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Inside the UConn Libraries, Volume 1, Number 1

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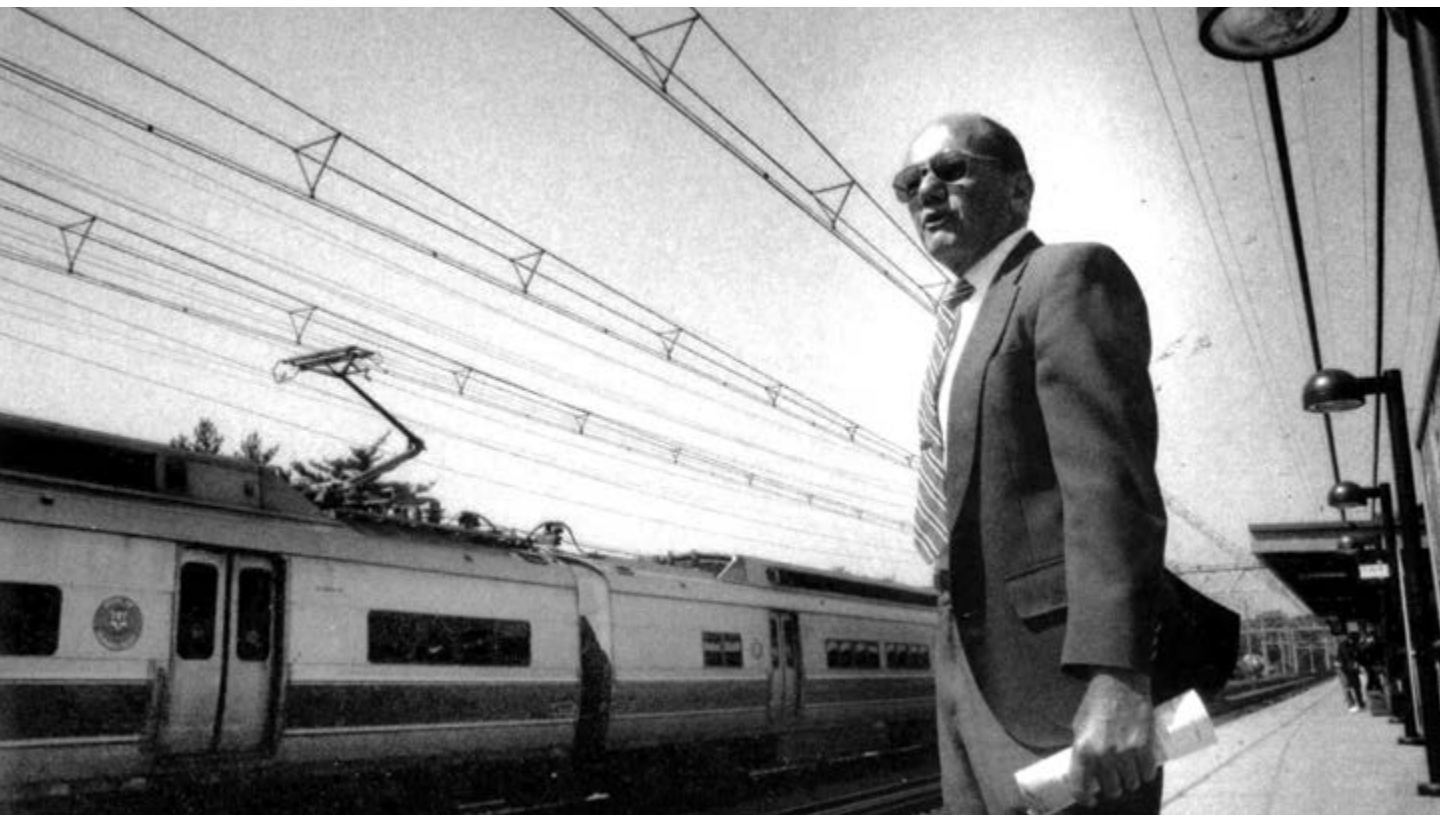
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Inside the UConn Libraries

News from the University of Connecticut Libraries

fall
2014



J.W. “Jack” Swanberg

On Track with an Eminent Railroad Historian, Collector, and Donor

Whether contending in the 1990s with the many issues facing the safe and punctual operation of Connecticut’s heavily used Metro-North commuter rail service in New Haven, writing a definitive history of the New Haven Railroad – a volume coveted by historians and collectors alike - or traveling aboard classic steam trains in exotic locations, J. W. “Jack” Swanberg has done it all.

