The Wilbur Cross Library
Informal Observations on its Place in UConn History

Norman D. Stevens, Emeritus Director of University Libraries

The renovated Wilbur Cross building, which now houses a range of student services, was rededicated on November 20, 2002. As part of the program, I was asked to speak about the building’s role as the University Library. Since the University of Connecticut Advance and the rededication program included short pieces on the history of the building, I offered informal observations based on my experiences after I joined the staff in 1968 and also on my understanding of the earlier history of the library, gleaned largely from conversations with Roberta K. Smith, who began working in the Wilbur Cross Library in 1946. For this article, I have expanded slightly upon those remarks to provide a general impression of the place of the Wilbur Cross Library in the history of UConn.

A Brief History of the Wilbur Cross Building

The Wilbur Cross Library (WCL), the first university structure built specifically to house the university’s library collections, served as the University of Connecticut’s main library from 1939 until 1979. Construction of the 110,000 sq. ft. building began in 1938 and was completed, at a cost of $424,472, in May 1939. Funding for the building was part of a then unprecedented bond issue of nearly $3 million approved by the Connecticut General Assembly for the construction of new buildings. Chief among the building’s features were its seven-level core stack area with a capacity for seven tons of volumes and its two monumental reading rooms with 30-foot high ceilings. The WCL was one of the first campus buildings to be air-conditioned.

Fittingly, the Connecticut State College Library was the first campus library to be air-conditioned. The building is evocative of many academic library buildings constructed in the 1920s and 1930s. Library services emphasized strong collections and large open reading rooms in which students could study and use the collections. The staff was relatively small and, other than then Director Paul Alcorn, consisted entirely of women. Male faculty members were part of a close-knit academic community and were expected to abide by strict standards governing appearance and behavior.

Planning and construction of the WCL came at the end of an era in the history of library architecture that emphasized monumental features. The cupola and dome in the center of the building, the imposing stairway and main entrance, and the massive reading rooms at either side of the building were typical of the time. Equally typical was the relegation of collections to a multi-tier core stack designed to maximize storage capacity with little consideration for ease of use. Sturdy wooden furniture, especially long reading tables, conveyed a sense of the serious purpose of the space. The building is evocative of many academic library buildings constructed in the 1920s and 1930s.

Library services emphasized strong collections and large open reading rooms in which students could study and use the collections. The staff was relatively small and, other than then Director Paul Alcorn, consisted entirely of women, most of whom were either Storrs natives or spouses of male faculty members. The stacks were closed to students, and except for a sizable reference collection in the north reading room, books were made available from a circulation service desk facing the entrance. Students were part of a close-knit academic community and were expected to abide by strict standards governing appearance and behavior.

Inside UConn Libraries

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The Wilbur Cross Library’s monumental features were typical of library architecture of the first half of the 20th century.
A report in the February/March 2003 UConn Libraries (“SNET Company Records Donated to Archives & Special Collections”), the university recently completed receipt of the Southern New England Telephone archival collection from SBC SNET. The article described the collection’s importance to researchers and noted its appraised value at $3.8 million dollars.

For the few of us who were charged with bringing the initial parts of the collection to Storrs from SNET’s vaults and offline storage facilities, the appraised value seems almost fantastical. The newly organized and described materials were, just five years ago, boxes upon boxes upon boxes of mostly dusty, sometimes crumbling, volumes, random pieces of paper, ancient notebooks, and equipment parts.

Our work started in the basement vault of SNET’s longtime headquarters at 32 Church Street in New Haven, moved to the company’s executive suites, spread to an adjacent skyscraper, which was to be SNET’s new headquarters (the sale to SBC was rumored but had not advanced yet), and finally to a commercial storage facility near Bradley International Airport, where members of the Dodd Center staff examined hundreds of the 50,000 boxes located there.

As we pored over what seemed to be an endless array of materials, we made a number of ad hoc decisions that eventually gave form to the collection. We took whatever we could find about more mundane paper items, such as a bound volume from the 1920’s listing service, Operator 25 was the source of requests from New York City to Bar Harbor, Maine.

All of the maps have been scanned to at least 300 dpi—enough resolution to show words. The files are large, as large as 678 Megabytes for the T.IFF file of the Hartford County wall map. However, the files are compressed so that the user can “zoom” into the map and always get “screen resolution.” That is, the 678 Megabytes are not being downloaded, but a reasonably small file dependent on the user’s screen, can be, allowing one to download the map and use it offline if so desired. The compressed image files were viewed an average of 4.100 times per month last year, making MAGIC’s C a very popular site.

Having saved local use maps to the digital collection, mining them for information was clearly the next step. For example, two early, statewide maps of Connecticut—Blandford (1792) and Warren & Gillette (1811)—were drawn at relatively large scale and have a remarkable amount of information on them. The Blandford map shows industries and houses of worship. The Warren & Gillette map was the first topographic survey of the state. Assigning contemporary project coordinate geometry to these 18th and 19th century documents so that they can be used with modern Geographic Information Systems (GIS) was a leap of faith. Coordinates were assigned to town corner points, providing a reasonable level of geographic accuracy—for 200 hundred-year-old measures.

