



A Newsletter for Employees of the University of Louisville Libraries  
Vol. 26, No. 7 ♦ Winter, 2010

# The Owl

*"The Owl of Minerva takes flight only as the dusk begins to fall." — Hegel*

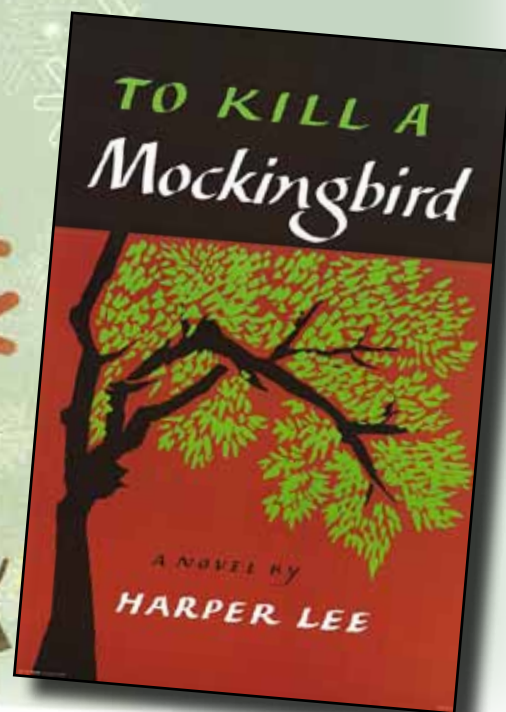
## WINTER READERS' PICKS

Written and compiled by Christopher Poché, Ekstrom Current Periodicals & Microforms

*To read a book for the first time is to make an acquaintance with a new friend; to read it for a second time is to meet an old one. (Chinese Proverb)*

**I**F THIS PROVERB IS TRUE, then I have many neglected friends, as I don't often re-read my books. Indeed, these days I avoid buying books and rely upon libraries whenever I can because I don't return to the large number I already have. I live with the anxiety-inducing awareness of all the great books out there to be read, and this keeps me impatiently moving from one to the next. So it may seem somewhat strange that I asked all of you to think about books that you love enough to read again and again, but it is the very fact that I rarely return to the books I read that fuels my curiosity about other people's experiences.

I am also intrigued by a comparison of how I read books to how I listen to music and watch movies and television. I listen to music almost constantly, and rarely does a day go by when I don't listen to something by the Beatles, solo



Paul McCartney, or Bob Dylan. And if I'm not listening to music, I often have my television on just as a background, usually with a DVD of a favorite movie or show. Clearly, there is a lot of repeat listening and viewing going on. And what I am experiencing with all this listening and viewing is primarily a comforting pleasure in things I am very familiar with and not the pursuit of information and knowledge I generally associate with the experience of reading.

John Williams' *Stoner* (Ekstrom PS3545.I5286 S76 1965) is one book that I return to for this kind of enjoyment. I read this novel for the first time (and recommended it here in *The Owl*) just two years ago; but already I have read it cover to cover two more times and often enjoy just picking it up to read favorite passages. Curiously enough, for a story about a plain and staid English professor, William Stoner, the book has several moments of great drama that keep the pages turning. There is, for example, a professional/personal battle between Stoner and a fellow faculty member over the advancement of the latter's favored but seriously deficient graduate student and a late-in-life romance that never loses its ability to pull at the heartstrings.

Another book that I have re-read with great pleasure is Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Ekstrom PS3562.E353 T6 1999). I can't guess how many times I have read it. Nor can I recall when I first read it—probably late in grade school or early in high school. But I do know that I saw and loved the film adaptation first and was actually a lazy reader of the novel when I first came to it. Subsequently, it has been a pleasure to revisit the novel and experience its story and the issues it raises deepen each time around.

