

Minutes of the Eighteenth Annual Meeting of the Council
of the Friends of the Oberlin College Library, November 1, 2008

Following a short delay, while two participants completed their connections by telephone, President Dan Goulding convened the Eighteenth Annual Meeting of the Council of the Friends of the Oberlin College Library at 1:32 p.m. in the Goodrich Room at Mudd Center.

The following Friends Council members, in addition to President Goulding, were then present for the meeting: Vice President Scott Bennett (via phone), Secretary Nathan (Mike) Haverstock, Ardie Bausenbach, William Bradford, Ray English (ex officio), Tabia Gaston (student representative), Jessica Grim (ex officio), Gary Kornblith, Lucy Marks, Scott Fehlan (via phone) Ann Sherif, Scott Smith (chair of the Acquisitions Committee), Ed Vermue (ex officio), Wendy Wasman, and Janice Zinser

Highlights of the meeting.

At its eighteenth annual meeting, the Council:

- authorized the expenditure of \$40,046 for new acquisitions to support a wide variety of subjects and the Library's special collections.
- awarded a Friends scholarship, worth \$2,500, to an Oberlin graduate to help her defray the cost of attending library school, as she embarks on a library career.
- awarded two Oberlin seniors prizes of \$500 each for special excellence in their use of the Library's collections in writing research papers.
- elected officers and two new Council members for the 2008-09 year.
- awarded two Life memberships (one shared by a couple) in recognition of their extraordinary gifts to the Library.
- awarded an Honorary membership to another couple, who are donating to the Conservatory Library what is believed to be the largest collection of jazz recordings and memorabilia ever assembled in private hands.

-- after hearing a report on membership that showed a substantial increase in members compared to the previous year, discussed ways to incorporate technology, and particularly e-mail, in collaboration with the College's alumni and development offices to further build Friends membership.

Financial report.

Following approval of the minutes of the December 1, 2007 meeting, English delivered the financial report, which indicated, he said, that the Friends are financially "in good shape," following a year when we received approximately \$55,000 in gifts. Taking into account the Council's suggestion to spend down our balance (because it does not draw interest), funds previously earmarked for acquisitions that will shortly be completely spent, and \$10,000 earmarked last year for digitization, the available balance in the Friends account is approximately \$37,000.

There were increased costs last year for student activities, English continued, as described in a report to the Council by David Matchim, the former student member of our group, including prizes in the "very successful" book collecting contest. There was also the executive decision made by the Council's president to grant two library scholarships last year to Oberlin graduates embarking on careers in library science.

During that period, English noted, the cost of printing was higher due to two large special mailings to recruit new members and the fact that the mailings were produced by the College's printing services from data files prepared by Alumni Fund staff. The cost of such mailings, about 75¢ per envelope sent, is higher than mailings produced through the library administrative office.

Acquisitions Committee.

Scott Smith and Jessica Grim delivered jointly the committee's report, which called for acquiring materials valued at \$40,046, including some noteworthy materials in support of ongoing research highlighted below. The following are highlights of the report and the Council's discussion of it.

The Friends are to defray \$10,000 of the cost of acquiring a digital collection of Congressional Hearings (1824-2003). The hearings comprise an unparalleled documentary record of events and public policy issues faced by America, as well as the objectives and actions of the U.S. Congress in response to them.

In similar fashion the Friends are to pay \$5,000 of the cost of committee prints (1830-2003) and Congressional Research Service (CRS) reports (1916-2003). The 30,000 CRS reports in this collection have never been distributed by the Government Printing Office, and are very hard to collect.

The work of faculty and students in the sciences is to be supported by two important purchases totaling nearly \$15,000. One is a back file in electronic format of journals from the National Research Council of Canada, of which the Library presently has only scattered issues. Among those included in the current acquisition are: *Canadian Journal of Forest Research*, *Canadian Journal of Microbiology*, *Canadian Journal of Physics*, *Canadian Journal of Physiology and Pharmacology*, and *Canadian Journal of Zoology*.

With Friends help, the Science Library will also acquire the complete ten-volume set of the *Encyclopedia of Mass Spectrometry* (six of them already published), an unparalleled and comprehensive work. This acquisition will support research utilizing the College's new mass spectrometer by students and faculty of Oberlin's chemistry and physics departments.

