Artwork for the Reading Room

Visitors to the new Friends of the Smith College Libraries Reading Room initially took in the comfortable furnishings, the good lighting and the quiet atmosphere. With time, eyes began to focus on the space above the high-backed chairs. “What about the walls?” we heard, “Are there any plans for the walls?”

As luck would have it, members of the Class of 1950 were looking for a permanent way to pay tribute to classmate Frana Larrabee Low, a retired librarian who loved reading, art, promoting literacy and planning Smith reunions. Her friends agreed to help the Libraries embellish the Reading Room with a piece of art. An unrestricted gift from President Emerita Jill Ker Conway was added to the pool, and an artist, who is known for his paintings of natural scenes in the Pioneer Valley, was selected. Thomas Locker’s four-foot by six-foot painting Repose will be installed this month. Mr. Locker felt so honored to have his painting hang in this grand space that he has donated two smaller works A River Valley and Evening Glow to accompany the large painting. Photos will be posted to www.smith.edu/libraries/info/friends.

FALL PROGRAM

Thursday, October 13, 2011, 7:30 P.M.
Neilson Library Browsing Room

Redwood & Wildfire: A Performance Reading by Andrea Hairston with Pan Morigan

In Redwood & Wildfire, her second novel, Andrea Hairston explores the indelible imprint itinerant theater, featuring immigrants and ethnic minorities, left on American culture. Her story follows an African American “hoodoo” queen and a Seminole Irish man, who journey from Georgia to the bright lights of Chicago in the early twentieth century. Gifted blues musicians and performers, they find opportunities in minstrelsy, vaudeville and the early film world that flourished in Chicago at that time. Pan Morigan will accompany Hairston’s reading with her original bluegrass compositions.

Andrea Hairston is the Louise Wolff Kahn 1931 Professor of Theater and Afro-American Studies at Smith College, artistic director of Chrysalis Theater, and recipient of the 2011 Distinguished Scholarship Award from the International Association of the Fantastic in the Arts.

Pan Morigan is a vocalist, songwriter, composer, multi-instrumentalist, and producer.

OUR SPRING EVENTS

Clockwise from top left: Dedication of the Friends of the Smith College Libraries Reading Room, President Carol Christ with romance literature panelists, Barbara Keiler ’74, Sarah MacLean ’00, and Stephanie Dray ’93; graduating student library assistants at our Commencement reception; Sue Roberts ’66 prints a broadside with Joe Riedel during our Reunion Special Collections Tour.
FSCL News
By Ann Shanahan ’59, Chair

Since last I wrote, the Friends of Smith College Libraries Reading Room became a reality; we have moved closer to completion of a redesign and replacement of the current Libraries Web site; and we have seen more activity on the Friends Facebook page.

Since the opening of the new reading room, at every hour of the day or night, Smith students have filled virtually all of its comfortable chairs and sofas. The room’s formal name reflects the generosity of the Friends organization, which was responsible for the majority of funding for the project.

A fascinating panel discussion, Romance Literature: Love It or Leave It, followed the dedication. Four alumnae, May Chen ’00, senior editor at Morrow/Avon Book, and authors Barbara Keiler (Judith Arnold) ’74, Stephanie Dray ’93, Sarah MacLean ’00, and moderator Bethanne Patrick ’85, “book maven” and FSCL executive committee member, spoke about the genre and the continuing growth in its popularity. (A podcast is available at the News and Events page of the Friends site http://bit.ly/iGPJLt.)

To move from the past to the future: the Smith College Libraries Web site is nearing the final stages of a “renovation.” We are excited about having a handsome new look, which will bring the Libraries’ Web face more closely in line with that of the College.

One of my favorite Smith sites is its home page—there’s so much going on there—but especially in the news and events section, called “The Gate.” Its ever-changing content is managed by Eric Weld in College Relations. One recent item, which you will find if you click on “News Archive” at the top of the Gate’s home page, is “Smith Lit,” a reading list compiled by Kristen Cole, Smith’s media relations director. It offers a selection of quite recently published books by or about Smith alumnae, for example: Nothing Daunted: The Unexpected Education of Two Society Girls in the West, by Dorothy Wickenden; Joan Mitchell: Lady Painter, by Patricia Albers; Why I Left the Amish, by Saloma Furlong ’07; or Maine, by J. Courtney Sullivan ’03. Also mentioned is Erin Blakemore ’02, whose book, The Heroine’s Bookshelf: Life Lessons, From Jane Austen to Laura Ingalls Wilder, was published last year. Erin blogs at www.theheroinesbookshelf.com. Please note that Dorothy Wickenden will address the Friends on March 1, 2012 at 4:30 P.M. in Neilson Library.

On another Web note, please visit the Friends’ site to see booklists provided by faculty members and, just launched, book recommendations by Friends’ executive committee members. We’d love to hear from Smith book clubs about what they are reading or will be reading this fall; contact us at http://www.smith.edu/libraries/info/friends/about/contact.html. We could make a page on our website to share the lists. I encourage you to post on the Friends Facebook page about anything related to books—Have you written one? Have you read a good one?

