Empowering Young People with Stories
Thursday, April 11 at 7:30 p.m., Neilson Browsing Room


A Place of Reading: Three Centuries of Reading in America
by Martin Antonetti, Curator of Rare Books
This spring Neilson Library hosts a loan exhibition of rare books and prints documenting the history of reading in America from the collections of the distinguished American Antiquarian Society. As it turns out, the act of reading, especially in the colonial era, is exceptionally difficult to document. But curator Cheryl Harned, a graduate student at the University of Massachusetts, tells a compelling story of Americans “caught in the act” of reading—in homes, taverns, libraries, military camps, parlors, kitchens, and beds, among other places.

A Place of Reading is complemented by the exhibition, Cultivating the Nobler Part of her Nature: Books for Women and Girls in Early America, curated by Book Studies Concentration seniors—as part of their capstone seminar last semester. Both exhibitions are on view in the Book Arts Gallery, Neilson Library, from February 28 until May 28.

The Future of Reading
by Jenny Frost ’78, Senior Vice-President, Scholastic e-Commerce Group

The future of reading lies with children. While many fear that access to digital content, including games and social media, threatens to reduce the time children spend reading, this does not seem to be the case. A recent study released jointly by Scholastic and the Harrison Group, Kids & Family Reading Report, (http://bit.ly/UDg0rk) sheds extremely positive light on how digital content and delivery is influencing reading patterns in children.

The bottom line is that kids are reading! Kids are reading across print and digital formats. As children gain access to digital platforms including eReaders and tablets, readership of eBooks is increasing dramatically. According to the survey results, the number of children who have read an eBook has increased fifty percent since 2010. Half of children aged 9-17 report they would read more for fun if they had greater access to eBooks. Even better, eBooks hold tremendous promise for increasing recreational reading among boys. Historically a difficult group to interest in reading, one in four boys who have read an eBook report that they are now reading more for fun. Reading on devices presents an exciting opportunity to engage more reluctant readers in ways that were never available before.

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A lecture fund has been established in memory of Enid Epstein Mark ’54 through the generosity of her husband, Eugene L. Mark. Income from this fund will bring scholars to Smith on a regular basis to discuss topics primarily related to the book arts and poetry. Enid Mark was a distinguished artist whose love of poetry flourished at Smith. Over time her dual focus on words and images found an ideal outlet in the genre of artist’s books. Her limited edition books can be found in private collections and close to one hundred special collections in university libraries and museums across the U.S. and abroad.

Loretta Ross is Activist-in-Residence at Smith during the month of February, Women’s History Month. Ross is an expert on the politics of women’s health, hate groups, and sexual violence. She is a longtime anti-violence and human rights organizer, a builder of coalitions between women of color and white feminists, and a prime mover in the paradigm shift from a reproductive rights to a reproductive justice movement. Learn more about Ross at www.smith.edu/libraries/info/news/lorettaross.
Just Another Day in the Mortimer Rare Book Room

by Martin Antonetti, Curator of Rare Books

Hardly a day goes by in the Mortimer Rare Book Room that we don’t make some fascinating or curious discovery. It’s especially interesting to unravel the clues that reveal the identity of a previous owner of a particular treasure. Here is a wonderful recent example: In December 1922, the college purchased (for $11.50!) a grand old book of astronomical observations, *Recueil d’observations faites en plusieurs voyages par ordre de Sa Majesté*, printed in Paris at the royal printing house in 1693. The *Recueil* spent several decades in the Astronomy Department library before being transferred to Neilson’s rare book collection in the 1960s, where it slept undisturbed until last week. That was when our sleuthing cataloger, John Lancaster, decided to give it an electronic record in the library’s online catalog. As he examined the bookplate of nineteenth-century book collector James Musgrave on the inside of the front cover, John noticed the faint outline of another bookplate underneath. Some detective work and sharp eyes revealed the earlier owner to be one Charles Huggins, whose father had purchased Sir Isaac Newton’s library in 1727 from the deceased scientist’s estate. Could the great man have thumbed this very copy? We might never know except for Newton’s well-documented and highly idiosyncratic practice of marking memorable passages by turning down the relevant leaves so that the corners pointed directly to the words he wished to highlight. Just as they do in our copy!

