

Minutes of the 24th Annual Meeting of the Council of the Friends of the Oberlin College Library, November 1, 2014

President Robert Longworth convened the 24th Annual Meeting of the Council of the Friends of the Oberlin College Library at approximately 1:40 p.m. in the Goodrich Room at Mudd Center.

The following Friends Council members were present: Robert Longworth (President), Maxine Houck (Vice President), Eric Carpenter (Secretary), Alan Boyd (ex officio), John Elder, Ray English (ex officio), Celeste Feather (by phone), Jack Glazier, Dan Goulding (Chair, Program Committee), Jessica Grim (ex officio), Herb Henke, Nick Jones, Peter McCracken (by phone), Anne McFarland, Sage Mitchell-Sparke (Student Representative), Scott Smith, (Chair, Acquisitions Committee), Robert Taylor, Ed Vermue (ex officio), Janice Zinser (Chair, Nominations Committee), Norman Jung (a former member of the Friends Council), and Gary Kornblith (incoming Council member).

Highlights of the Meeting:

- approved acquisitions for the library worth \$42,215 in response to recommendations from the Oberlin faculty
- approved the award of new life memberships to Myrlin von Glahn '48 and Tracy Chevalier '84
- re-elected officers for the 2014-2015 academic year, two incumbent Council members to second terms, and elected two new members to first terms
- awarded \$3,500 library school scholarships to Charlotte Beers Plank and Adekemi Lolade Gbadebo, both OC Class of 2011.
- approved a second, one-time expenditure of \$10,000 to develop a collection of pre-cinematic objects and artifacts requested by three faculty members from different departments.
- Approved a second expenditure of \$1,000 to support two winter term projects by contributing \$500 each – one on letterpress printing and one on papermaking.
- Had a lively discussion of a report by Ray English on the 2014 library self-study and external review including major issues the library faces: information literacy, the challenges of the digital age, library building issues, the pending search for a new director, and possible library internal reorganization.
- Concluded with Bob Longworth expressing warm appreciation to Ray English for many years of excellent service to the Library and the Friends, followed by an enthusiastic round of applause for Ray.

Welcome and Introductions – President Robert Longworth began a round of introductions, and each member introduced him/herself briefly.

Agenda – The agenda for this meeting was distributed in advance.

Minutes – The minutes of the November 2, 2013 meeting were approved as distributed.

Financial Report – Ray English presented the 2013-14 financial report (distributed in advance). The year began with a balance of \$38,424. Membership income was \$58,406. A planned gift of \$46,155 was also received, bringing total income to \$106,646. Expenditures for the year reflected past spending patterns, and the closing balance was \$78,786. The organization is in very good financial shape. A motion to adopt this report was made, seconded, and approved unanimously.

Acquisitions Committee – Scott Smith, Chair of the Acquisitions Committee, presented the report. In advance of the meeting the Acquisitions Committee supplied Council members with List #24 of the Committee’s recommended acquisitions (with Friends funds) totaling \$42,215. As usual titles are being purchased in disciplines across the college and conservatory curricula. The list of acquisitions the Committee recommended were chosen from a longer list of possible purchases totaling \$61,490. Scott noted that the mix of items supporting areas of the Oberlin curriculum was a bit different this year, i.e. acquisition of only one title in music was proposed since this was a costly (\$7,702) item.

Ed Vermue then displayed Item #4, “American Slave Trader’s Seizure on Saint Helena” (1840), six manuscripts in three folios. This is a collection of original documents related to the seizure by the British of a suspected slave ship, the American barque Jones on Sept. 14, 1840 near the island of St. Helena. This acquisition follows the 2013 purchase of two early albums (NOT with Friends funds) containing over 40 watercolors and pencil drawings showing the west coast of Africa and including seven slave castles on the coast of Ghana. When these manuscripts became available, the Library quickly acquired them. Item #10, *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Technology*, though not costly, was requested by a faculty member in the Creative Writing Department and reflects translation technology (its history and development), an area of growth in the Oberlin curriculum.

