From the Director

Al-Qaeda, the Taliban, Tora Bora, the Kashmir conflict . . . The incredible past six months have challenged all of us to understand the “who, what, where, and whys” of the September 11th attacks and subsequent events. How can we make sense of all this? How do we find the information that we need to make informed decisions? With the flood of material available in the media, on the Internet, in our libraries, how can the educated citizen critically evaluate the different sources and factor in their inherent biases?

How do we, how do students at Smith, learn to be “information literate”? Information literacy does not just happen; it must be taught. Here at Smith librarians and faculty are collaborating to give students an understanding of the nature of information and strategies for finding and using it.

Last year Smith librarians made presentations to nearly three hundred classes across the curriculum. Despite this, when you think of the word librarian, do you think of a teacher? Probably not. And yet today, in this information society, the librarian-as-teacher is certainly one of our most important roles on campus. Librarians at Smith are working now as never before to ensure that undergraduates leave here with the information literacy skills that will last a lifetime.

Thus, this issue of News from the Libraries is devoted to examining the ways in which librarians are working within the larger pedagogical context to teach these crucial skills. Reference librarian Bruce Sajdak provides an overview of the concept of information literacy and its challenges. Associate curator Karen Kukil notes in her article on Virginia Woolf that our special collections are particularly successful in integrating unique primary source materials into the curriculum. Alumnae can also benefit from our teaching by attending Alumnae College 2002 as described by college archivist Nanci Young. So as you read this issue, I ask that you broaden your concept of the librarian beyond that of the collection builder or the reference provider to include the image of us teaching students to be lifelong users of information. Christopher Loring
Information Literacy: A Primer

The explosion of information on the Internet has been a great asset to scholars, but the pitfalls of uncritical Web use are all too apparent, as some students use outdated, unreliable, or overtly biased information instead of more scholarly electronic or printed resources. For many years the Smith College librarians and archivists have taught the basic principles of locating, evaluating, and using information—now known as information literacy. In the past, library instruction generally focused upon preparing students to complete an assignment or write a paper. What we now call information literacy emphasizes skills outside as well as inside the classroom.

What does information literacy do for students? For instance, how will students base a response to the World Trade Center disaster? Will they simply conduct a search of the Internet and take whatever information they get? Will they focus solely upon television images or the evening news? Will they use newspaper or magazine articles written by journalists? Or will they find scholarly books and articles written by renowned Middle East and foreign policy experts to explain the issues inherent in political violence?

Information literacy gives students the tools to find the resources necessary to make reasoned decisions on important issues—and to do so as quickly and easily as they would using a Web search engine. Among many other skills, the information literate student:

- knows how to formulate research questions and how to modify the questions as the process of inquiry proceeds
- develops a research plan appropriate to a chosen investigative method (fieldwork, laboratory experiment, simulation)
- understands how knowledge is organized and disseminated within the relevant academic discipline
- identifies the purpose and audience of potential resources (popular versus scholarly, current versus historical, advocacy versus dispassionate discussion)
- recognizes when information may need to be constructed with raw data from primary sources
- knows how to locate and select the most reliable electronic and print resources for research in an academic discipline
- examines and compares information from various sources to evaluate reliability, validity, accuracy, authority, timeliness, and point of view or bias
- communicates clearly and with an appropriate style; chooses a communication medium and format that best supports the purposes of the product and of its intended audience
- synthesizes and uses the information found in a way which respects copyright and intellectual property rights
- avoids plagiarism by giving proper recognition to sources of information through the use of an appropriate citation format.

The challenge for the Smith community is to find a way within a diverse and ever-changing curriculum to insure that every student who graduates from Smith can be as literate in her use and pursuit of information as she is in her writing, speaking, and reasoning abilities. The Smith College librarians and archivists look forward to a continuing collaboration with teaching faculty and administration in meeting this challenge.

For more information, visit the Institute for Information Literacy website (www.ala.org/acrl/nili/nilihp.html) and Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education (www.ala.org/acrl/ilcomstan.html).

Woolf in the World

“You have the most generous alumnae!” This refrain followed Smith curator Karen Kukil down the Gothic hallways of the University of Wales last June after her talk at an international conference on Virginia Woolf. In her lecture, “Objects are Documents,” Kukil described the many ways faculty and curators at Smith College teach Woolf using primary sources.