An Activist Archives: The Sophia Smith Collection at 70

On Sunday, February 3, the Smith community and guests packed the house to hear civil rights activist Gloria Steinem ’56, Mohawk midwife/environmental justice activist Katsi Cook, and civil rights/reproductive rights activist Loretta Ross in conversation with Anna Holley ’12 and Marianne Bullock AC. They were there to take part in a special program to celebrate Sherrill Redmon’s tenure as Director of the Sophia Smith Collection (1993-2012) and to mark the 70th anniversary of this internationally recognized women’s history manuscripts collection. Earlier in the day, Professor Susan Van Dyne interviewed graphic artist and SSC papers donor Alison Bechdel, author of *Fun Home* and the comic strip *Dykes to Watch Out For*.

Among Sherrill Redmon’s achievements is the significant growth of the collection: Under her watch, 292 new collections were added (6,500 linear feet of manuscripts) the majority of which document women’s movements for social change across race, class, and sexual orientation in the twentieth century.

In Memoriam

Susan von Salis ’79

by Nanci Young, College Archivist

History and inquiry were always a part of Susan von Salis’s life. Her interest in feminism and the concept of ‘other’ were explored in her senior thesis on race and feminism. As an archivist, Susan created tools to help explore collections at the Schlesinger Library at Radcliffe/Harvard. Later, as Associate Curator of Archives at the Harvard University Art Museums, she created internships, mentored students and tirelessly promoted the use of the archives. She was active in the New England Archivists chapter, from which she received the Distinguished Service Award in 2011, and in the Society of American Archivists. Susan loved Smith, and served as a member of the Friends of the Libraries executive committee from 2003-2009. She was a staunch supporter of, and advocate for, the Sophia Smith Collection and the College Archives. In 2006, she and her mother, Jane Mead von Salis ’48, established the Studwell Fund that provides funding for manuscript processing. In 2008 a reunion of Clark House alumnae was organized by Susan, fondly remembering her days as a Clark-ite. Susan, who embraced all that life had to offer, passed away December 3, 2012. We miss her dearly and keep her wife Kim and son Gus in our hearts.
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EXHIBITIONS

The Chemist in the Garden: Origins of Natural Products
Anita and Byron Wien Atrium, Ford Hall
February 1–May 28, 2013

An exhibition of books from the Mortimer Rare Book Room in honor of Lâle Burk on her retirement from the Department of Chemistry. Curated by Signe Dahlberg-Wright ’14.

America: A Place of Reading
Book Arts Gallery, Level 3, Neilson Library
February 28–May 28, 2013

Books and prints from the American Antiquarian Society

Cultivating the Nobler Part of her Nature: Books for Women and Girls in Early America
Mortimer Rare Book Room foyer, Level 3, Neilson Library
February 28–May 28, 2013

Drawn from the Mortimer Rare Book Room collection and curated by seniors in the Book Studies Concentration as a capstone project.

“The Bell Jar” Revisited
Book Arts Gallery, Level 3, Neilson Library
June 3–September 8, 2013

Curated by Amanda Ferrara ’13, as an Archives Concentration capstone project.

Access to JSTOR
We continue to provide free access to JSTOR for all alumnae. This digital archive offers over one thousand full-text journals in the humanities, social sciences and sciences. To explore the offerings, follow the link when you log into the Alumnae Directory on the Alumnae Association’s website: http://alumnae.smith.edu/cms/.

New Publications Based on Research in our Special Collections
Cold War Progressives: Women’s Interracial Organizing for Peace and Freedom by Jacqueline Castledine.
American Isis: The Life and Art of Sylvia Plath by Carl Rollyson.
Mad Girl’s Love Song: Sylvia Plath and Life before Ted by Andrew Wilson

The Friends News Update
is published twice yearly, in the fall and in the spring. Comments may be sent to Mary Irwin, Friends of the Smith College Libraries, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, MA 01063, telephone: (413) 585-2903 or email: mirwin@smith.edu. Visit us online at www.smith.edu/libraries/friends.