The Madrid Codices (#14), a facsimile edition of a great work by Leonardo da Vinci, was requested by Christina Neilson, an art history professor developing a new seminar. The art faculty also requested #18, the three-volume *Medieval and Renaissance Sculpture in the Ashmolean Museum* of Oxford University. Science faculty requested three major titles this year, and the Friends are supporting purchase of all three, including *Climate Vulnerability: Understanding and Addressing Threats to Essential Resources*. This is an essential work that seeks to strip away the emotion and politics surrounding climate change by rigorously assessing a broad range of climate threats while seeking adaptations and preventive measures.

Item #24 Leopold Mozart’s *Methode raisonnee pour apprendre a Jouer du Violon...* (ca. 1783), an early French translation of a *Violinschule* by Leopold Mozart provides valuable insight into the violin methods contemporary with Mozart. Oberlin currently owns the 1756 German first edition and a Dutch translation (1766) in the VSA/Goodkind Collection. Scott noted that the Acquisitions Committee decided to fund purchases in full this year, in contrast with more partial funding in previous years. He also noted that funding for #11, *American Consumer Culture Market Research, Consumer Culture and*

American Business, 1935-1965, a database requested by a history professor was NOT approved. Though valuable, this resource was too costly. This report comes to Council as a recommendation (moved and seconded) to approve these purchases. The motion passed unanimously with a voice vote.

Program Committee – The Program Committee provided Council members before the meeting with a chronological listing of the past year’s and upcoming Friends events. Minutes of the Program Committee meetings of Jan. 16 and July 23, 2014 were also distributed. Dan Goulding, Chair of the Program Committee, presented the report.

Dan described the year’s programs as a variety of notable events (including a physics lecture on relativity) that were generally well attended. The positive response to the lecture on relativity demonstrated that it is possible to effectively address complex topics in math and science as well as in the humanities and social sciences. There was general agreement that the Nov. 7, 2013 Jantz lecture on *The Monuments Men* by Robert M. Edsel was a highlight of the past year.

Looking ahead, Ray said suggestions for the annual dinner speaker are welcome. As noted in the minutes, the possible speakers for next year are spy novelist Alan Furst or French historian Robert Darnton (University Librarian at Harvard). Darnton has been a strong advocate for open access and was involved in founding the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA). Gary Kornblith suggested Daniel Cohen, Executive Director of the DPLA, if Robert Darnton is not available. Dan urged all to attend the Nov. 7th preview sale opening this year’s library book sale. Ray urged all to attend the Nov. 20th Jantz Lecture, “Picturing Jazz” (on jazz photography) by prominent jazz critic and scholar Gary Giddins. This lecture is coordinated with a series of events honoring jazz bassist Milt Hinton, whose estate has donated his remarkable jazz collection to Oberlin, including photographs of many prominent jazz musicians.

Membership Committee – Peter McCracken, Committee Chair, presented the report viva voce. He reviewed 2013-14 membership statistics distributed in advance of the meeting with Ray’s added input. Membership numbers remain high. Contributions in the previous year exceeded \$70,000, a record amount (large contributions by a few members), and this year’s membership contribution total was \$58,406, making this the second highest total to date. Peter noted that there probably won’t be new membership initiatives in 2014-15, given that Ray is retiring effective June 30, 2015. Thelma Morris continues to bring Kendal residents to the main library for tours, especially during the summer and winter term. These tours have encouraged Kendal residents to become members of the Friends.

Nominating Committee – Jan Zinser, Committee Chair, presented this report. The terms of two Council members expire this year: Celeste Feather and Peter McCracken (both 2nd terms). They were thanked for their service. Jack Glazier and Ann McFarland’s first terms are expiring, and both have agreed to serve a second term. New members proposed to replace Celeste and Peter are Stephanie Davis-Kahl (OC ‘94 and

award winning librarian) and Gary Kornblith, Emeritus Professor of History. Proposed Officers for 2014-15 will remain as they are this year:

President Robert Longworth, Vice-President Maxine Houck and Secretary Eric Carpenter. These nominations were proposed as a motion made and seconded by the Nominations Committee. The motion was approved unanimously.

New Life Memberships: Myrlin von Glahn, Class of 1948, has given the library a very valuable collection of calligraphic art. The collection features original artworks created by herself and leading calligraphers in the U.S., Britain, and Europe. It also includes her personal library on calligraphy and archival materials related to her career and compositions.

