What’s Ahead?
Dr. Richard S. Ross,
College Librarian

This is a core question that many of us are asking as we see the economy in a tailspin and know that it is affecting our lives, the lives of our students, their families, and our school. In the Library, we recognize that additional cut-backs may be necessary. We are no strangers to them as the Library budget has decreased by 10.3 percent over the past two years and we have had to review and adjust our available resources.

Despite these financial challenges, we continue to find ways to enhance the Library’s collections and services. This spring, we have initiated a pilot project for collaborative collection development with our two consortium partners, Connecticut College and Wesleyan University. The project focuses on the shared purchase of expensive monographs that are of long-term value for advanced study or research, but do not need to be owned by all three libraries. Each of the CTW libraries has been allocated an equal amount of funds for ordering titles unique to the consortium, along with a set of criteria to guide their selection. If a second copy is needed at one of the other libraries, it must be ordered on their own funds. If the pilot project is successful, our hope is that it will allow the three CTW libraries to expand the quantity and quality of their collective purchasing well into the future.

The CTW consortium has also begun to explore possibilities.

The Watkinson Library Receives Two Stunning Gifts

Dr. Jeffrey Kaimowitz, Head, Watkinson Library

NESTS AND EGGS OF OHIO

If you ever thought that a bird’s nest could be not a thing of beauty, you have not seen Illustrations of the Nests and Eggs of the Birds of Ohio. A magnificent hand-colored, handsomely bound copy of this remarkable publication was recently presented to the Watkinson Library through the generosity of Watkinson Library Trustee Dr. William Bronson. It is a great rarity. Only 90 copies were produced, of which 39 were hand-colored. The Watkinson is also fortunate to have the Ostrom Enders copy of the uncolored version of the book as well.

Illustrations of the Nests and Eggs of the Birds of Ohio was originally issued in 1886 in 23 parts to be bound in two folio volumes and was the creation of the talented Dr. Nelson Jones family and their friends in the little southeast Ohio town of Circleville. The project to produce the book began with the Jones’s daughter, Genevieve, who after an unhappy love affair, found consolation in working on it. She had learned to love natural history, while traveling in a buggy with her physician father on his rounds in the Ohio countryside and was inspired by Audubon’s Birds of America after seeing that great illustrated book at the 1876 World’s Fair. Genevieve and a friend, Eliza J. Shulze, drew the illustrations for the first part, which appeared in July of 1879. This initial part received generous praise from the normally cranky Elliott Coues, leading American ornithologist of the day, who compared the work to that of Audubon. However, tragedy soon followed. Genevieve Jones was stricken with typhoid fever and soon died. The family, prostrate with grief, nonetheless decided to continue the project in Genevieve’s memory. Her mother Virginia became the lead artist, drawing the lithographic illustrations. The hand-coloring of the illustrations was at first carried out by two Circleville watercolorists, Nellie Jacobs and Kat Gephart, but proved to be very burdensome. Soon a professional artist, Josephine Klippert was hired to help color the nests. The actual printing of the illustrations from the lithographic stones and the printing of the letterpress text, written by Genevieve’s brother Howard, were performed 120 miles away in Cincinnati. Finally after seven years, the book was completed. We are extremely grateful to Dr. Bronson for the gift of this exceptional publication, a major monument of American book illustration and ornithological scholarship.

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The Watkinson Library Receives Two Stunning Gifts

ROBERTS BROTHERS

The Watkinson Library this fall was the beneficiary of an outstanding collection of 19th century literary editions. Watkinson Library Trustee and bookseller John William Pye, '70, donated to the Library over 1,200 volumes published by the Boston publisher Roberts Brothers, which operated between 1863 and 1898. This wonderful collection complements a fine collection of Roberts Brothers manuscripts and ephemera that Mr. Pye had donated to the Library in 2005 and has continued to add to.

The firm of Roberts Brothers began with Lewis Augustus Roberts (1833-1901), who, after emigrating from England, established a book-binding business in Boston in 1840. Upon expansion, it included his two brothers, John and Austin; the bookbinding business eventually was sold in 1859. In 1862 during the Civil War, with the growing interest in the new medium of photography, the brothers began manufacturing and selling photographic albums, examples of which were presented to the Library by Mr. Pye, and soon added job printing. Interested in getting into publishing, Lewis Roberts, who was the firm’s principal and handled its finances, hired Thomas Niles (1825-1894) as editor in 1863. Niles was particularly well suited for this position, having worked for famed Boston literary publisher Ticknor and Fields and at one time having run his own publishing company. His skill and his knowledge of the book market were invaluable, and the firm’s publishing venture flourished. In 1872, Niles was made a partner in the firm.

Roberts Brothers’ first great publishing success was an edition of the Poems of the English poet Jean Ingelow, little known today but in her time almost as popular as Tennyson. Notable books that followed included the first editions of leading American authors such Louisa May Alcott’s Little Women (1868-69), Little Men (1871) and many other publications, Helen Hunt Jackson’s Ramona (1884), and the Poems of Emily Dickinson (1890). Among British authors, the firm published the first American edition of Robert Louis Stevenson’s Treasure Island (1884) as well as works of William Morris, Christina and Dante Rossetti, and Oscar Wilde. The sudden death of Niles from a heart attack while in Italy in 1894 led in a few years to the demise of Roberts Brothers, since he was the firm’s brains and driving force.

