

The Friends of the Cheng Library Sponsors Lecture and Exhibit by Mark Hillringhouse



“Great Falls” by Mark Hillringhouse. This infrared, black and white photograph was donated to the Friends of the Cheng Library and will be displayed in the Library.

“The photographs of Mark Hillringhouse are moody. They draw you in and want to tell a story.” So commented Andrew Barnes, Chair of the Friends of the Cheng Library, and it was this story that many interested persons came to hear at the Library on April 18, 2010.

Mark Hillringhouse, photographer, writer, poet and professor, gave a talk and slide presentation titled “Life Along the Passaic River.” Mark first became interested in the Passaic River and the City of Paterson from reading the poems and prose of William Carlos Williams, most notably his collection of experiences and observations of life along the Passaic River.

The talk presented a portrait of the river’s past and present, and a wish that its future be appreciated. The tone of the address was celebratory but carried a warning: while the river is ad-

mired for its many moments of sheer beauty along its 80 mile course, it must also be protected from the perils of pollution.

Mr. Hillringhouse began with a historic review of the river using photographs taken from the book, *Song of the Passaic*, by J. A. Macnab and published in 1890. The book contains many rare images of views of the Passaic River during the late 1800s.

In contrast, Mark’s photographs capture the Passaic River in its present state. Some accentuate its pastoral qualities which are still evident in certain areas. “The river is sometimes so still, it looks like glass,” commented Mr. Hillringhouse on one of the photographs. Other images show the abandoned mills found along the river as it flows through Paterson.

The river reflects some of the same social problems present in urban areas

like Paterson. People do fish in the river and a few homeless persons live on its banks in small camps. Two environmental groups are active in efforts to protect the areas surrounding the river. The Passaic River Coalition, an urban watershed association, is involved in the restoration of the river basin, and Hackensack Riverkeeper, Inc., an independent organization, is also committed to the protection of the area.

In 2009, the Great Falls of the Passaic River received the designation of the Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park. As a newly created national historical site, the federal government will fund development of the area surrounding the Great Falls.

Geographically, the Passaic River is unusual in that it flows north before it heads south. The river has two origins: rainfall and tidal waters. At its beginning in Morris County, its flow is chiefly from rainfall. But as it meanders on its 80-90 mile course, it is fed by small streams until it empties into Newark Bay.

The event was sponsored by the Friends of the Cheng Library and was held in the Library Auditorium. It was attended by many area residents with an affection for the river, some with personal recollections to share. Afterwards, a reception took place in the Friends’ Room where some of the photographs of Mark Hillringhouse were on display.

Mr. Hillringhouse is the recipient of several awards and fellowships. His photographs have been exhibited at the Paterson Museum and in other galleries and museums. His writing has been published in the *American Poetry Review*, *New Jersey Monthly*, the *New York Times* and other publications.

Cheng Library Presents Program on the U. S. Census

On March 30, 2010, the Cheng Library sponsored a program focusing on the United States Census. The program, "Making the Numbers Come Alive: Using Census Data in Research," consisted of three faculty panelists who discussed various aspects of the census data with a special emphasis on their own research.

Richard Kearney, Electronic Resources Librarian, provided an introduction, tracing all of the U. S. censuses from 1790 to this year's 2010 Census and comparing the number of questions on the forms. The U. S. Census represents a fact-gathering project of an enormous scale and scope. It is very expensive to conduct and this high cost puts a premium on collecting data that is as reliable as possible.

Prof. Emily Mahon, Department of Sociology, traced the historical applications of censuses which have been used for centuries. Her address helped to establish a framework for the program.

Prof. Mahon also discussed the political aspects of the U. S. Census including the issues of race and ethnicity. The categories for this question on the census form have varied over the years, and these changes reflect the use of socially constructed terms. The

census has both social and economic value: it presents clear, undeniable data that characterizes variations in the population over time.

Prof. Martin Gritsch, Department of Economics, Finance and Global Business, spoke about immigration and wages. His research used Census data to determine the effect of immigrant labor on wages in certain sectors of the United States. Prof. Gritsch sought to clarify common assumptions of wage fluctuations due to the employment of immigrants.

Prof. Paula Fernandez focused her address on the American Community Survey (ACS), a separate survey sent to a portion of the population each year. It includes more detailed questions than those on the decennial census.