He recalls a 1994 British charter trip into Pakistan’s Khyber Pass, almost to the Afghan border, as being particularly memorable. “Using British-built steam locomotives, we had a carload of Pakistani Army soldiers with us for security, although even they would not let us stop the

train in areas that they deemed unsafe. Not a luxury train at all, but the mountain scenery was fantastic. Our base of operations was Peshawar, a Bin Laden stronghold where you certainly wouldn’t go today.”

Clearly an adventurer, Swanberg’s love of trains took hold when he was a toddler. During his life, he has indulged that early fascination by taking rail trips throughout the world, while simultaneously enjoying a 38-year career in railroad management. He began as a locomotive fireman shortly after his graduation from Hartford’s Trinity College, and ended as Lead Trainmaster for Metro-North in 2000.

Since 2000, the Guilford, Connecticut resident has shared his time, energy, and expertise with Laura Smith,

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**donor
spotlight**



“Great things are done by a series of small things brought together.”
- Vincent van Gogh

Message from the Vice Provost

Martha Bedard

Since my arrival a year ago, I have had the opportunity to meet the many talented people within the UConn Libraries – as well as the many amazing people outside of our walls – who are connected to us in very special and unique ways. And, as van Gogh’s quote suggests, when all these individuals are brought together into a larger whole, great things happen!

This issue of *Inside the UConn Libraries* is a new beginning of sorts, replacing the *University of Connecticut Libraries* with a more focused look at you - the people behind who we are. By examining our newest collections and the generous donors who have made them possible, and then adding the users of these resources to the picture, we will tell the inside story behind the UConn Libraries.

In this inaugural issue you’ll meet J.W. Swanberg, an eminent railroad historian and collector who has shared his rich collection and expertise with our Railroad History Archive, and, by extension, its many followers.

He joins Professor Emeritus Stanley L. Nash of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion who donated his collection of more than 1,000 books on Hebrew and Israeli literature to us. His gift will provide a substantial working library for students specializing in Modern Hebrew literature and contemporary Israeli culture.

Our collections and resources only reach their full potential when they’re used. We’re therefore pleased to celebrate some of our users and the impressive work they do. Included in this issue is an update on a familiar face around here. UConn Professor Emeritus and noted historic landscape architect Rudy Favretti – whose work is in our own Archives & Special Collections as well as the Smithsonian’s Archives of American Gardens and Landscapes – has departed from his work in historic landscapes and is now writing about Mansfield’s history.

These new collections expand the resources we offer researchers and give us new reason to celebrate our stature as the Library of the State’s flagship University!

To learn about the many things happening in Storrs and at our regional campus libraries, please visit: www.blogs.lib.uconn.edu. ■

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Volume 1, Number 1

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Editor: Suzanne Zack

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Cover Photo: J.W. “Jack” Swanberg, Metro-North Railroad at Old Greenwich, CT, May 2001.

Professor Emeritus Rudy J. Favretti

Noted Historic Landscape Architect Has Sights on Mansfield's Past

user
spotlight

One might think that after teaching at UConn for 33 years, writing some 20 books and scores of journal articles on the historic restoration and preservation of landscapes, and creating master plans for such national landmarks as Jefferson's Monticello and Washington's Mount Vernon – not to mention having those plans placed in the Smithsonian Institution's Archives of American Gardens and Landscapes – Professor Emeritus Rudy J. Favretti, might be ready to sit back and rest on his proverbial laurels. That would be a reasonable assumption, if one didn't know him.

Blessed with an abundance of energy and a "planning gene," Favretti, 81, says much of his intellectual spadework has been done at the UConn Libraries.

"I use the library a lot - the art and history sections and interlibrary loan," he notes. I have found the staff in all of these sections extremely helpful, in general, and especially as I search for odd and obscure material that is not readily available. It's a great place!"