During the same period that we were creating the digital collection of historic printed maps, image-based geo-spatial information, or raster based data, in the form of orthographic aerial
Ken Wilson 1923-2003: A Friend of the University Libraries

Norman Stevens
Director of University Libraries, Emeritus

Throughout his more than 50 years in Storrs, Ken Wilson was a regular user, strong supporter, and true friend of the University Libraries. When I joined the library in 1968, Ken was Dean of Liberal Arts & Sciences. Shortly thereafter, in 1970, he became Vice President for Academic Programs, a position he held until 1981.

During Ken’s tenure as Vice President, Director of University Libraries John McDonough and I worked closely with him, and his associate Bill Orr, on virtually every matter relating to the library. It was a difficult time for the university’s budget. State support for the university diminished greatly when John Dempsey was governor, and Homer Babidge’s tenure as president came to an end. We were fortunate to have Ken and Bill, with substantial help from Ed H Anna in the Controller’s Office, looking out for the library. Although they often could not provide firm budget figures in such critical areas as student labor and acquisitions at the start of the fiscal year, we knew that their verbal assurance of support at the end of the fiscal year could be relied on. Ken was committed to the growth and development of the library and could always be counted on to give sound guidance and, where necessary, to take bold action on any problem we brought to his attention.

More than any other administrator that I worked with in my more than 35 years as an academic librarian, Ken had a genuine understanding of the importance of the library to a university. That came not only from his own library-based academic background but also from his personal life and love of books and libraries. When he returned to teaching in 1981, he once again became a regular user of the library. On his retirement from teaching in 1989, he took up almost permanent residence in Babbidge Library to produce the Columbia Guide to Standard American Usage. I saw him then on a regular basis, and he always expressed interest in the well being of the library.

Long-time Friends of the University Libraries, Ken and his wife Marilyn participated regularly in library events and programs. It is especially fitting, therefore, that his family has established the Kenneth Wilson Library Fund to provide ongoing support for the library. After he announced his plan to retire as Vice President, Ken kept a small hand-lettered sign on his desk in Gulley Hall, which read “Lame Ducks Bite.” It made clear his intention to continue to devote himself to his assignment. The establishment of a library fund in his name makes it equally clear that Ken’s influence on the welfare of the Libraries will continue for years to come.

Contributions to the Kenneth Wilson Library Fund may be directed to Linda Perrone, University Libraries, Storrs, CT 06269-1205. Please make checks payable to the University of Connecticut Foundation and note “Kenneth Wilson Library Fund” on the memo line.

The Class of 1953 Video Theater

The University of Connecticut’s Class of 1953 will celebrate its 50th reunion at the Storrs campus on June 27-28. As part of an overall goal to raise $150,000 as a class gift to the university, the class has earmarked an overall goal to raise $150,000 as a class gift to the university, the class has earmarked $35,000 to upgrade the equipment and furnishings for one of Babbidge Library’s two video theaters. Video Theater I was refurbished with funds from the Class of 1952 and bears their name. Similarly, the refurbished Video Theater II will be named for the Class of 1953. Daniel Blume and Rocco Murano, both long-time supporters of the university, are leading the fund raising effort.

Mr. Blume, president of the Associated Student Government during his college days, graduated from UConn with a degree in economics and English and went on to earn a degree in law from the Georgetown University Law Center in 1958. He has conducted a private law practice since 1960 and has been active in the UConn Alumni Association since graduation. He is currently a member of several university committees.

Rocco Murano, co-captain of the UConn football team in 1953, earned his UConn degree in business and marketing. He spent a career in publishing and fundraising, working for Condé Nast, M’Millan, and Guide Post, where he retired as executive vice president of a major division. A member of the Alumni Association since 1983, he has twice served as president of the UConn Club. In addition, he does pro bono fundraising and marketing work for the United Way and homeless shelters for the elderly and has established an endowed UConn football scholarship in his family’s name.

Searching the Archives for Information on UConn’s Past

Bruce M. Stone
Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor of History Emeritus & Director of the Center for Oral History

Without the assistance of Betsy Pittman, University Archivist, and the staff at the Dodd Center, and the wonderful finding aids they have prepared, the task would be impossible. Even so, one often never knows what to expect in a file. In Box 31, a innocuously labeled folder, simply marked “A,” revealed a treasure trove of material relating to shared governance and the emergence of unions at the university. The files of former provost Albert Waugh offer very useful information about the development of university policies and standards. This follows from his habit of writing complete and detailed letters to faculty and other administrators.

If contemporaries are impressed by the physical changes brought to campus by UConn 2000 and the promise of 21st Century UConn, the archives reveal that when the president of the University of New Hampshire received a copy of Jorgensen’s capital construction list for 1957, he responded: “do it over with envy.” He archives also shed light on the development of athletics at the university and, in light of events of recent years, offer some sense of irony.

In 1936, a member of the Board of Trustees congratulated Jorgensen on the resignation of the basketball coach and continued, “perhaps some day we will have a decent basketball team up there....” The presidential papers, along with other collections and sources such as the Connecticut Daily Campus and oral histories available in the University Archives and to be conducted especially for this project, illuminate numerous other topics: undergraduate life, the role of women and minorities, academic freedom controversies, the development of research at Storrs, and the establishment of regional campuses and the law, medical, and social work schools in other parts of the state.

