

## Library Grapples with Students' Textbook Requests

It is the perception of the Library staff that more and more students think that the Library does have or should have a copy of the textbook for their class. This semester, the reference librarians have searched the Library catalog for countless titles of course textbooks and other required readings. Moreover, these questions were still being asked weeks after the semester began, often because the student did not purchase the text.

The issue of cost to students and the current poor fiscal economy are undoubtedly driving the rise in demand for a Library textbook collection. But added to the discussion are the characteristics and perceptions of the present generation of college students, the Millennials, who seem to expect that a copy of the text should be available at the university library.

Strictly speaking, the Library does not purchase textbooks, but sometimes it does have a copy. In these cases, often the book was a gift or it is not, per se, a textbook, but a required reading that is in the collection. The Library's collection development policy supports the purchase of related, supplemental materials for the University's broad curriculum. The rapid obsolescence of textbooks due to frequent new editions makes them a costly expenditure for a short timeframe.

The question of the Library's role vis a vis textbooks was raised

at a recent Library Liaison meeting where the faculty were asked if they thought the Library should have a copy of required textbooks. Most responded that they did not think this was part of the Library's mission. It is the faculty's perception that most students do buy the texts, but some cannot due to limited finances, and others choose not to.

The many facets this issue are not new to William Paterson University. In 2004, an Ad Hoc Textbook Committee of the Faculty Senate focused on improving the availability and timeliness of textbooks in the campus bookstore.

The issue has also reached national attention this year and has been a topic of discussion on many listservs. The possibility of using "open" texts was the subject of a recent issue of *Educause Review*, and the *Chronicle of Higher Education* recently included an article about the use of electronic textbooks which cost substantially less than their printed counterparts.

In some cases, other options are available to students. The College of Science and Health has a fund for students to borrow money to purchase texts, and the Science Enrichment Center tries to keep a current text available for all science courses. The University's Educational Opportunity Fund has both book deferment and book loan programs for students who qualify.

The Department of Marketing and Management bought one copy

of the text for required classes and placed that copy on reserve in the Library. This is the third year the Department has had this policy, and all sections of a required class use the same text.

Anne Ciliberti, Library Director, said, "There are certain elements of the discussion that we want to continue to focus on. One is adequate communication between the faculty and the Library as to what books are required. If we know beforehand, and we have a copy, it can be pulled from the circulating collection and placed on reserve."

"The Library is particularly interested in the perspective of the faculty and the feedback they are hearing from their students," commented Ciliberti.

There are steps the Library can take to minimize the inconvenience to students who cannot purchase the text. In all cases, advanced planning is required.

Each semester, hundreds of courses and sections are offered at the University, many of which have required texts. Faculty are encouraged to place a copy of the text on Reserve where it can be made available to any students who need it. The Library is prepared to accommodate more books at the Reserve Desk if needed.

The Cheng Library is committed to responding to the needs of students and to keeping this discussion open as it continues to explore practical solutions to this issue.

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# Snapshot Day: A Day in the Life of the Cheng Library

What happens on a randomly selected day at the Cheng Library? How many students and other patrons enter the Library? How many items are circulated and how many questions asked?

The Library staff collected all of these statistics and more on February 19, 2009 as part of Snapshot Day organized by the New Jersey State Library and the New Jersey Library Association. The purpose of the State-wide project was to document the significance of libraries in neighborhood communities by recording various statistics for one random day. The project's goal was to measure the impact that New Jersey libraries have on their

communities and the value they play in the lives of citizens.

At the Cheng Library, the following activities were recorded:

- 2196 = Number of visitors
- 4311 = Searches in the online catalog
- 224 = Items borrowed or renewed - both books and media
- 66 = Wireless laptops borrowed for use in the Library
- 147 = Questions answered at the Reference and Periodicals Desks
- 70 = Number of items processed by the Interlibrary Loan staff
- 88 = Database searches conducted

- 2483 = Hits to Library website
- 285 = Remote logins to Library resources.

Overall, more than 250 public, school, academic and special libraries participated in Snapshot Day. The statewide statistics were impressive: more than 160,000 visitors were recorded, and nearly 20,000 reference questions were answered. The response was so enthusiastic that the sponsors plan to make it an annual event.

For more information about Snapshot Day and to see the statistics, comments and photographs from other New Jersey libraries, link to the Web site at [snapshot.njlibraries.org](http://snapshot.njlibraries.org).

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## Margaret Mead Traveling Film and Video Festival Presented at the Cheng Library

Four films that comprise part of the Margaret Mead Traveling Film and Video Festival were shown at the Cheng Library during the month of February, 2009. The three-day event was co-sponsored by the Cheng Library and the Departments of Women's Studies, Anthropology, and Environmental Science. The event was supported by a grant from the William Paterson University Alumni Association.

The film showings were well attended and were open to all students, faculty and staff of the University. Members of the University faculty introduced each film.

