



LIBRARY

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Oberlin College Library

PERSPECTIVES

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Nicholas Basbanes to Speak on November 2

Nicholas Basbanes, author of *A Gentle Madness: Bibliophiles, Bibliomanes, and the Eternal Passion for Books*, will speak following the Friends of the Library combined Council and Membership meeting on November 2.

A finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award for nonfiction, *A Gentle Madness* is an entertaining and comprehensive look at the world of books and book collecting. In addition to full portraits of great collectors, it includes sketches of figures whose fascination for books has taken a darker turn, such as bibliokleptomaniac Stephen



Nicholas Basbanes

Blumberg and professional book thief James Shinn, who was first apprehended in Oberlin.

Basbanes wrote *A Gentle Madness* because he "wanted to show that, however bizarre and zealous

collectors have been through the ages, so much of what we know about history, literature, and culture would be lost forever if not for the passion and dedication of these driven souls."

Michael Dirda, Pulitzer Prize-winning critic of *The Washington Post* (and Oberlin College Class of 1970) describes the book as "a wonderful gallery" that is "chock-a-block with strange and appealing characters, each more wonderful than the last." Peter Kopper, writing in the *New York Times Book Review*, considers it "compulsory for anyone interested in books."

Academic Press Journals Online

Academic Press, a major publisher of scholarly books and periodicals, will soon make its research journals available to subscribers electronically. Through an initiative known as IDEAL (International Digital Electronic Access Library), the full-text of all 175 Academic Press journals will be accessible through the World-Wide Web. As a participant in OhioLINK, Oberlin will be among the first libraries in the United States to subscribe to the Academic Press journals online.

OhioLINK has entered into an agreement with Academic Press

which will allow users at participating institutions to view, search, print, and download articles from any of the 175 journals. Students and faculty will have access to these journals from any networked workstation on campus—in the libraries, their offices, or dorm rooms.

While Project Muse (the online journal publishing initiative of the Johns Hopkins University Press) features journals in the humanities and social sciences, the Academic Press journals are primarily in the sciences. Oberlin currently subscribes to forty-four

Academic Press journals in print format.

OhioLINK expects to make this service available in the early Fall of 1996. For a sneak preview of the Academic Press journals, visit IDEAL on the World-Wide Web at <http://www.idealibrary.com/>. Guest users of IDEAL can view tables of contents and abstracts of all journals in the library.

Margaret Atwood
will speak at the Friends of the
Library dinner on February 8.
See page 2.

Margaret Atwood to Speak at Friends Dinner

Margaret Atwood will be the featured speaker at the Friends of the Library annual dinner, which this year will be held on February 8.

Ms. Atwood, one of Canada's most prominent literary figures, is the author of over twenty-five books of fiction, poetry, and essays. Her works have achieved a rare combination of international critical acclaim and general popularity, giving her a unique position in contemporary Canadian literature.

In the words of one critic, Ms. Atwood "explores the relationship between humanity and nature, the dark side of human behavior, and power as it pertains to gender and politics. She has helped to define and identify the goals of contemporary Canadian literature and has earned a distinguished reputation among feminist writers for her exploration of women's issues."

Ms. Atwood's most recent books include the best-selling

novels *The Handmaid's Tale*, *Cat's Eye*, and *The Robber Bride* as well as the collections *Wilderness Tips* and *Good Bones and Simple Murders*. *Alias Grace*, her forthcoming novel, will be published in December by Nan A. Talese / Doubleday.

Among Ms. Atwood's many honors are a Guggenheim Fellowship, eleven honorary degrees from colleges and universities in Canada, the United States, and abroad, and numerous literary awards and prizes for individual works and for her entire creative output.



Margaret Atwood

Ms. Atwood's visit to Oberlin in February is cosponsored by the Friends of the Oberlin College Library and the Creative Writing Program.

CD-ROM Network Expands

In the Spring of 1996 the Oberlin College Library, working in conjunction with the Irvin Houck Computing Center, upgraded the CD-ROM network by purchasing a jukebox with a capacity of 150 drives. Unlike the Wurlitzers of yesteryear, this jukebox can "play" discs simultaneously.

This expansion increases access to bibliographic databases, full-text sources, and data sets previously available to single-users at non-networked workstations in the libraries and other locations on campus.

The CD-ROM network previously had a capacity of twenty-one drives. With the addition of more drives, the library will be able to provide distributed access to a number of multiple-disc data sets, such as the *American Housing*

Survey, the 1990 *Census of Population and Housing*, and the *Current Population Survey*.