The project is supported by contributions from the UConn chapter of the AAUP, the President’s Office, the Alumni Association, the University of Connecticut Foundation, the Dodd Research Center, and other sources.\[641x955\]
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During the 1940s and 1950s, students studied at long tables in the library's grand reading rooms and were not permitted in the closed stacks.

behavior. Women, for example, were not allowed to wear anything but dresses or skirts and blouses in the library.

Formal library architectural planning was in a developmental stage during this period. It is unlikely that there was written building program, as would be required today, based on projections of collection and student growth, defined staff and service requirements, and other needs. The building was an expression of standard academic library architecture interpreted in terms of available funds. It was undoubtedly thought that the WCL would serve the university’s library needs well for the rest of the twentieth century.

1964-1966 Planners could not have foreseen the impact of World War II on higher education. At the end of the war, the GI Bill of Rights and the interest of veterans in using that legislation to secure a college education produced a substantial increase in enrollment, faculty, and staff, and buildings at UConn. The impact on the library was in the use of space, especially the reading rooms, new demands for assistance, and growth of the collections. The change in the nature of the student body brought with it some relaxation of dress codes and other standards, but students remained part of a formal community with a prescribed, and still somewhat rigid, code of conduct. By the mid-1950s, less than 25 years after the completion of the WCL, it was clear that the library was not adequate to meet the demands being placed upon it.

1964-1978 In the late 1940s, the movement towards formal academic library architectural planning intensified as college and university campuses across the country underwent substantial growth. A widespread acceptance of modular construction, emphasizing function and flexibility, had become the standard by the time a much-needed addition to the WCL was being planned.

Except for the new main entrance opposite the Benton Museum of Art, monumental features were not included in the WCL addition. Instead, a straightforward three-story rectangular structure was attached to the rear of the original library. The new entrance reflected a change in the overall orientation of the campus away from Storr's Road.

The addition was built with support columns placed at fixed modular intervals, designed primarily to accommodate the efficient placement of library stacks, and had few interior loading walls. Interior space featured open stacks with a mixture of shared seating—tables substantial smaller than those in the old reading rooms—and individual study carrels. Completed at a time when the state and the university were stressing economy, the addition had cinder-block walls, standard library and office furniture, and no frills. Only the administrative offices had any features, such as oak paneling, that reflected the comparative luxury and dignity of the original building.

Construction of the addition was begun by adhering to formal planning, but largely unforeseen dramatic changes were about to impact higher education. The keynote speaker at the dedication of the addition on October 16, 1964 was Keys E. Metcalf, Harvard University Librarian and the premier academic library-building consultant of the time. Metcalf, aware of the rapid growth of the library’s collections, reportedly told President Babbidge that the university should immediately begin planning for a new library building.

Fortunately, it was an idea that quickly took root. The Higher Education Act of 1965 was designed to strengthen the educational resources of colleges and universities. Thanks to vigorous support for that legislation by national library associations, in which John McDonald played an active role, substantial funds for library resources were made available. Under McDonald’s leadership, the UConn libraries received over $2 million in federal funds for acquisitions over a ten-year period. That support, coupled with increased state funding for library materials, grew the collections so rapidly that even the new addition was not adequate to hold them. By the end of the 1960s, portions of the library’s collections were being stored in other campus buildings.

During this period, academic libraries were beginning to automate selected processes. The library joined with the other New England state university libraries to form the New England Library Information Network (NELI NET) as a means of securing federal support to plan collectively for the use of machine-based cataloging records created at the Library of Congress. By the early 1970s, WCL staff, with the help of Computer Center staff, had designed and implemented an IBM punch-card automated circulation system. At about the same time, library staff began to use primitive online search systems to assist faculty and students in identifying needed information.

To some degree, the addition’s modular construction facilitated installation of equipment needed to support these new venues, but it was soon clear that the long-term need to introduce new library technologies could not be accommodated by the existing library.

I joined the library staff in 1968 as Associate Director of University Libraries, a position created so that John McDonald could devote more of his time to planning a new graduate library building. Yet another major change was about to impact higher education and the life and culture of the WCL in its last years as a library building.

By the late 1960s, college and university campuses were in a state of turmoil as student activism, especially protests against the war in Vietnam, reached a fever pitch. Those issues also dominated the work of the American Library Association and, in many institutions including UConn, permeated the thinking and activity of library staff. Student activism brought about a major change in their behavior, which, in turn, had a major impact on the WCL.

By the early 1970s, faced with inadequate seating and study space and inadequate building maintenance, the WCL was subject to harsh treatment by the students. This resulted in, among other things, a proliferation of graffiti. For the first time, it became necessary to assign uniformed security staff to monitor the library. In an effort to improve the ambiance of the building, steps were taken to introduce art and color into the building and to initiate activities and programs of interest to students.

These efforts met with modest success but one ill-fated venture is most memorable. To make up for the lack of comfortable lounge furniture in the library, we rescued some mattresses from university surplus, covered them with colorful Marimekko fabric, and placed them in public areas around the building. Students, however, preferred to drag the mattresses into the building’s many nooks and corners, where they remained until the administration decided to remove them.