This year is the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and there have been many events celebrating what is being called "our national novel." One such event is the publication of Mary McDonagh Murphy's *Scout, Atticus and Boo: A Celebration of Fifty Years of To Kill a Mockingbird* (Ekstrom Browsing PS3562.E353 T6356 2010). This book has two parts, the first being a short history of the publication and influence of the novel. But the best part is the second, which consists of twenty-six writers and other artists discussing their love of the novel. The insights of some of the contributors make me want to read *To Kill a Mockingbird* once more. Well, we'll see how that goes. I'm sure I'll get to it eventually. But I haven't read any Mark Twain yet, and I really must read *Moby-Dick* sometime, and then there's *War and Peace*, and ...



But for now, here are some books that I have read recently and have no intention of reading again anytime soon, however good they may have been ...

I actually purchased a copy of Jonathan Franzen's new novel, *Freedom* (Ekstrom Browsing PS3556.R352 F74 2010), because I wanted to read what has been christened the "literary event of the season" when it was still new (and when all the library copies would surely be checked out or on reserve). It took me eight years to jump on 2001's bandwagon and read Franzen's breakthrough success *The Corrections* (Ekstrom PS3556.R352 C67 2001). Overall, I enjoyed *The Corrections* but felt that it seriously sagged for long stretches and that some of its characters and scenarios were overwrought. But when it was good it was definitely good, so I was eager to read Franzen's follow-up, which took him nine years to produce (finally, an author I can keep up with). *Freedom* shares several of *The Corrections* basic characteristics. Both focus on one nuclear family and its dysfunctions against a broad backdrop of

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*The Owl's* purpose is to promote communication among the various libraries in the UofL system.

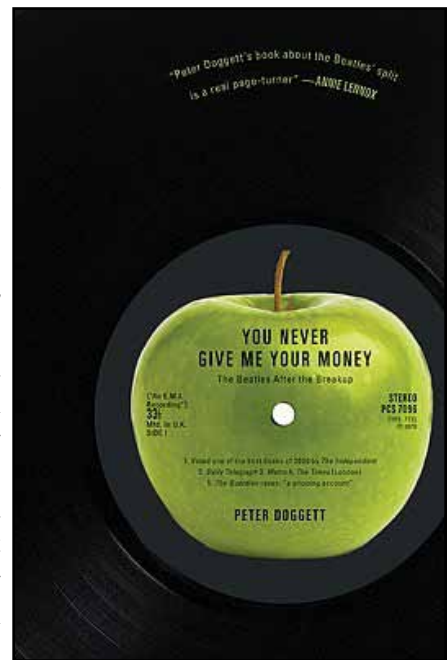
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American social, cultural, and political life (in the 1990s for *The Corrections* and in the 2000s for *Freedom*). Both involve complex narratives that shift focus from character to character and that travel backwards and forwards in time. *Freedom*, it seems to me, does everything *The Corrections* does, only better.

In the summer column, I reported reading a biography of Paul McCartney and realizing that perhaps I have read enough of such biographies and that I wanted to read more specialized studies of Beatles-related topics. I found two very good such studies. Peter Doggett's *You Never Give Me Your Money: The Beatles After the Breakup* (Ekstrom Browsing ML421.B4 D65 2009) takes a close look at the Beatles' business. Doggett examines the Beatles' tangled web of relationships to publishing companies and record labels, the creation and tortured life of their own company (Apple), the whole sordid story of their late-career manager (Allen Klein), their efforts to avoid paying taxes, etc., all while telling the sad story of how these four great friends, who accomplished so much while making tons of money, fell out of love with each other and got divorced. The legal wrangles over the terms of this divorce, which took over ten years to settle, kept these four sparring partners intimately involved with each other long after they wanted just to get on with their lives and not have to look back.