Novelist Tracy Chevalier, Class of 1984, has pledged to donate her papers related to all her published novels. She is the author of seven historical novels, including the international best-seller *Girl with a Pearl Earring*. Her most recent novel, *The Last Runaway*, is set in pre-Civil-War Ohio near Oberlin. The papers consist of handwritten and computer-printed drafts, print and electronic correspondence, and wide-ranging research materials, i.e., photos, illustrations, physical objects, articles, documents, and maps.

A motion to approve the two honorary life memberships was made, seconded and approved unanimously.

Student Friends of the Library – Sage Mitchell-Sparke, new coordinator of the Student Friends of the Library, presented the 2013-14 report, prepared by Jesse Gamoran, her predecessor. She praised Jesse for his imaginative, diligent, and effective work. Jesse focused on multiple departments of the library and used varied methods to contact and communicate with fellow students: e-mail, a blog, posters and the Friends Facebook page.

Highlights of 2013-14 include: a puzzle hunt leading students to various locations within the libraries they have not previously explored, a linoleum carving workshop, and a tour of Carnegie Library storage. Jesse also helped with the library book sale, a successful outdoor event that attracted many students. Jesse prepared a scary-books-and-movies display for Halloween that attracted favorable attention. Sage mounted a similar display this year. Another highlight was the exhibit and talk (by Ed Vermue) during spring semester about maps held in Mudd Special Collections. A Books in Art event at the art museum, featuring curator Liliana Milkova and several art history professors, was very well attended. The event was well reviewed in *The Oberlin Review*. The highly successful Student Book Collection Competition closed out a full schedule of second semester activities. Thirteen students (a record number) submitted collections of books for evaluation.

Sage has noticed that students become confused (difficulty interpreting existing printed maps of Mudd) while locating books in main library so she has organized a student map-making contest to produce a new finding aid. Students are invited to create a new book

locator map (a “GPS”) for main library and the winning map will be duplicated and distributed for use by library patrons. Alan mentioned that the library is aware of this problem and seeking an “app” sort of solution for it. Sage will hold the Life of a Book and Score events and the scavenger hunt again. She is also planning topical books displays, to be exhibited in conjunction with significant campus and national events, as well as a display of library book titles that are student favorites.

Library School Scholarships – Jessica presented the report (copies distributed in advance of the meeting). Five worthy applications were received for the 2013 Friends Graduate Library School Scholarship, and two awards were made: Charlotte Beers Plank ’11 and Adekemi Lolade Gbadebo ’11. Charlotte majored in German and organ performance, held several student library positions at Oberlin, now works at the Oberlin Public Library, and is taking online library school courses at Kent State University. “Kemi” Gbadebo was a Cinema Studies major, worked in the main library Reference and Instruction, and is now enrolled in the MLIS program at Rutgers University.

Student Research Awards – Ray reported on these (for Megan Mitchell who chairs this Committee), referring to the Oct. 20, 2014 memo distributed in advance of the meeting. Two awards were made for the 2012-13 academic year. Winners were Alexandra Howard ’14, and Lauren Vandemortel ’13 collaborating with Alicia Gaber ’14. Alexandra, nominated by Professor Amy Margaris (Anthropology), worked on contextualizing objects in the online OC Ethnographic Collection for Anthropology 456: Seminar in Culture Contact and Colonialism. Lauren and Alicia, nominated by Professor Gregory Mattson (Sociology), mounted an exhibition, Gay and Lesbian Literature of the 20th Century: Selections from the Gene Woodling Collection. This exhibit, one of the Year of the Queer events, celebrated the library’s collection of over 2,000 books and films on gay and lesbian themes.

Ray also distributed copies of a report covering student research awards for 2013-14. Four papers were submitted and award winners selected were Rebecca Achtenberg ’15 and Zachary Bluford ’15. Achtenberg, nominated by Prof. James O’Leary (Musicology), submitted a paper “Firth, Hall, Pond & (Their Many) Co(mpanies),” written for Music History 337 (Introduction to Organology). The assignment was to provide a rich cultural context for a musical instrument (in this case, a mysterious clarinet). Bluford was nominated by Professor Anu Needham (English) for his paper, “Gibreel’s Inadvertent Conversations: ‘extending his internal repertory’,” submitted for English 388, Selected Authors: Salman Rushdie. Research Award Committee members were: Megan Mitchell, chair; Kathleen Abromeit, Conservatory Public Services Librarian; Alison Ricker, Science Librarian; and Ann Sherif, Professor of Japanese.