Library staff began to respond more directly to student interests by participating in such campus programs as the celebration of the First Earth Day on April 22, 1970. The Special Collections Department began to collect underground press materials and other activist and political ephemera. For the first time, serious efforts were made to recruit librarians from institutions in other parts of the country rather than to rely almost entirely on a local pool of candidates. The age and the gender distribution of the staff changed as younger people and men began to join the staff in greater numbers.

Perhaps because of changes that were occurring within the library, the WCL was never a target of the many protests and sit-ins that took place on campus. On one evening, African American students who were unhappy with their treatment on campus did occupy the WCL just before closing and remained in the building until police forcibly removed them the next day. No damage was done to the building during that sit-in; students repeatedly assured us that none would occur and that their complaints were with broader university policies and programs and not with the library.

Planning for a new library building proceeded throughout the early 1970s, and eventually the General Assembly provided the funding for it. For several years, however, the governor refused to place the project on the agenda for the Bond Commission. Finally, prompted in part by the need to stimulate the state construction industry, Governor Grasso released the funds in 1975.

Initial plans for the new building envisioned a graduate and research library. The WCL was to serve as an undergraduate library with a collection of about 100,000 volumes and services designed for undergraduates. As planning proceeded, however, it became clear that the university administration could not provide sufficient staff to operate two substantial library buildings, nor the funds to clean up and renovate the WCL. In any case, other pressing space needs of the university required that most of the WCL building be used for non-library purposes.

Study spaces in the Wilbur Cross addition were crowded, unattractive, and poorly maintained.

When we left the WCL to occupy the new library building in October 1978, we felt appreciation for spacious new quarters and relief in leaving a building that had its usefulness and was in a state of considerable disrepair. But we also recognized with gratitude the role that the WCL had played in developing stronger library services for UConn for almost 40 years.

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Only the new Historical Manuscripts and Archives Department remained behind in the WCL, occupying a few offices and the original core stack space for its collections. That department remained in WCL until moving to the Thomas J. Dodd Research Center in early 1996, when it merged with the Special Collections Department to become Archives & Special Collections.

1978-2002
Once most library collections and services were removed from Wilbur Cross, the building was used, with minimal renovation, for a variety of purposes, including several student services and the UConn Foundation. In the late 1990s, when funds became available under UConn 2000 and after the library had completely left the building, a major renovation prepared the building to serve as the central location for Student Affairs.

The renovation, by the architectural firm of Arbonies King Vlock, makes remarkably good use of the best features of two distinctly different architectural styles and integrates them in a way that was never possible when the library occupied the building. The original building’s monumental reading room has been retained as open spaces that serve as places to congregate, and the office spaces in that portion of the building have been refurbished. The old seven-tier stack, which always stood as a barrier between the two buildings and from which no good alternative use was feasible, has been removed, creating a atrium and allowing for a central axis between the east and the west entrances.

The wisdom of modular planning is fully demonstrated in the 1964 addition. With minimal renovation, a series of attractive office spaces and service counters have been incorporated, using glass walls and other elements working off the modular that earlier accommodated library stacks and service points. The Wilbur Cross building, as it now stands, is far more effective than it ever was as a library. Its contemporary, open interior stands in stark contrast to the sad and shabby building that the library left almost twenty-five years ago. Congratulations to all who have brought the building back to life.  

Studying Old Maps in New Ways
Continued from page 2

photography became available and proved to be important for several user communities at the university. MAGIC also developed a strategy for making these large sets, some in the range of 11 Gigabytes, available. These data are served out using a wavelet algorithm to compress the files while retaining their geographic nature. These images are in a coordinate projection and can be used by a GIS. Computer processing enables the user to refer to multiple data layers in a geographic context. For example, US Census population or housing data can be mapped to determine where a particular demographic is located; then this map can be laid down on the orthophoto for further study.

Orthographic aerial photography was followed with satellite-derived Land Use and Classification raster data from 1976, 1990 and 1995. The MAGIC scanner was put to good use by scanning printed maps of land classification from 1954, 1961 and 1970, making this information also available in digital form.

Today, images of these historic maps are dynamically available to users through GIS at http://mapserver.lib.uconn.edu/magic/. Researchers can bookmark their place on the maps, layering over 200 years of cartographic information as they explore 21st-century Connecticut, through time and space.  

Succeeding in Difficult Times
Continued from page 1

capabilities. Three staff members have been reemployed to more productive duties and collection management is significantly improved.

• The Library hosted three librarians from the University of Fort Hare in South Africa and two Guatemalan librarians to study our library programs and services. The Dodd Center successfully recruited a project coordinator for the African National Congress archives project.

• The Library completed a pilot project to offer digital audio materials as part of the electronic course-reserve program. Students in two music courses and a virology class gained access to musical selections and class lectures anytime and anywhere they were able to access the web.

• The Dodd Center and four library and museum partners received a $498,000 grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services for a second phase of Connecticut History Online, allowing us to digitize 2500 images from Archives and Special Collections and make them available online.

• The library is one of the first ten North American research libraries to install ENCompass, a digital library developed by Envision Information Systems and its software development partners: Cornell University, the Getty Research Institute, Kansas State University and the University of Kansas. Two modules, Link Finder Plus, which allows direct linking to electronic journal articles, and ENCompass for digital collections, which provides integrated access to a variety of local collections, were implemented. A third module that enables instant integrated access to commercial content, free web resources, and our local catalog will be introduced next year.