The collection donated by Mr. Pye comprises over half the output of Roberts Brothers. As such, it provides a valuable resource for American publishing history in the late 19th century. There are a number of works by authors still read today, including translated works by authors who did not write in English, but there are many more authors whose numerous books were popular after the Civil War, but today are generally unknown. The range and character of these publications provide a window into literary taste in this country in the last third of the 19th century. In addition, the presence of many of the Roberts Brothers’ most popular books in multiple editions and variant bindings provides an opportunity to analyze how a publisher went about marketing his books in this period.

The Library is extremely grateful to John Pye for this thoughtful gift.
2009 Winter Institute on Teaching & Technology (WITT)

Doris Kammadt, Head Librarian for the Collections, Research and Instruction Division

On the morning of January 14th, about 50 participants: faculty members across all disciplines, staff from the Raether Library & Technology Center (LITC), and invited students gathered in the Library’s Joslin Family 1823 Room for a half-day program on Critical Reading in a Digital Age. The event had been organized by a group of LITC staff, the Blume Language & Culture and the Writing Centers, with support from the College’s new Center for Teaching & Learning.

The morning’s program opened with a warm-up exercise using clickers, a hand-held device for registering instant feedback, to test some common opinions about reading in the digital age. Then, a panel of five faculty members, moderated by Prof. Gary Reger, shared reflections and techniques on developing their students’ critical reading skills. A second panel of two professors and five students, moderated by Prof. Chris Hager, provided the opportunity to hear how students approach their reading assignments.

Concluding the program, Social Science Data Coordinator Rachael Barlow and Academic Computing Specialist David Tatem presented a selection of online tools that help with reading new things in new ways and how to keep track of them. Lively conversations continued over lunch. The feedback about the program was very positive and confirmed that the topic had touched a core interest of the participants.

A Student Profile in the Music and Media Center

Jessica Smith, Administrative Librarian, and Chris Brown II, ’09

The Trinity College Library could not sustain its service hours and keep its operations running without the student employees who staff our desks and aid in the handling of our collections. Every so often students work in the Library as a way to augment their academic interests while also pursuing a personal passion, and one such student is Chris Brown II, ’09.

Chris forged the basis for his passion and keen perspective early on as a child, when his family moved from a middleclass suburban home life to the tougher economic and physical conditions often associated with public housing. In Chris’s words, he has “experienced the challenge of having to maneuver through a change in value systems, where my peers had different goals and motivations... where conflicts and their attempted resolutions often escalated into greater conflicts. It all plays out different when you are a kid in a more urban environment with the suburbs as your backdrop.”

He also acknowledges it was the observations he made during this point that would eventually shape his passion for storytelling. It is his love of films and storytelling that led to his screenwriting aspirations. He says, “films are powerful because people already see and think in pictures.” He also believes that the telling of stories through the medium of film can introduce viewers “to new possibilities of what they might become”.

The job in the Music and Media Center of the Library has been an ideal match for Chris. “I understood that working in the Music and Media Center would be a valuable learning experience because it would provide an opportunity to interact with both students and faculty, and expose me to the films that the professors use as learning tools. Each exchange, each moment of small talk,” he says “offers new insights into how I might interpret a film’s story.”

Before coming to Trinity, Chris took classes at a community college and, since enrolling at Trinity, has taken classes at New York University and interned at Samuel Goldwyn Films to further his goals in screenwriting. He acknowledges that Trinity has been essential to helping him develop into the budding screenwriter he has become. His professors in the English Department, where his main focus is poetry and creative writing, have challenged him in his writing, whether it is the emphasis on the importance of audience or creating a compelling story.

He values every day he has had at Trinity for the lessons he has learned, both inside and outside the classroom. The Trinity experience helped launch the pursuit of his passion—telling good, meaningful stories through the medium of film. Says Chris, “No matter what the economy, people will always enjoy films. Storytelling is a part of our everyday lives and films speak to the universal experience of what it means to be human.”
Modern American Poets Featured in the Watkinson Library

Sally Dickinson – Special Collections Librarian

The current exhibition in the Watkinson Library, “Modern American Poets and Their Printers,” highlights selections from the library’s holdings of 20th century literary titles. The show features unusual holdings from the expatriate circles of 1920’s Paris, including titles from the press of William Bird, a Trinity graduate and foreign correspondent, who collaborated with the likes of Ezra Pound and Ernest Hemingway in some of his first publishing ventures. Also displayed are early 20th c. avant-garde poets, the Beats of the 50’s, new poets of the 60’s and 70’s, as well as established giants such as Robert Frost, whose holiday greetings were printed at the Spiral Press. The exhibition focuses on fine printing and small, independent presses that were willing to publish unknown and experimental work. It celebrates the role of the printer and illustrator as well as the poet in the creation of the printed word.

The exhibition was curated by Special Collections Librarian Sally Dickinson and will run from February 2 to June 15. Watkinson hours are Monday through Friday, 9:30-4:30 and Saturdays, March 28-May 2, 12:30-4:30.

SPRING WATKINSON EVENTS

TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 2009
A Poetry Reading by Clare Rossini
4:30 p.m.
Watkinson Library Reading Room
Raether Library and Information Technology Center

THURSDAY, MARCH, 26, 2009
A poetry reading and book signing by Dr. Jeffrey Kaimowitz, along with Jessica Smith and Llyn Kaimowitz, will read from his new translation, The Odes of Horace
4:30 p.m.
Joslin Family 1823 Room, Raether Library and Information Technology Center

NEWS from the Libraries at Trinity College

Raether Library and Information Technology Center
300 Summit Street
Hartford, CT 06106-3100

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