Prof. Fernandez used ACS data to examine housing segregation in Miami and Dade County, Florida. Her research is continuing, and she plans to use the 1990, 2000, and 2010 data to create a longitudinal perspective on this issue.

All three of the presenters communicated an appreciation of the value of the Census data. It reveals much about our nation, and this information cannot be obtained else-

where. Changes in the findings of the census have influenced adjustments in government initiatives and the focus of federal fiscal policy over time.

Thousands of articles in subjects across many fields reference census data. Researchers in nearly every discipline consult it for a variety of statistics. "It is truly a public resource. The data is available on the web site of the Census Bureau in many forms, and users can create a variety of individualized tables of various types of data," remarked Mr. Kearney.

This year marks the 23rd Census of the United States. The Constitution mandates an enumeration of the population every ten years. The public policy value of accurate data cannot be overstated, and the Census represents a rich source of statistical information about the citizens of the United States.

The Library also sponsored a campus-wide University poster contest. Students were asked to design posters encouraging participation in the 2010 Census, and 28 students contributed designs. At the conclusion of the program, four students received awards for the posters they designed. The students were Jennifer Luzzi, first place; James O'Hanlon, second place; Derek Koppinger, third place; and Jonathan Le, honorable mention.

Dr. Anne Ciliberti, Director of Library Services, Receives Award

The staff of the Cheng Library is pleased to recognize the faculty service award presented to Dr. Anne Ciliberti at the University's 20th Legacy Awards Dinner on April 16, 2010 at the Rockleigh Country Club.

Dr. Ciliberti was selected for her commendable management of the Library, her commitment to student success, and her dedication to the William Paterson University community. She has served as director of the Library since 2001 when she was promoted from the position of associate director for collection development and special projects.

Under her leadership, the Library has advanced both in the amount of its resources and extent of its services. The Library has expanded its collection of electronic resources to meet the growing demand for scholarly materials in digital format. Anne has coordinated the redesign of several library spaces to accommodate both group activities and quiet study. The Library has also introduced multiple methods of communication with the staff thereby providing increased access to reference and other services through the use of email, chat and text messaging.

Dr. Ciliberti is highly regarded in the state and is active in many library organizations: the Highlands Regional Library Cooperative, the New Jersey Library Association, and the Virtual Academic Library Environment (VALE), an organization she was instrumental in forming. As collection development librarian, it was Anne's vision of creating a consortium of academic libraries that led to the formation of VALE, now a major force for partnerships of many types among academic libraries in New Jersey.

Congratulations, Anne, on a well-deserved recognition!



THE FRIENDS OF THE CHENG LIBRARY

Becoming Virtual Witnesses

“To establish its credibility and to secure its status as knowledge, individual belief or experience has to be effectively communicated to others . . . experience might be extended and made public by *writing* scientific narratives in a way that offered distant readers . . . such a vivid account of experimental performances that they might be made into *virtual witnesses*.” This quote is taken from Steven Shapin’s book *The Scientific Revolution*, which seeks to explain how sixteenth- and seventeenth-century men reshaped the way we understand the world and ourselves in the world through scientific experiments. In contrast to medieval societies that, for the most part, received knowledge from the church as unquestionable facts, Renaissance thinkers argued that men could experience the world themselves and discover truth by putting certain natural phenomena to tests: the refraction of light or the pressure of air on certain objects or the movement of the spheres. Key to Shapin’s theory is the idea that these early scientists could not simply conduct their experiments, measure the results, and claim to possess new facts about the world. Rather, these facts had to be disseminated and agreed upon by the public. The method by which they acquired this agreement was by producing texts that described their experiments and the results so that a person could read these texts, judge the veracity of the experiments for themselves, and then conclude that the results are fact or not. The production of knowledge, then, had less to do with truth and more to do with creating “virtual witnesses” via written texts.

Shapin’s theory is important in understanding how the Scientific Revolution changed the epistemological landscape of the modern world, which relies heavily on objective truths, by insisting that facts be published in order to be verifiable, but also to understand that published facts are not necessarily true.

We might better understand this idea about “virtual witnesses” and fact making by looking at the way in which current news is disseminated. Once upon a time, we believed that if one of the canonical newscasters put a story on the nightly news it must be true, or that if something appeared in print—a story in a newspaper or ideas in a book—it must be factual. Today, however, we are much more cynical and realize that just because something is on television or in print does not necessarily mean that it is true—on the contrary, we are highly suspicious of any fact claims on television programs and/or in written texts. Often people point to the disintegration of trust in news programs or printed texts as a sign that our culture is declining. But I would rather think of it in a more positive light: that our society is becoming more mature and understands that most facts in and of themselves are not readily apparent but rather produced by some entity, published in some form, and either verified or rejected by a certain group of people.