• Staff continued to develop web-based information literacy modules for freshmen and upperclassmen, consistent with the university’s forthcoming revised General Education Requirements. Librarians taught 675 instructional sessions for 9,987 students.

• The Libraries hosted three significant sponsored public programs. Samantha Power, winner of the 2003 National Book Award for non-fiction and the Pulitzer Prize for A Problem From Hell, America and the Age of Genocide, delivered the Raymond and Beverly Sackler Lecture. Peter Fisher, Undersecretary of the U.S. Treasury for Domestic Finance, gave the RBS Greenwich Capital Markets Lecture. Jean-Claude Guedon, Professor at the University of Montreal, and Heather Joseph, President of BioOne, addressed the crisis in scholarly communications at the Chancellor’s Library Advisory Committee-sponsored program, “Publish and Perish.”

The University of Connecticut Libraries have an important role to play on our campus as well as in the state, region, nation, and even the world. Despite mounting economic pressures in 2003, we continued to provide our services and programs. We are extremely thankful to our friends and supporters. Like the UConn Huskies, we aspire to be the best.  

E X H I B I T
J U N E 9 - A U G U S T 8 , 2 0 0 3

Early American Decorative Arts

This exhibit features objects decorated using 19th century techniques. Represented are: country painting on metal and wood employing brush work, as well as examples of primitive portraits often created prior to the introduction of the camera; threem painting on white velvet, which utilizes stencils further embelished with brush work; stencilling on metal and wood using bronze lining powders: gold leaf painting on metal; free-hand bronze work where the bronze lining powders are applied without stencils; Pontypool painting, often featuring tiny daisy-like flowers and roses; reverse painting on glass; tinting painting, which is reverse painting on glass using translucent paint, the glass later backed with tin foil to produce a sparkling look; and German designs typically painted on bride’s boxes.

For the works exhibited, oil paints, bronze lining powders, and gold leaf have been used with varnish as the medium. The Pontypool technique, however, uses oil paints with wax to create the central design. Some objects exhibit several techniques to complete the decoration.

The objects in the exhibit have been created by members of the Charter Oak Chapter of the Historical Society of Early American Decoration, Inc. (HSEAD). The society, together with its chapters, carries on the work of Esther Stevens Brazer, who devoted her life to the study and promotion of early American decoration as an art.

HSEAD also records and maintains patterns of early designs, sets standards for contemporary reproductions, provides awards, teacher certification, and workshops, conducts two national meetings a year, and publishes both a newsletter and a journal, The Decorator. Further information about HSEAD can be obtained at www.hsead.org or by calling 1-866-30H-SEAD toll free.

Babbidge Library, Gallery on the Plaza
Curators: David Kapp & Valerie Oliver

Theorem Design by Valerie Oliver  

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UConn Libraries  

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Moving Forward
The nine library staff members profiled below have opted to take advantage of the state's early retirement offer and will be moving forward to the next phase of their lives. As we went to press, some of our staff members were still considering retirement, so we may have more to report in the September/October newsletter.

With her forty years of service to the library, Frances Horilla appears to hold the record for longevity. But many others have been with the library for more than thirty years, and still others arrived in 1978 when the library moved from the Willbur Cross building to the Babbidge Library. We are thankful for their loyalty and we will miss their skills and experience. Most of all, we’ll miss their day-to-day presence as colleagues and friends. We wish them the best.

A party to celebrate retiring staff members is planned for Monday, May 19, from 4-6 PM, location to be announced. If you would like to join us, please RSVP to the Director’s Office at 860-486-2219.

Lee Astin began his career with the library as a part-time graduate student worker in the fall of 1977, when the library was still housed in the Willbur Cross building. This evolved over the years into a full-time career that is now ending twenty-six years later.

Lee transferred from Willbur Cross into the new Homer Babbidge Library building in 1978; his assignment was to unpack the huge cloth bins full of journals that had been held for delivery for several years prior to the new building. In 1981, he received his Master’s degree in German Studies, and at the same time accepted a full-time position in the Serials Department. Eventually he was put in charge of the public service desk for the former Current Journals Room.

In the early 1990s, processing of journals and serials for commercial binding was transferred to the Preservation Department. Lee transferred along with the journals. He began working a few hours a week in the Conservation Lab where he learned to repair damaged library materials, concentrating on journals and serials.

In 1996, when current journals were moved to Level 3, Lee took over the new journals management operation and shortly thereafter became a member of the Serials Team. As we implement a new security and collections management system, Lee has been overseeing the creation of Level 3 journals records for nearly 300,000 journal volumes. This effort will ultimately lead to a fully automated inventory system for the library’s journal collections.

Lee, an avid gardener, plans to enroll in the Master Gardener program. He will continue to receive library news from the library. We are thankful for his years of service and wish him well in his retirement years.

Betty (Frances) Horila began her library career as an exit control attendant in the Babbidge Library, that of Reference Librarian and Liaison to the Department of Sociology. Ellen thrived in her new position right from the start, for it allowed her the freedom to combine several of her passions—librarianship, learning, law, and teaching—in very creative and rewarding ways. Ellen leaves us at the pinnacle of her long and productive career; we will be very much the poorer without her.