After earning his undergraduate degree from UConn in plant science, the Mystic, Connecticut native went on to earn advanced degrees in horticulture, landscape architecture, and regional planning from Cornell and the University of Massachusetts. At UConn, he served as an extension garden specialist and extension landscape architect from 1955–1975, and taught landscape architecture here from the late 1960s to 1988, developing the accredited landscape architect program, retiring when he was 55. During his career, he completed about 700 individual and collaborative design, master planning, and preservation projects.

In 2011, no longer actively engaged in design work, he agreed to share his personal papers with the Smithsonian. There, one can find the lion's share of his research and work – 4,000 slides, drawings, and notes totaling some 27 linear feet. Having it housed there is a "huge honor," he says. Some of his work can also be found in UConn's Archives & Special Collections.

Favretti made the restoration and preservation of gardens and landscapes his life's work, appreciating not only their aesthetic value, but their value as a lens through which to view a person's life and times. Several years ago, he shifted his focus from gardens directly to people, specifically those who lived in Mansfield, his home for close to six decades. To date, he's written about Wormwood Hill (in concert with his friend and longtime resident of the area, veteran UConn administrator, the late Isabelle Atwood), Mansfield Four Corners, Mansfield Center (as co-author) and the



Gurleyville/Hanks Hill area, which is a tribute to his friends, fellow UConn faculty members, the late Annarie and Fred Cazal, Gurleyville residents themselves who had done some research on the area but who died before writing a book. The couple's bequest to the Mansfield Historical Society will allow more regional histories to be published.

Research for these histories, as well as for other undertakings including his keynote address in 2012 on the University's iconic "Great Lawn," has made Favretti a familiar sight in Archives & Special Collections and Homer Babbidge Library.

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Stanley L. Nash

Professor Emeritus Honors Libraries with Gift of Books on Hebrew and Israeli Literature

When Stanley L. Nash was awarded an honorary degree from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, an institution where he had taught Hebrew and Modern Israeli literature for 34 years, he was described as a prolific author and conscientious teacher who had given his students precious insights and an understanding of Zionism through the prism of Hebrew literature. Although Nash retired from teaching there in 2012, he will continue to shape the insights of students and researchers, only now here at UConn through the donation of more than 1,000 books from his own collection to Homer Babbidge Library.

“It is my hope that more students will specialize in modern Hebrew and reach a level where they can delve into the riches of the modern Hebrew Renaissance (1880-1920), the Second Aliyah (1904-1913), The Third Aliyah (1919-1930s), The Palmach Generation (1940s and 1950s), and the modern period,” Nash said in commenting on his gift. “There is an intellectual dynamism peculiar to the academic and literary language in the original Hebrew that simply cannot be translated.”

Dr. Nash received his B.A. from Columbia College, his Ph.D. from Columbia University’s Department of Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures, and rabbinical ordination from the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. He now resides in New Jersey, where he continues his research.

Of the focus of his gift he says, “Hebrew and Israeli Literature reflect the drama of Zionism as a movement and an ethos in the rebirth and regeneration of the Jewish people.” Dr. Nash’s books will comprise a substantial working library for students specializing in Modern Hebrew literature and/or contemporary Israeli culture.

“I donated a complete microfiche collection of the journal *Hashiloah* edited by Ahad Haam and the short-lived but significant journal *Behinot* edited by Shlomo Tzemach. By the time I am ready to relinquish all of the books presently on my shelves, UConn will have an exhaustive collection of the works of M.Y. Berdyczewski, Uri Tzvi Greenberg, Aharon Appelfeld, Shay Agnon, Amos Oz, Natan Alterman, Natan Shaham, Moshe Shamir, S. Yizhar, A. B. Yehoshua, David Grossman and many others. I also will have donated a substantial number of important critical studies dealing with these authors.”