Also, several bibliographic citation databases have expanded from one to two or more discs as coverage extends backwards in time: *PsycLIT* provides citations to scholarly articles in the field of psychology dating back to 1974; the *MLA International Bibliography*, which covers the fields of literature, language, linguistics and folklore, provides citations back to 1963.

Because they are on the network, students and faculty members can use these databases from virtually any networked workstation on campus, at any time of day. Currently there are twenty-seven titles available from the network menu.

New Friends of the Library Homepage

The Friends of the Oberlin College Library now have a homepage that is accessible through the Internet.

The homepage has information about the Friends, a schedule of upcoming programs, the latest issues of *Library Perspectives*, and texts from selected Friends programs (see related article on page 6). Access is available to anyone who has an Internet connection and a World-Wide Web browser, such as Netscape or Mosaic.

The next time you use the Internet, visit the site at:



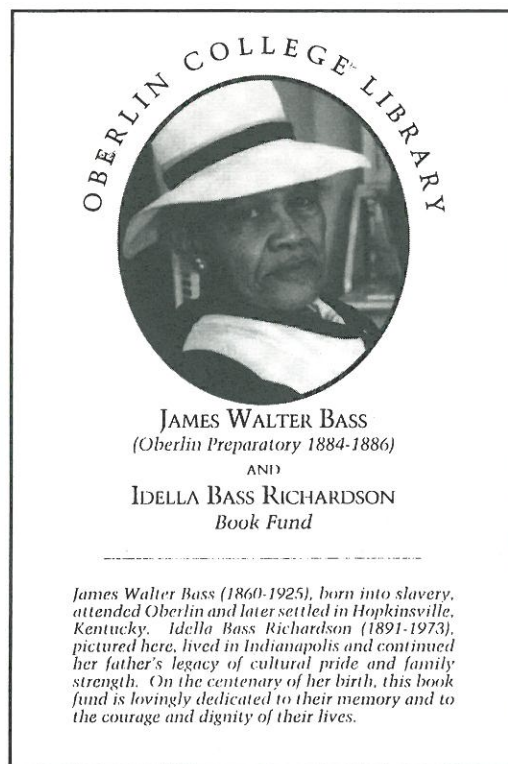
<http://www.oberlin.edu/~library/friends.html>

New Endowed Book Fund Established by Glazier Family

The James Walter Bass and Idella Bass Richardson book fund has recently been endowed and will provide continuing support for purchasing books on the culture, history, and arts of African Americans. This fund was originally established in 1991 by Professor of Anthropology Jack Glazier and members of his family. Contributors, in addition to Jack, are his brothers and sisters Albert Glazier, Robert Glazier, Samuel Glazier, Marcia Glazier Kolodkin, Harry Glazier, and Geraldine Glazier Pergament.

The fund honors James Walter Bass (1860–1925) and his

daughter Idella Bass Richardson (1891–1973). James Walter Bass, who was born a slave in Kentucky, attended the Oberlin Preparatory Department (1884–1886) and later settled in Hopkinsville, Kentucky. His daughter (shown on the bookplate for the fund) lived in Indianapolis and was a guiding force in the lives of the Glazier children. The fund was established on the centenary of her birth.



Bass Richardson bookplate

Recent Gifts

The previous issue of *Library Perspectives* noted that **Jon Carter Covell ('30)**, Professor Emerita of Art History at California State University, Long Beach, had donated a substantial portion of her collection of books to Oberlin. Her son, **Alan Covell**, recently donated an additional 1,015 volumes from Professor Covell's collection, following her death on April 18, 1996. This second portion of Professor Covell's collection includes English-language scholarly and popular books on Japanese art and culture, especially religion, and Buddhism in particular. Also included in this gift are some three hundred books in Japanese, and a few in Chinese and Korean. Given growing curricular interest in Japan, the multi-volume sets of profusely illustrated Japanese-

language texts on Japanese art and culture are especially welcome. A highlight of the gift is a 1914 book on the Ninwaji Temple, published by the Temple on the occasion of its renovation. Such beautifully illustrated, pre-World War I books, published in limited editions, are now difficult to obtain.

Former President **S. Frederick Starr** has named the Oberlin College Library as the beneficiary of his associate membership in the Foundation for Advanced Information and Research in Japan. Through this arrangement the library has received a significant number of current Japanese-language publications at no cost. Our first shipment consisted of forty-five volumes on various aspects of Japanese social, cultural, and political history.