Scott Kennedy, Director; Research & Information Services

Frances Horilla, Library Technical Assistant in Babbidge Circulation/Reserves

Betty’s interest in librarianship was sparked by her need to complete a full-time postgraduate degree at Simmons College. She was awarded her Master’s degree in Library Science in 1977 and a few months later accepted her first professional position as a Special Collections Librarian at the Willbur Cross Library.

In 1982, Ellen was formally designated Curator of the Alternative Press Collection and Curator of the Northeast Children’s Literature Collection. She saw these grow into two of the most respected and most visited collections at the University. Over the years Ellen has insti-

William Urichio, Director, Trecker Library, UConn/Greater Hartford & Deborah Sunday, Administration, UConn Libraries Director, Regional Campus Libraries

Ellen Esther Embardo came to the University of Connecticut as a transfer student from a small college in Boston to study at UConn’s School of Education. After her library career was cut short by a campus awakening to the consciousness of the times: be-ins, buttons, marches, and sit-ins, Ellen supported her studies by working in the library during the day and typing the Daily Campus at night. The more she read, the more interested in the emerging counter-culture she became.

Ellen graduated after two years with a degree in education, but recognized that librarianship was her calling. She held a variety of temporary library assistant positions—interlibrary loan supervisor, reserves coordinator, and legislative reference intern—while working toward a professional degree at Simmons College. She was awarded her Master’s degree in Library Science in 1977 and a few months later accepted her first professional position as a Special Collections Librarian at the Willbur Cross Library.

In 1994-95 Ellen spent a year at the Bilke University in Ankara, Turkey. Not long after her return, she elected to take a new position at UConn as a Staff Librarian, that of Reference Librarian and Liaison to the Department of Sociology. Ellen thrived in her new position right from the start, for it allowed her the freedom to combine several of her passions—librarianship, learning, law, and teaching—in very creative and rewarding ways. Ellen leaves us at the pinnacle of her long and productive career; we will be very much the poorer without her.

Carole Dal, Library Conservator/Preservation Officer

Richard (Rich) Debrito began his library career as an Exit Desk attendant in the fall of 1978, with the opening of the new Homer Babbidge Library. At that time, each library book leaving the building had to be individually inspected at the Exit Desk to ensure that it had been properly charged out. Late evening and weekend coverage of this desk was essential since it was staffed at all hours the library was open. Rich describes himself as a “night person,” so the late evening hours suited him perfectly.

Library users could count on seeing Rich at his appointed post until midnight, when the library closed, always ready with a cheerful, and many times, a sympathetic word to students who were studying diligently or writing reports late into the night. Rich brought to the library a wealth of accurate information and good advice, helping students to negotiate what can appear to be an overwhelming building with complex collections and services. In every encounter with users, he imparted confidence and offered straight answers.

During the summer of 2002, new library security technology eliminated the need for an Exit Desk where library books and patron belongings were checked, so Rich opted to join the Access Services team. As Access Services Assistant, Rich retired, we’ll miss his familiar and friendly greeting, not to mention his wealth of accumulated knowledge and his calm and reassuring presence. We wish him the very best in the future.

Dennis Thornton, Facilities Manager, Babbidge Library

May it be said of Elizabeth (Betty) Horila that she has spent the forty-four year career at the University Libraries with her far professionally and yet didn’t take her very far at all geo-

Educated at Saint Joseph’s College in Indiana, Betty began work at UConn’s West Hartford campus in 1969—a campus one can see from the parking lot of “St. J’s” on a leafless winter day. She began at the “old” Harleigh B. Trecker Library in the then- recently constructed School of Social Work Building and, in the mid-1980’s, moved across campus to the “new” Trecker Library whose expanded mission reached beyond Social Work to encompass the business and undergraduate programs.

Betty started as a Library Assistant I but by 1971 had already advanced to the next rank and been given responsibility for the School of Social Work’s library circulation and periodicals collections. She was promoted to Library Assistant III in 1977. With the creation of the “new” Trecker Library, Betty assumed responsibility for the expanded journals collections of three formerly independent libraries that had been brought together under one roof. She was responsible for the Periodicals Room in the basement of the library building and kept that vital place operating for a decade when library reorganization brought her upstairs to work with the new automated circulation system.

Along the way, Betty, most recently as Access Services Assistant, helped run the Torrington campus library and keep that vital place operating for a decade when library reorganization brought her upstairs to work with the new automated circulation system.

Between the lines, Betty most recently as Access Services Assistant, helped run the Torrington campus library and keep that vital place operating for a decade when library reorganization brought her upstairs to work with the new automated circulation system.

According to the State of Connecticut’s labor statistics, 9,064 people were employed in Connecticut’s libraries in 2002. A decline from the 9,588 of 2001, the downward trend appears due to the increase in public library funding.

The report also states that 2,303 of the librarians were college educated. The number of library degrees has increased by 38% over the past five years.

Among the library school graduates, 31% are women and 69% are men. The average age of librarians is 55. Of those surveyed, 33% are employed in academic libraries, and 67% in public libraries.

The average salary for librarians in Connecticut was $38,200 in 2002. In the previous year, the figure was $39,300.

Library employment is expected to grow at a rate of 1% per year over the next decade. This is below the national average growth rate of 12%.