Most academic institutions have special collections, but few integrate them into the curriculum as successfully as Smith. The Chicago-based advertiser and journalist, Frances
Hooper ’14, gave her Virginia Woolf collection to the college in 1986, hoping the manuscripts would be used to teach students how to write. Indeed, students learn to appreciate the value of revision after examining two of the fifteen known drafts of Woolf’s short story “The Searchlight.” They also trace the first draft of her essay “The Patron and the Crocus” through its various printed incarnations in *The Nation* and *The Common Reader*. The one substantive revision in the proofs for this essay states that “a writer has no gender.” This emendation by Woolf, in her characteristic violet ink, always sparks spirited discussion, especially in women’s studies classes. In addition to the annotated page proofs of Woolf’s first collection of essays, *The Common Reader*, the Hooper collection includes proofs of *Orlando*. This fictional biography of Woolf’s lover, Vita Sackville-West, is often the focus of gender studies research, since the main character changes sex several times in the narrative.

Leslie Stephen’s photograph album, which he compiled in 1895 to mourn the death of his wife, includes early pictures of his youngest daughter, Virginia Woolf, playing cricket during idyllic summer holidays in Cornwall. This album is the star piece in the Bloomsbury Iconography Collection, bequeathed to the Mortimer Rare Book Room in 1998 by Elizabeth Power Richardson ’43. The Stephen family album along with annotated page proofs of *To the Lighthouse* (Woolf’s novel about her parents) are often used in history and comparative literature courses to examine everything from Victorian mourning to sexual politics.

The Smith College Museum of Art provides art history students with access to original paintings by artists who lived in the Bloomsbury district of London in the early twentieth century, particularly those of Virginia Woolf’s sister, Vanessa Bell. In addition to paintings and drawings by the Bloomsbury group, Smith owns a number of their original illustrations and designs for the covers of Woolf’s books. Noted bibliophile Ann Safford Mandel ’53 donated many of these original watercolors to the Mortimer Rare Book Room, along with early Hogarth Press publications, hand printed and bound by Virginia and Leonard Woolf. As a result, students can study the interplay of word and image in Hogarth Press publications.

Students are also introduced to the art of editing through a series of interterm courses held in the Mortimer Rare Book Room. In one course, each student selects, transcribes, and annotates three original letters from the correspondence between Lytton Strachey and Virginia Woolf in the Frances Hooper Collection. Even though a selection of the 140 letters written by Woolf and Strachey was published by the Hogarth Press in 1956, students discover new information when they examine the originals. Many passages were omitted by the editors, such as this unflattering description of Lady Ottoline Morrell written by Strachey in 1922: “She sits after dinner in the lamplight, her cheek-pouches drooping with peppermints, a cigarette between her false teeth, and vast spectacles on her painted nose, the effect produced is extremely agitating.”

After the conference in Wales this summer, members of the International Virginia Woolf Society selected Smith College as the site for an upcoming conference. Over three hundred international scholars are expected to attend the Thirteenth Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf, which will be held at the college on June 5–8, 2003. The conference will give Smith the opportunity to showcase its collections through exhibitions in the libraries and museum. The theme of the conference, “Woolf in the Real World,” will explore topics such as women’s education, class and money, feminism, pacifism, and family life. Woolf’s career as a creative writer, journalist, publisher, teacher, and feminist will be highlighted along with her influence on modern writers, activists, and small publishers.

Historic homes of local authors and the book arts community of western Massachusetts will also be featured. For additional information about the conference contact: Karen Kukil, associate curator of rare books (kkukil@smith.edu), Stephanie Schoen, assistant director for stewardship in the Advancement Office at Smith College (sschoen@smith.edu), and Marilyn Smith, a Five College Associate (msmith@amherst.edu).

The local planning committee welcomes suggestions and support from the community as conference plans progress.
Young Science Library

The Young Science Library has acquired full-text access to six hundred of the twelve hundred journals in Science Direct (Elsevier Science's web-based electronic information service). These titles cover core disciplines primarily across the sciences and technology and include some of the most important and frequently cited publications in their discipline, such as Biochimica Et Biophysica Acta, Brain Research, and Tetrahedron Letters. Web access to this significant list of journals provides timely receipt of information in fast-developing areas of research and adds a significant number of new titles supporting the Picker Engineering Program, environmental studies, neuroscience, and other new or expanding areas of scientific interest. In addition, Science Direct provides multiple ways to search for material in individual journals or across the entire database of journals. Coverage extends back to 1997. Science Direct is available from the list of databases at the libraries' website or by individual journal title in the online catalog.