The Art Library is availing itself of Friends funding to acquire the *Koga Soran Dai 4 Ki*, a monumental series in six volumes and a supplement of more than 250,000 Japanese paintings by more than 1,300 artists published in auction catalogs from 1909-1943. It also includes many photos of lost or destroyed works, which are valuable for research.

The Art Library will also acquire back issues, volumes 1-7, of *Esopus Magazine*, to which the Library currently has a subscription. Each issue of this magazine is anchored by three contemporary artists' projects (one commissioned from an established artist, the others by emerging artists). The projects take the form of removable posters, hand-assembled pop-ups, inserts, and foldouts – often created through unusual printing processes utilizing unique paper stock and specially formatted inks.

Music resources, to be acquired by the Conservatory library, include a set of Mozart autographed manuscript opera scores in facsimile and a set of 21 DVDs of master classes conducted by prominent musical artists.

Instruction at the Library's special collections is to be enhanced through the acquisition of custom models illustrating the history of the book created by Julia Miller, a book conservator of Ann Arbor, Michigan. This set of three rolls represents Egyptian and Greek styles of making papyrus rolls.

The Council's secretary raised doubts as to the value of Friends partial funding of one of the items suggested by the Acquisitions committee. This was a digital collection of *FBIS (Foreign Broadcast Information Systems) Daily Reports*. Originally, he noted, speaking from his experience as a former journalist, *FBIS*, a publication of the Central Intelligence Agency, was made available as a classified document only to those with a requisite security clearance. Over the years this had changed, and along with it the

objectivity of *FBIS's* coverage. "The U.S ambassador's speech was always rendered faultlessly. The remarks of those throwing eggs at the U.S. embassy became increasingly 'INDISTINCT' or 'IMPOSSIBLE TO HEAR' in the text of the publication." He likened the result to the biased commentary provided on television by former generals on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan – whose purported "objectivity" was the subject of a recent exposé in *The New York Times*.

Notwithstanding this objection, the Council approved all acquisitions recommended by the committee.

Program Committee.

Committee chair Goulding supplied Council members with a chronological listing of past and planned Friends-sponsored events.

Upcoming events included:

-- a talk by Mary Sayre Haverstock on her book, *George Bellows: An Artist in Action*, which was the recipient of an Ohioana Award in October 2008. Her talk, copiously illustrated with color illustrations, was to take place in the newly revamped Art Seminar Room of the Art Building at 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, November 11.

-- a faculty talk by Julia Christensen, Luce Assistant Professor of the Emerging Arts, on her recent book *Big Box Reuse* (MIT Press 2008) in the Moffett Auditorium at Mudd Center at 4:30 p.m. Thursday, November 20.

The Friends are also sponsoring a reception for Oberlin authors at Azariah's Cafe in the Academic Commons at Mudd Center at 4:30 p.m. Friday, December 5.

Goulding appealed to Council members to provide names of possible speakers for the committee, which meets two or three times a year.

Scott Fehlan suggested greater efforts might be made to keep Friends members in touch with activities on campus through e-mail and other electronic means. These might, he said, include the preparation of exhibits for on-line perusal by Friends members.

Membership Committee.

In delivering the committee's report, Gary Kornblith noted that total membership in the Friends increased from 700 in 2006-07 to 770 in 2007-08. At the same time, total funds contributed to the Friends during the year declined by approximately \$9,000

compared to the previous year. The difference in contributions is due to a larger than normal number of major gifts (over \$1,000) that were received in 2006-07. The mailing to alumni librarians accounted for a significant number of new members. The mailing to alumni who were English majors was less successful than the earlier mailing to alumni History majors.

English noted that the staff of the Oberlin Alumni Fund established a special page on its Web site for those wishing to make on-line contributions to the Friends, using their credit cards. As part of plans to transact more Friends business electronically, the annual renewal mailing was sent first by e-mail to Friends members who have e-mail addresses in the alumni databases. This produced a significant number of responses and was also very cost-effective, since no printing or postage was involved. The wording of the e-mail message will need to be revised next year, since some members did not realize they would receive the regular renewal mailing, if they did not respond to the e-mail solicitation.

