’s catalogers that the book had belonged to Dante scholars and bibliophiles George John Warren Vernon (1803-1866) and his son William John Borlase-Vernon-Venables-Vernon (1834-1919). Their bookplates appear together with William E. Moss’s (1875-1953), whose interest in William Blake as engraver possibly led him to our incunable. The library catalog, however, did not mention the autographic ex-libris of Italian poet and dramatist Vittorio Alfieri (1747-1803), a major figure in European literature during the 18th and 19th centuries. Count Alfieri’s library was dispersed during several of his trips and his precipitous flight from Paris at the outbreak of the French Revolution.

Consultation with Alfieri scholars, an investigation into the list of consigned items drafted by the French revolutionary authorities, and a study of the library catalogs written by Alfieri’s secretaries in the desperate attempt to reconstitute his library have led me to track two additional owners of the volume: the mathematician, scholar, forger, and thief Guglielmo Libri (1803-1869), who listed the volume in catalogs written by Alfieri’s secretaries in the desperate attempt to reconstitute his library; and the Italian physician, naturalist, and writer Antonio Cocchi (1695-1758), whose ownership is recorded on the back of the text and image. The first edition preserved on appearance on the first folio of the incunable and was first recorded by Libri.

The material study of the volume adds sense to both the material history of the early stages of typography and the history of book collecting and Dante studies. Literary and material creation is inseparable from circulation and reception, and after 700 years Dante’s Commedia has not finished saying what it has to say. More details on the incunable are included in an article forthcoming in Italian in 2018. I would like to thank Suzy Taraba, director of SC&A, Mihaela Biddle, collection conservator, and Miya Tokumitsu, curator of the Davison Art Center, for their invaluable help and feedback throughout all phases of this research.

**FRANCESCO MARCO AREDI, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ITALIAN AND MEDIEVAL STUDIES**

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**DAVISON ART CENTER COLLECTION**

*We* are excited that the Davison Art Center collection will be moving to renovated spaces in Olin Library. Construction began in December 2018. Look for an article by curator Miya Tokumitsu in the May issue.

**WESLEYAN AND THE GREAT WAR—SPECIAL COLLECTIONS & ARCHIVES EXHIBITION WINTER 2019**

In 1914, The Great War—known later as World War I—broke out in Europe. Wesleyan became a war campus in the years that followed. After the U.S. Congress declared war on Germany in 1917, college life at Wesleyan “took on a belligerent aspect,” as Carl F. Price, Class of 1902, observed later. “Minor sports, dramatics, dances, were dropped. The students were in uniform, rose early in the morning to drill, were allowed no cuts from classes. A trench was dug at one side of the campus and armed guards challenged allcomers.”

By the time the armistice was signed in 1918—100 years ago last year—some 1,200 Wesleyan faculty, staff, students, and alumni provided military or civilian service, including 10 and barely decipherable note of poem examples which he exhibited. How the “War to End All Wars” impacted Wesleyan. Email scawesleyan.edu for more information.

**WILLIAM BENDER, JR.— COWBOY SONGBOOKS AND SHEET MUSIC**

The Coen brothers pay homage to old Westerns in their most recent film *The Ballad of Buster Scruggs*, an anthology of six short stories of the Old West, with the first featured story about a singing cowboy. We too, in Special Collections & Archives (SC&A), have a story to tell about another singing cowboy, but not the gunslinging, rowdy, hard type. It was serendipity to rediscover in the closed stacks of SC&A a collection of cowboy and country music songbooks and sheet music that once belonged to a former student, William Bender, Jr. (born August 1, 1916, in Brooklyn, New York), a nongraduate of Wesleyan University’s Class of 1938. He attended Wesleyan from September 1934 to June 1935 and was a member of the Sigma Chi fraternity.

It must have been the call of new frontiers because in 1936 he moved out West to attend Colorado University, where he became better known as Bill Bender. After not much time there, he picked up a western accent—having always liked to sing and at the suggestion of a schoolmate—tried for a job at the radio station KOA. He was hired to host a weekly and then semi-weekly radio show featuring a wide variety of country music performers popular during the time, such as Dude Martin and his band; Fred Scott, “The silver voiced buckaroo”; and the Golden West Cowboys, featuring Pee Wee King and others (see photo). Bender, as the article *stated, “Bill Bender today is recognized by folklorists as one of the West’s singing cowboy, but not the gunslinging or cowhand type. It must have been the call of new frontiers because in 1936 he moved out West to attend Colorado University, where he became better known as Bill Bender. After not much time there, he picked up a western accent—having always liked to sing and at the suggestion of a schoolmate—tried for a job at the radio station KOA. He was hired to host a weekly and then semi-weekly radio show featuring a wide variety of country music performers popular during the time, such as Dude Martin and his band; Fred Scott, “The silver voiced buckaroo”; and the Golden West Cowboys, featuring Pee Wee King and others (see photo). Bender, as the article stated, “Bill Bender today is recognized by folklorists as one of the West’s singing cowboy, but not the gunslinging or cowhand type. It has been a pleasure to learn something about William Bender, Jr. We have enjoyed sharing some of his story with you, but as with all stories, there is a final note. The trail ended for Bill Bender, Jr. on December 8, 1975, in San Antonio, Texas. He is in Arlington Cemetery, along with his wife, Jeanne, who passed away in 2004. I would like to thank Suzy Taraba, director of SC&A, Michaelle Biddle, collection conservator, and Miya Tokumitsu, curator of the Davison Art Center, for their invaluable help and feedback throughout all phases of this research.

**FRANCESCO MARCO AREDI, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ITALIAN AND MEDIEVAL STUDIES**

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**WELCOME TO AMANDA NELSON**

On January 16, Amanda Nelson joined the library staff as university archivist and director of Special Collections & Archives. From the American Institute of Physics in College Park, Maryland, at AIP, she had a wide range of archival duties, including both behind-the-scenes collection and technical management and outreach and public services. Amanda worked extensively on AIP’s oral history program, and she has described, digitized, preserved, and provided access to archival collections of all types. Recently she managed the upgrade of the Physics History Network (https://history.aip.org/physics истории), an online resource of “over 1,000 biographies of physicists and histories of institutions with information pertaining to their lives, careers, and research.”

Equally adept at connecting with physicists and researchers at all levels of experience, Amanda serves as a judge for National History Day, an academic program emphasizing historical research, interpretation, and creative expression for 6th- to 12th-grade students. She was instrumental in developing and implementing a new category of NHD awards in the history of science. Amanda holds the MLS with a specialization in archives and records management from the University of Maryland. Her undergraduate degree is from the University of Miami, Coral Gables, where she studied English and African literature, with minors in history and dance. Among her many extracurricular interests, Amanda is a devotee of classical New Mexican music; she expects those of this qualification will soon come into play as Amanda assumes her new role as University Archivist. Welcome, Amanda!

**SUZY TARABA, DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL COLLECTIONS & ARCHIVES**