The four films presented were *The Birthday*, *Grito de Piedra (Scream of the Stone)*, *Gimme Green* and *Village of Dust, City of Water*. Discussions held after each film were conducted by Arlene Scala, Women's Studies; Balmurli Natra-

jan, Anthropology; and Richard Pardi, Environmental Science.

The Margaret Mead Traveling Film and Video Festival is the longest-running showcase for international documentaries in the United States. The films selected for inclusion cover challenging subjects on a wide range of issues. The Festival is centered at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City where new films are premiered annually.

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## Kris Owens, Technical Library Assistant, Retires After Nineteen Years

Kris Owens, Technical Library Assistant, retired from William Paterson University as of June 30, 2008. She began working at the Cheng Library in 1988 through a temporary work service. Dr. Amy Job and Mrs. Hidong Kwon were her first supervisors in the Cataloging Department. At that time, Kris's main task was the challenging job of filing catalog cards in different sequences: alphabetically, by subject, and by call number for the shelf list – often with various types of exceptions.

After fulfilling the requirements for civil service testing, Kris began

working in the Acquisitions Department with Pam Theus.

During her 19 years at the University, Kris applied all her patience to survive three Library directors, moving the Department twice during the renovation of the Library and learning several different computer programs for the cataloging and acquisitions functions.

Over the years, the Library became an extended family for Kris, and she will remember many friendships and experiences. One of her favorite Library activities was working on the Exhibits Committee where

she excelled at planning the schedule for the exhibits and organizing many displays. Kris said of her time in the Library, "Dr. Anne Ciliberti, Pam Theus, Amy Job and Nancy Wiener always inspired me to do my best." A farewell luncheon and tea party was organized by her colleagues in the Library last June.

Kris is enjoying her retirement and keeps active by learning new crafts. She enjoys keeping in touch with her friends and spending time with her husband, Howard, and their Basset Hound, Molly. She even has a "retirement home" in Pennsylvania.

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## THE FRIENDS OF THE CHENG LIBRARY



A couple of weeks ago, I saw a person reading a book on a Kindle: an electronic device that allows one to download books and read them on a computer screen. With the appearance of the Kindle in the marketplace, a debate within publishing circles has arisen about the future of the printed book, and more and more newspaper articles are appearing about digital books and the way they will affect traditional publishing. While we can make predictions about the future of printing, when I saw the person reading a book on a Kindle, I was reminded of the history of printing, that perhaps can give us a hint about its future.

In his compelling book, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (University of Chicago Press, 1998), Adrian Johns gives a detailed account of how a book made its way from the author's pen to the bookseller stalls in St. Paul's Churchyard in the early modern period (1450-1700). Traditionally, academic theorists assumed that with the invention of the printing press, the production and reproduction of texts became more stable because a printer could easily reprint the same book over and over again—as opposed to the pre-modern scribe who had to hand copy each new book. The theory stated that the stabilizing effect of print allowed for a more stable transmission of knowledge and thus a greater organization of ideas and systems that eventually lead to the Enlightenment, the Industrial Revolution, the Modern Age, etc. Think of the game telephone that you used to play as a child and remember how the information that started with the first person to whisper into the ear of her neighbor was radically different than the information that came out of the last person in the link. With print, rather than rely on the oral instructions that were passed from one person to another, each person could get his or her own printed information to insure that they were on the same page. Johns, however, refutes this theory and shows how the printing process gave us the illusion of stability while the actual printing process reproduced instability.

Johns goes into great detail about the production of books in the early modern period. He takes us through every step of the process and notes those many instances where the text could and did change from the original. To begin, the hand-written text of the author was sent to the Stationer's Company and recorded before it was sent to a licensed printer. In the early modern period, the author did not own the printed text but rather it was the property of the printer, so once the author handed off his manuscript, he had little to do with the production of his book and most did not see the final product until it appeared in the bookseller stalls. Once the printer got the hand-written manuscript, it was up to an apprentice to set the type. The problem began right away because it was up to the printer and his apprentice to interpret the manuscript: if the handwriting was unclear, the printer did not stop the process and seek clarification but simply guessed at the right word. Similarly, if a manuscript did not fit on the allotted pages, the printer made his own edits to make it fit. Thus, before a single book was printed, the manuscript had already been altered by the mere setting of the text.

Once the print was set and the paper run was begun, the fluidity of the text did not cease. Rather, as Johns documents, printers continued to edit as the run was in process: as the print was running, the printer read the pages that came off the press and made the necessary corrections so that the next run would contain those corrections. The problem, however, was that paper was expensive in the early modern period and rather than discard the error-filled pages, the printer would keep them and sell the uncorrected book along with the corrected copy. Thus, a person could buy two of the exact same books but own two completely different versions. In addition to the errors in printing of the book itself, Johns notes the thriving business in counterfeit books, especially of books that became early modern best sellers. It was relatively easy to take an already printed book and reproduce it on a rival printer's press.