Sophia Smith Collection

Last July the Sophia Smith Collection acquired the papers of longtime activist and feminist leader Molly Yard (b. 1912). Yard's activism began at Swarthmore College in the early 1930s when she closed down the anti-Semitic women's "fraternities" on campus. After her graduation, Yard worked with Eleanor Roosevelt in the American Student Union, which sought to improve conditions for Depression-era students. Her friendship with Roosevelt brought Yard into the Democratic Party and the liberal Americans for Democratic Action. By the 1960s Yard was a highly visible civil rights activist, deeply involved in Pennsylvania state politics.

In the 1970s feminism became the focus of Yard's political activism. She worked to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment and, in 1987, became the president of the National Organization for Women. Emphasizing reproductive freedom, Yard revitalized the organization and mobilized two of the largest demonstrations in Washington D.C.'s history.

Mortimer Rare Book Room

In 1676 Isaac Newton famously quoted the twelfth-century philosopher, Bernard of Chartres: “If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.” We like to think of the Mortimer Rare Book Room as a playground for big-shouldered giants from all periods and fields of human endeavor, a place where students can come to “see further,” to hobnob with the likes of Isaac and Bernard. This is why the college continues to build a collection so rich in literary and cultural artifacts: only the realia of history will do for us, not its digitized facsimile.

So it was that we welcomed another giant to the rare book room recently, a great American graphic artist, who takes his place among our substantial holdings in the history of graphic communication. Nationally-recognized book designer and calligrapher Charles Skaggs has donated his personal typographic library of nearly six hundred books, many of which are special and limited editions produced throughout the past six decades. At the core of the gift is a complete collection of the books designed by Skaggs himself during his long and successful career. Also included with the gift is a large body of typographic ephemera, original artwork, and technical manuals.

Charles Skaggs taught calligraphy at Cooper Union in New York City and was art director for several leading text and trade book publishers in the 1950s and 1960s. He designed hundreds of books and dust jackets for Alfred A. Knopf, Harcourt Brace, Doubleday, Simon and Schuster, the Limited Editions Club, Story Classics, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, and several American university presses. A self-taught artist, he produced numerous book designs that were selected for the prestigious American Institute of Graphic
Arts annual *Fifty Books of the Year*. While at Knopf in the 1950s, Skaggs worked closely with the legendary William Addison Dwiggins, one of the most important American designers of the first half of the century, and as a result the collection is particularly rich in material relating to that great designer.

Charles Skaggs is eighty-four years old and lives in Olympia, Washington, with his wife, Nita. Their daughter, Joyce Skaggs Brewster ’61, facilitated the gift. An exhibition highlighting the career of Mr. Skaggs is planned for Neilson Library’s Book Arts Gallery for the near future.

Hillyer Art Library

Internet access to *The Index of Christian Art* is now available throughout the Smith campus via the libraries’ website. From a modest beginning in 1917—a card file housed in two shoeboxes—*The Index of Christian Art* has grown into a vast archive documenting and analyzing over two hundred thousand works of art. Established by the great medievalist Charles Rufus Morey, the *Index* has, since its inception, been based at Princeton University. The computerization of the *Index*, begun in 1991, has opened this rich resource to scholars worldwide.

The *Index* documents works of art with Christian themes; it also documents art executed for ecclesiastical settings, from apostolic times through the fifteenth century. Though Morey expected the *Index* to be completed in fifteen years, it continues to grow by almost two thousand works every year. Most recently, medieval manuscripts from the Pierpont Morgan Library were added to the electronic database, extending the scope of the *Index* through the end of the sixteenth century.

The *Index* thoroughly describes works of art in all media created all over the world, documenting them with extensive bibliographies and scholarly commentaries. Iconographical analysis was the foundation of Morey’s art historical method; thematic or subject indexing is the heart of the *Index*. Each work is exhaustively analyzed and indexed using a vocabulary of twenty-seven thousand subject terms, most describing some aspect of Christian iconography.

One of the preeminent research tools in its field, *The Index of Christian Art* significantly enhances Smith’s resources in art, classical studies, and early Christian and medieval culture, religion, and history.

Werner Josten Library

To support the recent appointment of Steve Waksman, a scholar of American vernacular music, the Werner Josten Library has acquired microfilms of four major popular music periodicals and hopes to add more as resources permit. These backfiles, which are listed below, will provide significant research material for new concentrations in the history and development of popular culture, gender studies, and popular music, including rock, heavy metal, and jazz.

*New Musical Express* (and its predecessors), 1946-1971. This postwar pioneer in entertainment and music journalism provides a record of contemporary music in society. Its longevity, consistent ability to predict trends, and large worldwide readership affirms its importance.

*Guitar Player*, volumes 1-35 (1967-2001). This is the magazine for serious guitarists.