Interestingly, one of Nash’s former students now teaches at UConn. “When I was a student and Dr. Nash was my teacher, he let me learn,” recalls Susan Einbinder, Professor of Hebrew & Judaic Studies and Comparative Literature in the Center for Judaic Studies and Contemporary Jewish Life, and in the Department of Literatures, Cultures, and Languages. “By that I mean that he recognized that I loved Hebrew literature, and he gave generously of his time and his own learning. He offered his vast knowledge of medieval and Modern Hebrew literature, but especially his mastery of the modern corpus, and he encouraged me to read and study and write. Dr. Nash is a scholar of great

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erudition and great humility, and it was a privilege to be his student. Now, many years later, I personally, and UConn's future students and scholars, benefit from his extraordinary and quiet generosity once more. I am very grateful to my teacher for the gift of his library, which is a rich testament to the depth and range of his devotion to Modern Hebrew literature and to questions of Jewish meaning and culture that are what Judaic Studies is about. And I am very moved by the gesture and lack of fanfare

that characterize such a generous gift, which greatly enriches the holdings of the UConn collection and makes it possible for us to study, teach and keep learning – which is what we are here to do,” Einbinder noted.

Sandy Gallup, the Library's Liaison to Judaic Studies, also expressed deep gratitude for Dr. Nash's gift. “It has enriched the Library's collections beyond measure and greatly expanded the resources that we can offer to scholars in our Judaic Studies programs.” ■

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curator of UConn's Railroad History Archive. He recently bequeathed his rich collection to the Archive, which is being digitally scanned to catalogue and preserve it.

“Jack's collection is extraordinary and comprehensive, most particularly to the history of the New Haven Railroad and of railroads in New England, but more generally in showing the impact and importance of trains and train travel in the United States,” Smith says. “It is no exaggeration to say that Jack's collection reminds us of the importance of the railroad in the making of America.” To view his collection, go to: <http://s.uconn.edu/2a7>.

Railroads aren't the only thing firmly within Swanberg's grasp. He is knowledgeable about the defense of our country following four years of active service in U.S. Naval Aviation as an aerial transport navigator. He flew scores of missions worldwide, including many into Vietnam, and served another 25 years in the Reserve, retiring as a Captain.

Author of not only the notable *New Haven Power, 1838-1968: Steam, Diesel, Electric, MU's, Trolleys, Motor Cars, Buses & Boats*, a history of the locomotives and motive equipment of the New Haven Railroad published in 1988, the research for which is included in the donation, Swanberg

continues to share his knowledge and insights with readers of *Railroad History* (a publication of the Railway and Locomotive Historical Society), *Shoreliner* (a publication of the New Haven Railroad Historical and Technical Association), and other railroad history and enthusiast publications. Many photographs that he has taken and collected over his

voluminous historical records. All of this is now consolidated, so why should it be scattered once again? I know that UConn will archivally preserve my collection and will make it available to researchers indefinitely. Current authors, myself included, refer frequently to such collections, and I appreciate having my own collection being available for such



career with the railroad have been widely published, many by other railroad history authors.

Swanberg explains the rationale for his largesse this way: “Typically when a collector dies, his or her collection of photos, records, etc. goes to a dealer and is scattered by being sold off piecemeal, thus mostly becoming unavailable to future researchers,” he says. “I've been collecting and accumulating photos going back into the 1800s for over 50 years myself, plus taking my own photos for just as long, plus collecting

research in the future.”

A regular visitor to the Railroad History Archive, Swanberg has applied his knowledge and helped Smith organize and describe materials in the collection, particularly photographs of New Haven Railroad steam and electric locomotive that were placed online in an early digital project.

“The UConn Libraries has benefited tremendously from our relationship with Jack, and we are honored to preserve his legacy as a historian, collector and creator of railroad history,” Smith added. ■

events

Northeast Children's Literature Collection Reception



On August 2, friends of the Northeast Children's Literature Collection (NCLC), gathered at a reception, viewed new and notable acquisitions, and celebrated Mrs. Billie Levy's donation of Maurice Sendak materials to the collection.

Top right, clockwise: Co-hosted by Vice Provost Martha Bedard, left, and Mrs. Billie Levy. // Among the special items NCLC Curator Terri Goldich shared with guests was a signed copy of the *Dali Alice Folio*, Salvador Dali's 1969 illustrated version of the children's classic *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. // Bill Gray, center, is shown with a *Martha the Hippo* stuffed animal from James Marshall's *George and Martha* book series in the collection. // "Miss Billie," as she is fondly known, signs her Sendak materials over to the collection, adding to the thousands of items she previously donated.