All of these steps to get the book to the public created, in Johns' study, an incredibly unstable product that was meant to make books more accessible to the public. Indeed, in many early modern manuscripts, the printer prefaces the book with a letter to the public where the printer assures the buyer that the book they are about to purchase is, in fact, a true and accurate representation of the author's work. We know, however, that this assurance is dubious and the books sold in the early modern period were anything but accurate representations.

As I was watching this person read the novel on a Kindle, I was reminded about Johns' book and the history of print because the debate about digital books is concerned with how electronic reading devices will someday kill the printed book. But I wonder how texts make it into the digital realm, about the process of taking books that were printed before the digital age and transferring them to digits that could be easily downloaded, about the stability of electronic data that can be edited by manipulating the data as easily as we edit words that we type on our computers. Perhaps, scholars in the future will look back at this age of information and discover that the real questions about electronic texts have less to do with the production of material goods and rather about questions of knowledge and the way it is transferred and the way it is manipulated.

Andrew Barnes, Chair  
The Friends of the Cheng Library

## *VALE Celebrates Tenth Anniversary as Academic Library Cooperative*

VALE, the successful New Jersey academic library cooperative celebrated its tenth anniversary at the VALE Users' Conference on January 9, 2009. The Conference took place at the Busch Campus Center of Rutgers University.

Anne Ciliberti and President Speert received awards for their continued support of VALE, the Virtual Academic Library Environment. President Speert was honored for providing a "home base" for the organization. The Cheng Library has served as VALE's office address since its inception. Dr. Ciliberti was honored for her pioneering vision and organizational efforts which resulted in the successful, collaborative enterprise now known as VALE.

The VALE academic library consortium was organized in 1998 to facilitate access to scholarly materials through collaborative purchases of electronic resources. Since that time, VALE has expanded its scope to encompass many types of shared agreements and collegial endeavors among New Jersey academic libraries.

In addition to its Executive Committee, VALE now has ten separate committees to address such concerns as cooperative collection development, digital media, electronic resources, bibliographic control, reference services, resource sharing, information literacy, and statistics. Committees also oversee the annual conference and the organization's

Web site. The VALE reciprocal borrowing agreement extends borrowing privileges among the participating libraries to faculty, staff, graduate and undergraduate students.

The annual conference of VALE has developed over the years as well. It is now a major venue for academic librarians of New Jersey, and offers them an opportunity to confer and exchange information. More than 250 librarians attended the conference this year, and among the presenters and panelists were several librarians from William Paterson University.

As the organization continues to grow, its focus will evolve to incorporate the new challenges and opportunities of the changing landscape that academic libraries embrace.

## **Natesha Eaton Memorial Scholarship Fund Supports a Single Parent**

The Natesha Eaton Memorial Scholarship was established with the support of a William Paterson University retiree, Ms. Dottie Emerson, and other WPUNJ employees. Natesha was employed at William Paterson for almost 20 years. She was the first in her family to earn a college degree.

At the University, Natesha first worked in the Registrar's Office beginning in 1987. She also worked in the Advisement Center, the College of Education, and the Mathematics Department before joining the staff of the David and Lorraine Cheng Library in August, 2003.

Natesha was a loving daughter, mother, and grandmother. She received a B.A. degree in Sociology in 2004 while being a full-time employee and a dedicated single mom. In addition, she always worked a second job. This Scholarship honors her dedication to single parenthood and her appreciation of the value of education.

The first recipient of the Scholarship was Ms. Rose Capers in fall 2007. A Sociology major pursuing a career in social work and human services, Rose is a single mother of a three-year-old daughter and a faithful church member.

Ms. Erin Garolis was the recipient of the scholarship for fall 2008. Erin is a single mother, a junior majoring in Mathematics, and a Dean's List student. Her most challenging role is that of nurturing twin boys with special needs. Ms. Garolis gave a heart-felt acceptance speech at the William Paterson Scholarship Luncheon held on April 5, 2009. The Committee Members wish Ms. Garolis the very best in all of her future endeavors.

The Natesha Eaton Memorial Scholarship Committee is proud to announce that it raised more than \$800 this summer on a family bus ride to the Showboat Casino in Atlantic City. This event took place on August 15, 2008, and was a beautiful way to end the summer session and to enjoy a day of leisure for a great cause. Participants also enjoyed raffles of cash, gift cards and other prizes.

The Committee wishes to thank all those who contributed their time, monetary donations, or gifts to make this scholarship effective.

Special appreciation is extended to the following participants for helping to make the fundraiser a huge success: Mrs. Angela Eaton, Ms. Jeneen Artis, Mrs. Patricia Colston, Mr. William Blauvelt, CWA Union Representative of New Jersey, Dr. C. Flint, Dr. Fuller-Stanley, Dr. N. Jemmott, Ms. Jonnine Deloatch, Mrs. Della Capers, Mrs. Ivory Mack, Ray Martinez, Pamela Theus, The Sweet Potato Pie Company of Paterson, It's Ours-Urban Clothing of Paterson, and the High Park Gardens Cooperative of Newark, New Jersey.



### **CONNECTIONS**

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