*Living Blues*, volumes 1-56 (1970-1983). Published by the University of Mississippi, this bimonthly magazine is the authoritative source on the blues. Its founding in 1970 addressed a long overdue need for an American magazine devoted to the blues.


These purchases were made possible by monies from the American Studies Department as well as other library music funds, including the Staples Fund.
Friends Celebrate 60th Anniversary

On February 20, 1942 the Friends of the Library was formed so “alumnae would find an opportunity to express their continued interest in the college as a place of learning.” With the country then at war no dues were solicited, but those who joined the Friends were asked to search their own shelves and attics for books that would enrich their alma mater’s collection. This “call to books” brought much welcome material to the library’s stacks. In addition, rare and unique books and papers unexpectedly arrived on our doorstep. Within two years a rare book room was established and the Sophia Smith Collection, a pioneering women’s history archive, was up and running. By the end of the 1940s Friends were paying $1.00 in annual dues, and the tradition of the annual meeting—giving members a chance to gather on campus—had begun. The cumulative effect of the Friends’ fund and other endowed funds as well as individual gifts of books and other materials have been of tremendous significance in building and shaping collections and providing the best resources to faculty and students.

Annual Meeting

Marking the Friends’ sixtieth anniversary, women’s historian and former president Jill Ker Conway will be the guest speaker at the Friends’ annual meeting in Wright Hall Auditorium on Friday, April 12, at 2:30 P.M. with a lecture entitled: “Telling Stories About Women’s Lives: Biography, Memoir and Archives.” Drawing primarily on materials from the libraries’ special collections, she will discuss “inherited plots,” censorship, and the re-interpretation of women’s lives. The lecture will be followed by a book signing and a reception in the Neilson Browsing Room. A companion exhibit will be on view.

Commitment & Reunion Events

The Friends’ commencement reception will take place on Saturday, May 18, 2:00–3:00 P.M. in the Mortimer Rare Book Room. This annual event honors graduating seniors who have worked in the libraries and welcomes returning alumnae and their guests.

On Saturday, May 25, at 2:00 P.M. as part of reunion weekend activities, the Friends will host a tour of the Mortimer Rare Book Room, the Smith College Archives, and the Sophia Smith Collection. This is a special opportunity to learn about the collections and view artifacts and exhibits. A reception will follow in the Alumnae Gymnasium, Level A at 3:30 P.M.

Anniversary Exhibit

Echoing the theme of the anniversary year, this exhibit—Making a Difference: Sixty Years of Friends Support—will draw on some of the library treasures that Friends have made possible over the years.

Committee News

Priscilla Barlow ’80 joined the Friends’ executive committee in October. Priscilla Barlow, a longtime user of academic libraries, is a doctoral student in English at the University of Chicago. Printmaker and publisher Enid Mark ’54 was awarded a Pew Fellowship in the Arts in 2001 for the limited edition books she produces under her ELM Press imprint. Enid Mark was also one of the book artists featured in last year’s British Library exhibit More Than a Text: Fine Printing from America.
Staff News

This spring Christine Hannon, coordinator of public services, will teach “Reference and Information Services” for the University of Rhode Island at the Amherst campus of the University of Massachusetts and reference librarian Robin Kinder will teach “The Role of Research” for Simmons College at the Mount Holyoke campus. Circulation supervisor Cristen Abrams received her M.L.S. from Syracuse University this January. Art librarian Barbara Polowy was recently appointed as the review editor of Art Libraries Journal, the journal of the Art Libraries Society (ARLIS) for the UK and Ireland. Martin Antonetti, curator of rare books and lecturer in art, delivered a talk, “The Archaeology of the Book in a Liberal Arts Curriculum,” on September 13 as part of the Liberal Arts Luncheon series at the college. In October he led a tour “Exploring Central Italy” for the Alumnae Association, playing the cicerone in several of Umbria’s most beautiful hill towns. This summer, for the fifteenth year in a row, he will head south to teach “The History of the Printed Book to 1800” as part of the University of Virginia’s Rare Book School. This spring, book arts specialist Barbara Blumenthal ’75 will teach “Building Books” at Hampshire College in the School of Humanities, Arts and Cultural Studies. Barbara was recently interviewed by radio reporter Alex Chambers for his story about western Massachusetts bookbinders, which aired on December 28 on WFCR, a local National Public Radio station. Kathleen Banks Nutter ’90, reference archivist for the Sophia Smith Collection and lecturer in history, will teach two courses at Smith this spring—“America, 1919: A Year of Clear and Present Danger” and “Gender and Community in Antebellum New England.” She continues to serve as editor of H-Women, a listserv that connects women’s historians around the world. Recent lectures by Nutter include “The Valley Women’s History Collaborative” at the annual meeting of the New England Archivists at Yale University on October 27. College archivist Nanci Young presented a paper titled “Educate a Girl? You May as Well Attempt to Educate a Cat!” at the History of Education Society conference in New Haven, Connecticut, on October 19. The paper discussed the development of the Smith College Archives and the challenges of documenting student life at a single sex educational institute. For an upcoming meeting of the Popular Culture Association in Albuquerque, New Mexico, on February 16, Young will discuss the impact of online auction sites on donor relations in a lecture titled “From Souvenirs of College Experience to Commodities: The Internet and the Changing Nature of Collecting by Archivists.” On February 16 Christopher Loring, director of libraries, will moderate a panel entitled “The Power of the Written Word: Reading, Writing, and Smith” for the Smith Club of Los Angeles. In addition to alumnae authors Dinitia Smith ’67, Kimberly Brubaker Bradley ’89, Lynne Withey ’70, and Patricia Friedmann Muchmore ’68, the panel will include Smith faculty members Susan Etheredge, Michael Thurston, and Patricia Skarda. Wendy Kaminer ’71 will be the keynote speaker at the symposium.