The committee's experience to date indicates it is economically more efficient to retain existing members than it is to recruit new ones. In the coming year the committee will make an increased effort "to grab students as members while they are still at college." In that regard it was suggested that we e-mail all students soliciting their membership and raffle a "Kindle" as an incentive for students to join.

(The Kindle is an e-book reader that weighs less than a pound and is about as big as an over-sized paperback. Launched by Amazon in November 2007, the Kindle allows readers to view successive pages, like those of a real book, with the click of a button. The device, which is battery-powered, sells for approximately \$370, and can be used with over 200,000 digital titles available through Amazon.)

Fehlan suggested that perhaps the Friends might sponsor an exhibit on the "History of the E-book" in conjunction with offering a Kindle as a prize. Ed Vermue described positive feedback from a somewhat analogous exhibit the special collections mounted during the past year on the "History of the Book."

Nominating Committee.

Committee chair Jan Zinser reported that Ardie Bausenbach and Gary Kornblith were nominated for second terms on the Council and two Oberlin alumni proposed for first terms, which also end in 2011:

-- Celeste Feather, class of '84, formerly the assistant to the university librarian at Ohio State University and presently the assistant director for electronic licensing at OhioLINK, the statewide academic library consortium.

-- Peter McCracken, class of '91, formerly a reference librarian at the University of Washington library and presently active with Serials Solutions, a library services company of which he was a co-founder.

The Committee also nominated the following slate of Council officers for the 2008-2009 academic year: Dan Goulding, president; Jan Zinser, vice president; and Mike Haverstock as secretary.

Before approving all of the above nominations by acclamation, the Council vigorously applauded the exceptional contributions of the two retiring members, Scott Bennett and Lucy Marks.

Life memberships.

The Council similarly approved of Life and Honorary memberships for the following individuals:

-- a Life membership for Sarah Sharpe, class of '82, for her exceptionally generous contribution to the realization of the Academic Commons project in 2007. Ms. Sharpe, a resident of Concord, Massachusetts, is a ceramic artist and teacher with advanced degrees from Brown University and the Rhode Island School of Design.

-- a Life membership for Marjorie and Norman Henderson. Ms. Henderson, a graduate of Oberlin's Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program, recently retired after working at the Main Library for 30 years. Her husband is an emeritus professor of psychology. The two of them have worked with Oberlin's development office to encourage other MAT program graduates to contribute to a new endowed fund to provide library support for Oberlin's new Graduate Teacher Education Program. The fund is named in honor of Frank Laycock, emeritus professor of psychology, one of her husband's former colleagues and one of Ms. Henderson's former teachers in the MAT program.

-- an Honorary membership for James and Susan Neumann, who are donating their extraordinary collection of jazz recordings and memorabilia to the Conservatory Library. Believed to be the largest collection related to all periods and types of jazz ever assembled in private hands, the James and Susan Neumann Collection comprises more than 100,000 sound recordings in various formats, as well as numerous books, periodicals, posters, playbills, programs, photographs, letters and clippings – many of them unique or exceedingly rare. In all, it will be one of the most significant gifts ever received by the Oberlin College Library.

Student Friends.

Tabia Gaston, student representative on the Council, said that student Friends number just 20, and she mentioned various ways we might increase that number. Following her presentation, English noted that we have not done a campus-wide solicitation of students for some time, and that such a solicitation using e-mail would now be feasible.

Other suggestions covered a wide gambit. One was to place student Friends materials at the circulation desk with staffers there empowered to sign students up on the spot. Another idea was possibly to offer students free computer technical services time as part of their membership package.

With the present Mellon grant for librarian recruitment (which provides some support for student Friends activities) running out next year, English floated the idea of possibly drawing on Friends funds to hire a student to work on student Friends activities, including membership. (In the memory of those at the meeting, this was something the Friends had not previously done.)

In his written report to the Council, David Matchim, who was previously the Council's student representative, highlighted activities of the previous year. These included a presentation by Avery Clayton (the first student activity held in the new electronic classroom of the academic commons) about his mother's extraordinary collection of African-American artifacts and cultural items. The collection, comprising musical recordings, films, and memorabilia, is housed in the Mayme A. Clayton Library and Museum in Los Angeles. Another was a two-part event involving Joe Hickerson, Oberlin class of 1957, a folk music legend and former director of the Archive of Folk Song/Culture at the Library of Congress. In addition to his talk, Hickerson gave a performance at the Cat in the Cream for Oberlin students. Student Friends also sponsored a showing of a film created at Oberlin in the 1970s about the local response to the shootings on the Kent State University campus during an anti-Vietnam War protest. They also supported a presentation of "The Resourcerer's Apprentice," a production mounted by the Library's reference department.