The Connecticut Library Association (CTLA) is the state’s professional association of librarians. Its mission is to promote the profession and public interest in libraries, the public service they provide, and the freedom of access to information, and to promote library education and related professional development.

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The best part of her job, Sue says, has been its variety. She knows whereof she speaks, having had to do just about everything in Torrington during her years there. She enjoys learning new skills and has embraced automation. During her career, the library went through four automation systems and innumerable word processing and spreadsheet applications.

In retirement, Sue will spend more time teaching jewelry making and silk and fabric dyeing and will continue to craft the beautiful creations we all admire so much. Already an avid gardener, she plans to become a Master Gardener. She is starting a first-of-its-kind 4-H Club for beekeepers and will continue to volunteer at the Hunt Library in Falls Village and to organize the UConn Torrington book sale. Her many talents will be sorely missed in both Torrington and Waterbury.

Nancy orth joined the University Libraries in 1978. Nancy earned a Bachelor’s Degree in Russian and French at Emmanuel College and a Master’s Degree in Slavic Languages and Literature at Brown University.

Prior to joining the Libraries, Nancy taught Russian at Boston College and high school in Middlebury, Vermont. She also served as Assistant Director for Summer Exchange of Language Teachers to the USSR in New York City.

Nancy became Head of Babbidge Library Circulation Reserve Department in 1985 after working in the Technical Processing Unit for seven years. She has been instrumental in a number of pivotal library automation projects since assuming a leadership position in 1985. She has been a key player in both the implementation and maintenance of the university’s first automated circulation system and our current Voyager integrated library system. Nancy was also a member of the team that brought electronic course reserve, electronic document delivery, RFID technology, and digital audio electronic course reserves to the University Libraries.

Nancy was active in the Libraries’ strategic planning and organizational restructuring efforts in 1995-1996, and has served on the University Academic Planning Committee, the Chancellor’s Library Advisory Committee, and other university committees as well. In 1992, she was recognized as part of the celebration of 100 years of Women at UConn.

In addition to her professional achievements, Nancy and her husband Sam, a professor at UConn at the time of his death, raised two sons, Adam and Austin. Never one to take it easy, Nancy will continue temporarily in her current role as Director of Library Access Services on a part-time basis.

Staff News

Continued from page 6

Still, as the saying goes, “what goes around comes around.” Last summer, Babidge installed a new automated security system, and exit control duties now reside with circulation desk attendants. Fortunately, forty years later, it is more responsible for exit control in addition to her many other duties.

Franco’s flexibility and sense of humor have gotten her, and us, through many technological and organizational changes. She now looks forward to technology and children, volunteer work, and planting an herb garden. We will miss her and wish her much happiness and good health in her retirement.

Dennis Thornton is retiring after more than thirty-two years of service at the University of Connecticut.

Dennis joined the library staff in 1970. Previously, he had served in combat in Vietnam as an intelligence specialist. He left the armed forces in 1970 and enrolled in a four-year program at the University of Connecticut.

Dennis’s post-secondary education included earning a Bachelor of Science degree in English at the University of Connecticut. He also attended the University of Bridgeport, the University of Connecticut, and the University of New Haven. He received an M.S. in Library Science from the University of Connecticut in 1976.

Dennis has held a number of library positions during his tenure at UConn Libraries. His first position was as Head of the Technical Services Department in the Babbidge Library. He then moved to the Facilities Management Department, where he served as Assistant Director of Facilities Management.

Dennis has also been involved in a number of library-related organizations, including the American Library Association, the Connecticut Library Association, and the New England Library Association. He has served as a member of the New England Library Association’s Executive Committee and as a member of the Connecticut Library Association’s Board of Directors.

In addition to his professional accomplishments, Dennis is an avid gardener and enjoys spending time with his family. He and his wife have three children and six grandchildren.

Dennis will be greatly missed by his colleagues at the University of Connecticut Libraries, and he will be sorely missed by the students, faculty, and staff who have benefited from his expertise and dedication over the years.

Mary Ann Davison Thomas began her career as a librarian at the Ledyard Public Library as a volunteer for children’s story hour and then went on to work at the circulation desk and as a weekend supervisor. She earned her Library Technical Assistant (LTA) certificate at Middlesex Community College while working at the Connecticut College Library.

Ann joined the UConn Avery Point Library staff in 1987. There, she has helped to automate library functions, participated in space planning for collections and study areas, offered library instruction sessions for new students and faculty, and trained and supervised student assistants. The most rewarding part of her career, she says, has been working with student assistants; several have pursued careers in libraries and several remain close friends.

Ann’s active participation in professional activities for LTAs, Ann helped to organize the LTA sections in the Connecticut Library Association and the New England Library Association, and served on the Board of Directors for the LTA program at Three Rivers Community College.

The last 20 years in libraries, Ann says, “have been more challenging due to the impact of the electronic era on our lives and the way we communicate, gather and disseminate information. It’s a treat to be a part of it.”

In retirement, she looks forward to spending more time with her family, crafts, gardening, golf, and her new endeavor as a senior fitness instructor.

Other Staff News

Supernatural Fiction Writers: Contemporary Fantasy and Horror (Solomon’s 2002), has received the 2003 New York Public Library’s “Best of Reference Award.” Liaison/reference librarian Richard Bieler edited the volume and was a major contributor to it. Earlier, the American Library Association recognized it as the “Outstanding Reference Source” of the year.