Revamping the Website

A team of library staff, chaired by reference librarian Sika Berger, hunkered down this past summer for several months of continuous deliberation. Their charge: to revamp the libraries’ website. Assisted by a local web design company, Gravity Switch, and ever mindful of their end-of-summer deadline, they transformed both the internal structure of the libraries’ web pages and their aesthetic look and feel. In the words of one undergraduate, “Oh yeah, now it looks like a real website.” The transformation from static pages, in which every page must be separately maintained, into a dynamic website, where data can be altered in a central repository and reflected throughout the site, provides a vehicle responsive to the needs of patrons and staff.

As it turns out, car talk was part of the process. Asked in the early phases to conjure the image they would like to convey, the web redesign team members came up with an array of sports cars. Whether Miata or Jaguar, the team strove to bring patrons “the most fun you can have sitting down,” a zippy, maneuverable, and nimble ride into the information universe.

Now providing remote access to most electronic resources for core users, the site has expanded many of the libraries’ functions for round-the-clock access. In addition to keeping the hours of an undergraduate, this iteration of the libraries’ web design places students’ needs and preferences at the forefront.
This May alumnae who register for “Going to the Source: The Treasures of the Smith College Special Collections” will be treated to a behind-the-scenes look at how the materials and people of special collections interact with all members of the Smith College community. Professor Susan Van Dyne will kick off the day with the keynote presentation “Going to the Source,” a talk about her use of primary sources in literary scholarship. Martin Antonetti of the Mortimer Rare Book Room, Sherrill Redmon of the Sophia Smith Collection, and Nanci Young of the Smith College Archives will highlight the recent acquisitions, programs, and class work of each section. Three “moveable feast” tours will follow: Reading Other People’s Mail (Sophia Smith Collection); How Bright These College Days Have Been (Smith College Archives); and “My! I didn’t know Smith had a rare book collection!” (Mortimer Rare Book Room). Participants will also be invited to a screening of Creating Women’s History: The Sophia Smith Collection, a new video featuring Gloria Steinem ’56, Ruth Simmons, and Professor Daniel Horowitz, among others. A special reception in the newly renovated Book Arts Gallery in Neilson Library will end the day. If you have ever wondered what makes special collections at Smith so special, here is your chance to find out!

EXHIBITS


Staff Visions Art Exhibition (Book Arts Gallery, Neilson Library, March). Original art and crafts by Smith College staff. Opening reception on Monday, March 4, from 4:00 to 6:00 P.M. Gallery talk by some of the artists represented in the exhibition on Wednesday, March 13, from 12:00 to 1:00 P.M., as part of the Staff Council “Lunch & Learn” series.

Telling Stories About Women’s Lives: Biography, Memoir, and Archives. (Morgan Gallery, Neilson Library, April through May). Published biographies and a selection of manuscripts and memoirs written by Virginia Woolf, Sylvia Plath ’55, Gloria Steinem’56, and Dorothy Reed Mendenhall (class of 1895).

Making a Difference: Sixty Years of Friends’ Support (Book Arts Gallery, Neilson Library, April through August). A selection of books, ephemera, and manuscripts donated to special collections since 1942.

Staff Picks: Favorite Photographs from the Sophia Smith Collection (Alumnae Gym, March through August & Morgan Gallery, Neilson Library, June through August).

News from the Libraries

Neilson Library
Smith College
Northampton, MA 01063