Priscilla Hunt ('51), who served as a trustee of Oberlin from 1976 to 1992, has donated six eighteenth- and nineteenth-century volumes to the library's special collections. The gift includes copies of *The Spectator*, volume V (1713) and volume VIII (1742); *Milton's Paradise Lost*, A New Edition, by Richard Bentley, D.D., printed for Jacob Tonson et. al., London, 1732; and *The Works of Virgil*, englished by Robert Andrews, printed by John Baskerville for the Author, Birmingham, 1766. The nineteenth-century titles include *Illustrated News*, vol. 1, no. 1, New York, Saturday, January 1, 1853; and *Gleason's Pictorial* (Drawing Room Companion), vol. VI, no. 1, whole no. 131 (Boston: F. Gleason, Saturday, January 7, 1854).

Library Perspectives, a newsletter for users and Friends of the Oberlin College Library, is issued three times a year. Printed from an endowed fund established by Benjamin A. and Emiko Custer. Editors: Ray English, Megan Mitchell, and Dan Zager.

Friends Update

The Friends of the Oberlin College Library had another fine year.

\$21,546 was contributed directly to the Friends in 1995–96, enabling the group to fund numerous important acquisitions for the library and to sponsor a series of interesting programs.

The organization counted 775 current members as of June 30, including 365 who contributed directly to the Friends, 126 who donated to other library funds or provided gifts-in-kind, 224 student members, 20 life members, and 4 honorary members.

Programs included an address by President Dye at the Friends dinner, the Jantz Lecture by historian Elizabeth Eisenstein, and a talk by author Sven Birkerts. The Friends also initiated a new "Faculty Book Talk" series that featured four members of the Oberlin faculty. Friends purchases for the

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Friends of the Oberlin College Library Upcoming Programs

Thursday, October 10

4:30 p.m. Faculty Book Talk by Norman Care, Professor of Philosophy
Living with One's Past (published by Roman and Littlefield, August 1996)

Saturday, November 9

1:30 p.m. Friends Council and Membership Meeting
4:00 p.m. Talk by Nicholas Basbanes, author of *A Gentle Madness*
— followed by reception

Thursday, December 5

4:30 p.m. Book Talk by Nathan Haverstock, Secretary of the Friends
Fifty years at the Front: The Life of War Correspondent Frederick Palmer (Brassey's, 1996)

Saturday, February 8

6:00 p.m. Friends annual reception and dinner
Featured speaker: Margaret Atwood

A Look at OhioLINK

Since the advent of user-initiated online borrowing through OhioLINK in December 1995 (see *Library Perspectives*, February 1996), the Oberlin College Library has borrowed 6,322 items and lent 12,305 items. Online borrowing is popular with students and faculty for a variety of reasons: it's free, it's a paper-less transaction that doesn't require the assistance of a staff member (in fact, the library doesn't even have to be open for the request to be placed), and books arrive quickly. Among Oberlin's online borrowers, students are the most active, accounting for 75.4% of borrowing, followed by staff at 13.2%, and faculty at 11.4%.

A majority of materials requested through OhioLINK are delivered within three days of the initial request. While borrowers are notified by campus mail when

materials arrive, it's also easy to monitor the status of books requested and checked out using the "VIEW your circulation record" option in OBIS.

Although Oberlin has lent substantially more items than it has borrowed, lending and borrowing levels are nearly equal during the last months of each semester. Of the books that Oberlin has loaned, 69.3% were from the Main Library, 12.4% from Art, 14.1% from the Conservatory, and 3.9% from Science and Physics. The majority of the books borrowed by Oberlin users have come from Ohio State University, the University of Cincinnati, Kent State University and Bowling Green State University.

In addition to having the collections of thirty-five Ohio libraries at their fingertips, users of the

Oberlin College Library enjoy other benefits of OhioLINK participation. Through OhioLINK the library subscribes to a variety of online reference sources and bibliographic databases at substantial discounts. Some of these databases include: *Britannica Online* (see *Library Perspectives*, February 1996), the *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd. ed., a subset of the FirstSearch databases (see *Library Perspectives*, February, 1993), *Anthropological Literature*, *Avery Index to Architectural Periodicals*, the *English Short Title Catalog*, the *Handbook of Latin American Studies*, *Hispanic American Periodicals*, and the *History of Science and Technology*.