Support for Special Collections Pre-Cinematic Objects Collection – Ray presented this report, referring to an Oct. 21, 2014 memo distributed in advance of the meeting. Last year’s Council authorized an expenditure of \$10,000 to support special collections purchases responding to curricular needs. These funds were not spent in 2013-14. A proposal has been received from three faculty members: Rian Brown-Orso (Cinema Studies), Wendy Hyman (English), and Sarah Hamill (Art History) to develop a

collection of pre-cinematic objects and artifacts (technology leading to motion pictures). This collection would be used in teaching in several disciplines, adding to the college's existing object collections used in a variety of teaching contexts. This year's proposal allocates an additional \$10,000 (added to last year's allocation for a total of \$20,000) to build this collection. Ed Vermue has been building the library's objects collection, acquiring items illustrating the history of photography to support curricular interest in this area. Ed cited examples of objects acquired for this popular course: panoramas, tunnel books, flip books, early cameras, glass negatives, zoetropes, camera obscura (facsimile version), etc. Students are delighted to interact with these objects. A motion was made and seconded to add \$10,000 to the \$10,000 allocated to this project last year, total now \$20,000. The motion was adopted without dissent.

Support for winter term projects – Last year the Friends Council approved support of \$500 each for two winter term projects, one on letterpress printing and another on papermaking. Both projects were successfully completed. This year Ed Vermue will again be working with specialists in letterpress printing and papermaking to offer winter term courses in these areas. Two \$500 awards are again proposed to support these two winter term courses: one for letterpress another for papermaking. A motion was made and seconded to make these allocations as requested. The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution Regarding Gift from John Patton '49 – Bob Longsworth explained that John Patton '49 of Fremont, CA established a gift annuity with OC in 2012 and designated the Friends of the Library as its beneficiary. The Friends received the proceeds of the annuity (\$46,155) in the spring of 2014 following Mr. Patton's death. Longsworth suggested that a motion be made that Bob Longsworth write a formal letter of appreciation to Mr. Patton's spouse to this effect. The motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously.

Library Self-Study and External Review – Ray provided background. Acting Deans of the College and Conservatory, Joyce Babyak and Andrea Kalyn, requested an external review of the library in preparation for the college's current strategic planning process. The library was asked to conduct an extensive self-study prior to the external review. With general consensus that the library is effectively managed and responsive to the needs of Oberlin faculty and students, it was agreed that both the self-study and external review focus on future planning issues rather than current services and operations. The Self-Study Committee was formed and completed an extensive report, and the external review team visited in April 2014. Alan compiled the helpful table of self-study action items and recommendations on each made by the review team. (A memo from Ray was distributed in advance of the meeting, with the list of action items). Self-study results were encouraging, Ray said. It is evident that faculty and students rely on the library and realize its central role on campus. The library is perceived as an asset that helps recruit faculty, and 43% of students surveyed said that the Library was a major factor in their decision to choose Oberlin.

Extended discussion followed. Major issues raised in the self-study include library – faculty collaboration on improving information literacy among students, library building

issues, challenges of the digital age, and of course budgetary matters. Ray will be summarizing these items in a major memorandum to both deans. Other issues mentioned were: the digital orientation of today's students, library staff turnover including a search for a new director, internal reorganization of library departments (new digital services department), e-book usage and relationship to printed monographs and others. The complexity and rapidly changing nature of the digital and publishing environment, the prominence and complexity of digital licensing issues, consortial agreements, interlibrary lending/sharing of e-books were all discussed. Celeste Feather contributed (by phone) helpful insights into these issues by virtue of her consortial work on electronic licensing issues.

Appreciation for Ray English – As a final note, Bob Longworth expressed warm appreciation to Ray for many years of excellent leadership of the library and the Friends of the Library organization. An enthusiastic round of applause was then extended to Ray.

The Council had voted by e-mail (and without Ray's knowledge) prior to the meeting to establish an endowed fund honoring Ray. Establishment of the fund was announced at the annual dinner.

Adjournment was at 3:25 p.m.