Rather than despair over the manufactured nature of truth and the way it is employed by various institutions, I would like to celebrate our enlightenment and encourage us to continually judge a truth not by the mechanism by which it is disseminated but rather by the communities that give it the weight of fact. We are all the virtual witnesses whose job it is to participate in the world around us and continually verify that which we hold to be true and right and good, and to hold the manufacturers of truth claims accountable. We can only do this by becoming active readers who move beyond text and analyze the socio-political mechanisms that produce those texts.

Andrew W. Barnes
Chair, The Friends of the Cheng Library
Interim Associate Dean, College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Authors' Reception Now Part of University Research Day

This year, the Cheng Library's Authors' Reception took place on April 1 as part the University's Research and Scholarship Day. This is the second year that the Cheng Library has combined its Authors' Reception with the presentations and poster sessions coordinated by the Faculty Senate Research Council.

The reception was held in the University Commons ballroom, and President Speert greeted the faculty authors and congratulated them on their prodigious work. Provost Weil also expressed his admiration for their accomplishments and encouraged their

continued research and creative expressions. The publications and compositions of the authors were displayed at the reception.

The Library compiles an annual bibliography with citations of all of the publications submitted by faculty and staff. This year, the bibliography took the form of a booklet and featured book publications as a special insert. Many faculty authors donate a copy of their book to the Library, and these books comprise a special collection which is displayed in the Paterson Room.

The Library plans to create a da-

tabase to provide ongoing access to these citations, and it is considering collaborating with the Faculty Senate Research Council in this endeavor. New citations will be added to this central database each year, so that eventually it will serve as a comprehensive, searchable database of William Paterson University authors' publications.

The Library invites the University faculty and staff to submit their publications for the next bibliography and to plan to take part in the annual recognition of these publications at next year's Authors' Reception.

Students Collaborate in a New Way and in a New Space

The Library has a new place to encourage student collaboration: Welcome to the Group Technology Center. In partnership with I.R.T., this space was recently redesigned to accommodate both group and individual student use. New equipment has transformed a formerly quiet area to a lively group-oriented space.

For group collaboration, large display screens are installed at tables accommodating four to five students. Students are now able to connect one laptop computer to a monitor and work together on a project.

The Group Technology Center was conceived in response to observations of students' behaviors in the Library. Many areas of the Library attract groups of students working together at

tables and in group study rooms. Often, these open spaces in the Library are the busiest and most crowded. This new area provides yet another venue for these collaborative activities.

This renovation reflects similar changes at academic libraries across the United States. Many libraries are finding that flexible, technology-oriented spaces are in demand for both individual use and group projects. As more print resources are converted to electronic format, areas which formerly served as storage spaces are being changed to study or

mixed-use areas.

Anne Ciliberti, Library Director, commented on the benefits of this new area: "We are always eager to respond to the changing patterns of students' study habits, and group collaboration is one current trend. The redesign was a perfect fit for this area."

An additional, chance benefit of the reconfiguration has resulted in the Library's display of current magazines being relocated to a more central area of the Periodicals Department. This room is still in transition, and as the rearrangement progresses, flat-screen monitors will be added.

Library Student Assistants Honored at Reception

Every day, somewhere in the Library, a student assistant is helping at a service desk or completing a technical or processing task. The Library appreciates the assistance provided by these students and wishes to acknowledge the work contributed by this large group.

A ceremony was held in the Paterson Room on April 29, 2010, to recognize and honor these dedicated student workers.

In particular, four students were selected to receive Outstanding Stu-

dent Assistant Awards. The four students were Qurra-tul-ayn Saleem and Nkechi Onukogu, both from the Periodicals Department; Zoe Nelson, Technical Services; and Caryne David, Lending Services.

Qurra-tul-ayn is a sophomore majoring in fine arts; Nkechi is a senior majoring in kinesiology; Zoe is a junior majoring in biology; and Caryne is a junior majoring in nursing. Congratulations to Zoe, Caryne, Nkechi and Qurra-tul-ayn, and a big "thank you" to all of the Library's student assistants!



CONNECTIONS

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