The OhioLINK Central Catalog also includes the holdings of

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Honoring Dina Schoonmaker

Dina Schoonmaker, head of the library's special collections and preservation programs, retired in June after fifteen years of distinguished service. During her tenure here Dina worked closely with faculty to promote the use of materials from Special Collections in various areas of Oberlin's curriculum, and she curated major exhibitions that highlighted these collections. As the staff member responsible for preserving the library's collections, she created a collection preservation program that serves as a model for academic libraries of our size.

Under her leadership and supervision, and with support from a generous alumni donor, the library developed a preservation mending lab staffed primarily by student assistants. This lab has repaired over thirty thousand volumes from the library's collections, restoring them for continued use by Oberlin students and faculty. Additionally, Dina has played a key role in administering the three-year Culpeper Foundation Preservation Grant that has resulted in

the deacidification and reformatting of important materials from our collections (see *Library Perspectives*, February 1994).



Dina Schoonmaker

Several of the student assistants trained by Dina have gone on to careers in book conservation and the book arts. One such alumnus is John Carrera ('91), who worked as an assistant in the mending lab for two years after graduating with

a major in Art, later studying book-binding at the Bennett St. School in Boston. His book *A Walk Through the Woods* was purchased for the library to honor Dina's outstanding career and her many contributions to the library. The book presents a series of engravings (white on white paper) depicting trees and woods. Oberlin's copy is number two of the twenty copies produced. For her personal collection Dina's colleagues gave her Carrera's production of the Robert Frost poem "Acquainted With the Night." Carrera made the cover and paper, set the type, and provided the etchings for this book. Dina's copy is number fifteen of twenty-five.

It is no cliché to say that Dina's preservation work has had a lasting effect on the library's collections. It is particularly fitting that two volumes created by one of her former students, who has since become a gifted book artist, were chosen to celebrate Dina's years of service to the Oberlin College Library.

OhioLINK...from p. 4

the Center for Research Libraries (CRL). Located in Chicago, CRL collects rare or expensive library material that individual institutions are not likely to own. OhioLINK will soon make CRL materials available through direct, online borrowing. For more information about CRL, visit their webpage at: <http://www.crl.uchicago.edu/>.

The popularity of online borrowing through OhioLINK has not eliminated the need for traditional interlibrary loan (ILL),

especially since the statewide system does not handle requests for journal articles. In 1995-96 Oberlin

users borrowed a total of 5,619 items through regular ILL channels.

A Snapshot of Oberlin in OhioLINK:

- As of April 26, 1996, Oberlin had contributed 593,194 bibliographic records to the OhioLINK database, making it the eleventh largest holding library
- Oberlin's records comprise 4% of the records in the OhioLINK central catalog; the largest contributor is Ohio State University at 12.8%, the smallest is Terra Community College at .1%
- 31.2% of Oberlin's records are unique to the database, one of the highest such percentages among OhioLINK institutions

The **Friends of the Oberlin College Library** provide significant support for special acquisitions and programs that help the library fulfill its fundamental role in the academic life of the college.

JOIN US. BE A FRIEND.

Members receive the *Library Perspectives* newsletter, invitations to Friends programs, and other privileges. Most of all, Friends have the satisfaction of supporting Oberlin's outstanding library.

Annual membership categories: \$1 Student \$5 Recent Graduate

\$25 Friend \$30 Couple \$50 Associate
 \$100 Sponsor \$500 Patron \$1000 Benefactor

Please return this coupon with your membership contribution to:

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Mudd Center, Oberlin, OH 44074

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City: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Please make checks payable to Oberlin College.
 Friends contributions are tax deductible.

Update... *from p. 4*

library collections included major reference works, special collections materials, and substantial

support for acquiring books in new curricular areas.

Yinger Talk on Homepage

The text of the talk delivered by J. Milton Yinger, Emeritus Professor of Sociology, at the Friends of the Library program for Commencement/Reunion Weekend is now available through the Internet from the Friends of the Library homepage:

<http://www.oberlin.edu/~library/friends.html>

Entitled "Along Many Trails — To a Single Destination," the talk describes the development of Professor Yinger's distinguished career, focusing in particular on his research interests in the sociology of religion, racial and ethnic relations, and countercultures.

Paper copies of the talk may be requested from the Friends of the Library, Mudd Center, Oberlin College, Oberlin OH 44074.

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Library Perspectives

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