Started in the 1960s when the Libraries acquired some 600 volumes of 19th and 20th-century children's books from author/illustrator Nonny Hogrogian, the NCLC has grown to include the best historical and contemporary children's books, book illustration, artwork, and research material.

giving

How to Give

We are grateful for your support of the Libraries and the role it plays in the teaching, learning, and research at the University of Connecticut.

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Lauren Prause, (860) 486-1949. Thank you!

From Transylvania to Tolland: the Art of Liviu Cupceancu

Norman D. Stevens Gallery

Born in Romania, Liviu Cupceancu became interested in art at an early age influenced by his artistically inclined parents. While studying art in his spare time, he earned a degree in biology from the University of Bucharest. More than three decades ago, he left his country and came to Connecticut, where he applied his scientific and artistic abilities at the University of Connecticut in neurobiology research, contributing scientific illustrations and photographs to scientific journals. Today, the Tolland, Connecticut resident dedicates his time to his art, creating surreal acrylics, abstract oils, and wood and metal sculpture.

(L-R) *Generations* and sculpture *Architecture* by Liviu Cupceancu



Current Illustration and Photography from UConn's Faculty in Art and Art History

Gallery on the Plaza

Opening Reception

Thursday, November 13
4-6 p.m.

Illustration - Cora Lynn Deibler, Alison Paul
Photography - Janet Pritchard

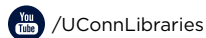
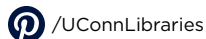
Anatole Deibler (1863-1939) was the most famous French executioner of all time. He worked from 1885 until 1939, when executions were public spectacle, and when the infant media of photography and film turned him into something of a celebrity. In the graphic novel *Anatole Deibler: The Tale of Monsieur de Paris* UConn Professor of Illustration Cora Lynn Deibler showcases Deibler's unusual career made more intriguing by the speculation that they may be distant relatives.

Photography professor Janet Pritchard examines the relationship between nature and culture in her photographic project, *Yellowstone Dream: An American Love Story*. Drawing upon insights developed while a fellow at the American Antiquarian Society where she examined maps, personal stories, and expedition records, Pritchard reflects upon her own time spent in Wyoming, and how generations have invested the park with their own values since its founding in 1872.

(Top) Bison along the road in Lamar Valley, as seen from Yellowstone Association Institute bus. Photo by Janet Pritchard. (Bottom Right) Artwork from *Anatole Deibler: The Tale of Monsieur de Paris* by Cora Lynn Deibler. (Bottom Left) *Advice From A Caterpillar* by Alison Paul.



Follow us:



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“Even though I’ve been on this campus for over 60 years, I didn’t realize that in 1908 President Charles L. Beach had hired prominent landscape architect Charles Lowrie, a founding member of the American Society of Landscape Architects, to help plan the placement of the buildings surrounding the Great Lawn. The plans are here at the Dodd Center. I didn’t know they existed until I began researching the Great Lawn. Just because you retire, your academic life doesn’t end,” he contends.

He is also currently at work on a book commemorating the 50th anniversary of Joshua’s Tract Conservation and Historic Trust, the largest such trust in Northeastern Connecticut, which he helped to found and whose papers are housed in UConn’s Archives & Special Collections. After completing that volume, he intends to finish his research into Mansfield Depot and produce yet another local history.

“Over the years, I’ve done all this research into local history. What would happen to it? That’s what

I’m doing now – transposing it into books, which I’m enjoying very, very much.”

His enjoyment today extends well beyond Mansfield. While he continues to tend his own gardens and remain active in the greater Mansfield community, he and his wife, Joy, regularly savor performances at the Metropolitan Opera. While in New York, they stay with their son, Giovanni, keeping tabs on the garden he designed for Giovanni’s townhouse. Other pleasures come from following the activities of his two daughters, Margaret, a high school history teacher in Scarsdale, NY, and Emily, an artist in Chicago.

What hasn’t the energetic octogenarian done? “I’ve always wanted to write a novel. I’ve written so many straightforward subject matter things like extension bulletins; when you write a novel, it’s about people.”

His training as a landscape architect, which required him to notice detail, should serve him well. “I can go to a cocktail party, come home, and describe what everyone was wearing. That kind of detail would be good for writing a novel,” he observes with a smile. ■