Book Studies at Smith College
By Martin Antonetti, Curator of Rare Books

The new concentration in Book Studies connects students with the exceptional resources of the Mortimer Rare Book Room and the wealth of book artists and craftspeople of the Pioneer Valley. Through classroom study, field projects and independent research, students will learn about the history, art and technology of the “book,” broadly defined to extend from oral memory to manuscripts and from printed books to digital media. Continued on back...
The Fruits of Archival Research
By Susan Goodman Novick, certified archivist and FSCL Executive Committee member

One of the benefits of serving on the executive committee of the Friends of the Smith College Libraries is seeing first-hand the use of the Libraries’ remarkable resources by Smith students. I remained on campus after a recent meeting to participate in Celebrating Collaborations, a day which highlights the collaborative efforts of Smith students and faculty in a variety of interdisciplinary projects.

For three hours on a Saturday morning, I listened to eleven presentations by students involved in the Archives Concentration. The students shared their exploration of the archives, learning about student life from scrapbooks to finding resources in Northampton repositories about Calvin Coolidge. Other topics included the Smith College Relief Unit in France during World War I and LGBT activism at Smith and nationally. As an archivist, I was impressed by the outstanding quality of the presentations, the enthusiasm that the students had for using primary sources and their appreciation for those who assisted them—the staff of the Smith College Archives, the Sophia Smith Collection and the Mortimer Rare Book Room.

While attending Smith, I took a history seminar with Mary-Elizabeth Murdock, the college archivist and director of the Sophia Smith Collection. Using primary sources from the collection in my research, I learned about the importance of these historical resources and the College's stewardship of them. Thirty years later, as I listened to students share their excitement about their research in Smith’s archival collections, I smiled, knowing that the resources of the Smith College Libraries remain an important part of the curriculum and add much to the students’ college experience.
FALL EXHIBITIONS

On view until December 22, 2011

Artists Reflect on 9/11
Works by sixteen artists and writers including Sheila Metzner and Richard Goodman.
Mortimer Rare Book Room Gallery, Neilson Library, Level 3

Hand, Voice & Vision: Thirty Years of Artists’ Books from Women’s Studio Workshop
Forty artists’ books selected from more than two hundred works produced between 1979 and 2009 at Women’s Studio Workshop in Rosendale, New York.
Book Arts Gallery, Neilson Library, Level 3
Sponsored by the Mortimer Rare Book Room.

A Queer History of Smith, 1970-2000
This exhibition explores Smith’s complex attitude toward homosexuality.
Curated by Olivia Mandica-Hart ’11 and Amanda Lineweber ’11
Alumnae Gymnasium, Level A

Taking the Archives Public
A capstone project by students in the Archives Concentration Program.
Alumnae Gymnasium, Level A

Continued from page 3: Students in this concentration will learn to read in a new way, in which books become an archaeological site for exploring the history of its design, production, promotion and dissemination, as well as the sources of its craftsmanship and beauty. A student interested in literary texts will explore how the physical production of books impacts how we understand them. Another student attracted to old books, rich leather bindings, tactile paper, fine printing and haunting illustrations will find a home in this concentration, as will one excited by new media and the digital revolution that promises a change in how and what we read, enabling radical new forms of typography, illustration and links to other media such as film, video and television. Book Studies concentrators will thus design capstone projects in a wide variety of areas.

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FSCL MEMBERSHIP FORM
SHOW YOUR SUPPORT FOR THE SMITH COLLEGE LIBRARIES BY JOINING OR RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY. Your tax deductible gift helps purchase library materials and enhances the services offered to the college community. Members of the Friends receive this newsletter, invitations to events, and other benefits – for more information, see www.smith.edu/libraries/info/friends.

Membership Levels
☐ $20 Student/Individual  ☐ $50 Active Member  ☐ $75 Family/Dual  ☐ $150 Contributor
☐ $600 Sustaining Member  ☐ $1000 Patron  ☐ $1,500 Champion
☐ My/our company will match the gift.
☐ I wish to make my gift in honor/in memory of _________________________________

Name __________________________________________________________ Class ________________ (if alumna)
Address ___________________________________________________________________________________

Please make your check payable to the Friends of the Smith College Libraries and mail to the FSCL Office, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, MA 01063 or, if you prefer, enroll on-line at www.smith.edu/friends.

We are pleased to provide access for all alumnae to JSTOR via the Alumnae Association’s website. This digital archive offers over one thousand full-text journals in the humanities, social sciences and sciences. JSTOR provides access from the first issue of each journal but JSTOR’s Alumni Access Pilot by design excludes current issues. Follow the link once you log in on the Alumnae Association’s website to explore the offerings.

Would You Rather be an eFriend?
If you would prefer to receive this newsletter (with live links), membership renewal letters and other correspondence via email, please contact Mary Irwin, mirwin@smith.edu.

The FRIENDS NEWS UPDATE is published twice yearly, in the fall and in the spring. Comments and suggestions may be sent to Mary Irwin, Executive Secretary, Friends of the Smith College Libraries, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, MA 01063, Telephone: (413) 585-2903 or email: mirwin@smith.edu.

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