Special Collection grants.

During 2008, Laura Baudot, Assistant Professor of English Literature, received a \$500 grant from the Friends to incorporate six "lab" classes into the course she will teach beginning in the spring of 2009 on eighteenth century fiction. Each of the classes will use the special collections to explore a specific issue/topic related to the history of the book.

During the year, Andrew Wilburn, Visiting Professor of Classics, reported successful completion of a project authorized by the Friends in 2006. This involved the incorporation of a two-week-long module on papyrology into his upper level Greek prose course.

Two other faculty recipients of grants in 2007 also reported on the successful completion of their projects. With Friends help, John Harwood, Assistant Professor of Art, compiled a sizable collection of digital imagery in support of his courses on architecture of the Enlightenment and the Age of Historicism. Paula Richman, Professor of Religion, prepared an exhibition of paintings that originated in Mathila, a region in northern India, for her course on the Ramayana tradition.

With a third 2007 Friends grant, Sebastiaan Faber, Associate Professor of Hispanic Studies, is working to incorporate materials from the Library's nineteenth century Spanish romantic novel collection into his course on historical fiction and the development of nationalism in Spain, 1800-present.

In reporting on three years experience since the Friends authorized special collections grants of \$3,000 per year for a total of \$9,000, Ed Vermue noted that there are more faculty who have expressed interest in similar projects. However, he said that the project by Laura Baudot will consume a considerable amount of his time, as she moves in the direction of developing a full academic course based on the resources of the special collections. Given those time demands, Vermue is not presently seeking additional projects.

Friends of the Library Scholarship.

After due deliberation, English reported that a Friends of the Library scholarship in the amount of \$2,500 was awarded to Darcy Gervasio, Oberlin 2006, who is attending the School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Ms. Gervasio worked five semesters in the Library's circulation department as a student at Oberlin where she double majored in Creative Writing and French with a minor in English. She dates interest in becoming a librarian to her experience as a teaching assistant in Toulouse, France, working with at-risk middle-school students. There, she "much preferred being my students' living encyclopedia on the U.S.A. to being their disciplinarian."

Student Library Research Awards.

Two Oberlin seniors received Friends of the Library 2008 Research Awards, each in the amount of \$500:

-- Allison Takahashi for a paper entitled "Light's Fellowship with Twilight: The Religious Thought of John Henry Barrows and the 1893 World's Parliament of Religion." In nominating Takahashi's paper, James Dobbins, Fairchild Professor of Religion, said that it "integrated beautifully her research on the local history of Oberlin with the overall theme of the course."

-- Brian Holbrook for a paper entitled "The Constitutional Significance of Presidential Signing Statements." In nominating Holbrook's paper, Ronald Kahn, James Monroe Professor of Politics, said it "ranks among the very best seminar papers I have seen in my thirty-nine years at Oberlin in its depth, rigor, balance and creativity."

Both awards were to be presented at the annual dinner.

Collection digitization report.

During the past year the Library has better positioned itself to carry out collection digitization projects, including forming a Digital Projects Work Group to guide efforts in this area and improve upon Library staff capabilities. The Council had previously authorized the expenditure of \$10,000 for this purpose annually, beginning in 2007-08.

In line with Council guidelines, the Library will digitize:

-- the complete run of *The Oberlin Evangelist* (1832-1862), the official publication of Oberlin College in its early years. The paper includes information on issues of importance to the College, including Christian education, slavery and abolition, moral reform, and revivals of religion.

-- selected years of the *Oberlin Review*, beginning with the first issues in 1874. One of the oldest student-produced college newspapers in the U.S., the *Review* is often the only source of reporting on College events.

Both of the above projects will be done in consultation with History Department faculty members Carol Lasser and Gary Kornblith.

Adjournment.

The Council having completed its business, President Goulding adjourned the meeting at 3:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Nathan Haverstock, Secretary
November 18, 2008