Suzanne Zack, former Assistant to the Vice Chancellor for Information Services for Marketing and Communications, has joined the staff of the University Libraries. Prior to coming to UConn, Suzanne served as Assistant Director of Marketing and Communications at Trinity College, for four years; as Public Relations/Development Coordinator and Reference Librarian, Stowe-Day Library, Stowe House, Harriet Beecher Stowe Center, for eight years; and as Administrator, Corporate Communications, Actera, for ten years. Suzanne holds a BA in English Literature from Central Connecticut State University.

Two university librarians from Guatemala recently spent three weeks at the UConn Libraries as part of a USIA Educational Partnership Program for librarians from Guatemala. The program included a visit to the UConn Libraries as part of a USIA Educational Partnership Program exchange between UConn and the Universidad San Carlos. Lillian Reyes spent three weeks in the library at the Universidad San Carlos, Guatemala City. She worked with Darlene Hul, Latin American & Caribbean specialist in the Babbidge Library.

The visitors focused their work plan on observing and gathering information regarding functions of US academic libraries, primarily in the areas of research services and services to users, as well as setting up a network of sending and receiving materials to their libraries. Visits were also scheduled to other libraries in the area including Yale, UMASS, Harvard, and Eastern Connecticut State University. Later this year Darlene Hul will travel to Guatemala on a reciprocal visit to work with librarians at the Universidad San Carlos.
Andrea Wisnewski has been drawing pictures ever since she was a little girl growing up on the Eastern shore of Maryland. “I can still remember those years wandering through cornfields, searching our lawn for wild duck eggs and the shoreline for shells,” she says, “It was my own personal time of wonder.” Her family moved to Connecticut where they had their own mini farm, including two wild Shetland ponies, twenty or so chickens, a dog, many cats and several gerbils. She tried her hand at pony training but when she broke her arm bareback riding she decided to take it easy. Curling up with a great book and reading for hours was a favorite pasttime.

Her arm bareback riding she decided to take it easy. Curling up with a great book and reading for hours was a favorite pasttime.

Andrea attended the Portland School of Art in Maine and the University of Connecticut in Storrs, where she received her BFA in 1985. Her company, Running Rabbit Press, has produced numerous illustrations over the years for newspapers, magazines, and publishers. A technique that she developed was published by David R. Godine in 2002. The paper cuts begin by doing sketches on vellum. “When I have tweaked the sketch to my satisfaction,” she says, “the design is transferred onto a black, clay-coated paper. Most of the design’s details come out in the cutting process, which I use a #11 X-acto blade and lots and lots of patience.”

The finished print is hand colored with watercolor. The beauty of materials with a history obliges me to honor these objects in my collages. The ideas expressed in my pieces start with a particular material and grow during the mysterious process of selecting and integrating other materials to complete the puzzle. I retrieve the textures, shapes, and colors that I could never create on my own. I can, however, present them in my compositions as gifts; since they were given to me.”

Andrea lives in Storrs, Connecticut with her husband Chris, daughter Allison, and their three Welsh Corgis. She has been drawing pictures ever since she was a little girl growing up on the Eastern shore of Maryland.

Finding the Big Picture
Photographs by Jim Lindsay

For many years, Jim Lindsay maintained an active interest in creating collages, using manufactured as well as found papers, metals, and wooden pieces. Several years ago, however, he purchased a Canon automatic camera to record ideas that he found in nature, on walls, trash heaps, anywhere that suggested an interesting composition for another collage. He carried the camera everywhere and used countless rolls of film, searching for new ideas. Gradually, the camera took on a life of its own, and film replaced cutting and pasting as his preferred medium of artistic expression.

Lindsay’s photographs typically focus on details within a larger setting. For example, his photo “Dumpster 4” is not obviously that of a dumpster. The rust riddled end of the heavy metal equipment is hardly noticeable when viewing the image. I isolated in the viewfinder, the rust assumes a character of its own, leading the viewer to question what he is seeing. The image becomes a subject for interpretation.

Lindsay, a clinical social worker, earned his BA in English with a minor in art at the University of Connecticut. In a review of his work, one critic noted that, as a psychotherapist, Lindsay “sees many images of life and the human condition. But it is what he sees through his camera lens...that makes him an artist.”

Finding the Big Picture
Photographs by Jim Lindsay

Joy Floyd is a collage artist living and working in Hartford, Connecticut. She says of her work: “My muse is quite tangible. My inspiration is the ordinary stuff left over at the end of a day or a year or a life. Faded jeans, rusted metal, marbled papers, linen scraps, stained copper, wood shingles, shells, stones, buttons and bottle caps excite me. The unique beauty of materials with a history obliges me to honor these objects in my collages. The ideas expressed in my pieces start with a particular material and grow during the mysterious process of selecting and integrating other materials to complete the puzzle. I retrieve the textures, shapes, and colors that I could never create on my own. I can, however, present them in my compositions as gifts; since they were given to me.”

Ms. Floyd is a long-time member of Artworks Gallery. In 1998, she was awarded an artist fellowship by the Connecticut Commission on the Arts. Her dedication to the collage medium stems from her involvement with young children and their extraordinary imaginative use of materials.