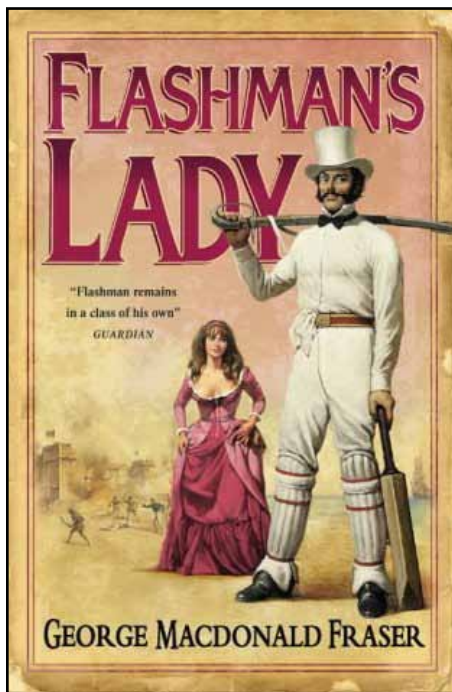
Ian Peel's *The Unknown Paul McCartney: McCartney and the Avant-Garde* (no holdings) really delivers on its title and presents to the reader/fan a comprehensive view of a rather significant but still little remarked upon, indeed virtually unknown, aspect of McCartney's career: his immersion in avant-garde music. Peel traces avant-garde influences upon McCartney (composers such as John Cage and Karlheinz Stockhausen) and examines McCartney's own avant-garde compositions (including experiments with tape loops, minimalism, and even music from vegetables). The book introduced me to many works I had never known existed. And it was interesting to learn about how McCartney deliberately refuses to put his name on or near any of these works in the hope that they will find audiences and honest critical reception without the influence of his celebrity. This is all the more interesting because a more widespread awareness of this work might change the generally accepted, and unfair, view of McCartney as a fluff writer of "silly love songs," a view that McCartney has otherwise tried to alter with controversial moves like switching the usual "Lennon/McCartney" songwriting credit to "McCartney/Lennon" on his concert albums that include Beatles songs.

Thanks as always to those who contributed to this column. Happy holidays and happy reading!

### Kelly Buckman, Ekstrom Library

*America over the Water*, by Shirley Collins (Music Library ML420.C651 A3 2005). Shirley begins with a short autobiography, but the heart of this book is the description of her journey to the American South with Alan Lomax to record traditional music in the late 1950s. She details their visits to a state penitentiary in Mississippi, a Baptist open-air prayer meeting in Kentucky, and the dwellings and homes of many musicians such as Mississippi Fred McDowell and Almeda Riddle. Her telling is fascinating and insightful, and she has a way of writing that made me feel as if she wished I could have been there. I'll put it this way for fans of the show *American Pickers*: imagine that show were instead a book, a book about recording music instead of junking, and about the people you meet doing so, and it took place half a century ago. Now get intrigued and go check out this book.

*Rat Girl*, by Kristin Hersh (no holdings). Kristin is a musician who began her career as singer and guitarist for the band Throwing Muses. *Rat Girl* is her memoir of 1985/86 and the recording of Throwing Muses' first album amidst personal tumult. As her band is taking off, she is diagnosed with bipolar disorder (she had a tilt toward the manic) and finds out she's pregnant. This makes it sound completely serious, but it's nowhere near that simple and I even found myself laughing out loud several times. I was fascinated by the strange and colorful world she found herself in on the cusp of adulthood and by her emerging awareness of her own self-indulgence and the almost forced remedy. I was captivated by her manic and hallucinatory experience of song creativity. Her writing style is subjective, but visual



and unique. There's more to this book than I can describe here so look it up if it sounds like your cup of tea.

#### Scott Campbell, Law Library

I try not to re-read books primarily because there are so many books that I haven't gotten around to reading for the first time. But there is one series of books that I keep going back to: the Flashman novels by George MacDonald Fraser. I will pick one up just to refresh my memory, and then before I know it, I'll be hooked and will be re-reading the whole thing. Harry Flashman was the villain of the Victorian classic *Tom Brown's School Days*. As portrayed in that novel, Flashman was a bully, cheat, coward, and drunkard who made Tom Brown's life miserable before getting his comeuppance by being expelled from school. Fraser's idea was to pretend that Flashman was a real person who in his old age decided to write a completely truthful account of his life. In this version of reality, Flashman had a glorious military career, winning multiple medals and even being knighted, despite the fact that he remained a coward to the very end. The novels place him in all of the events of the 19th century that a coward would never want to be caught in, among them the Indian Mutiny, the Charge of the Light Brigade, the Battle of Little Big Horn, and the raid on Harper's Ferry. (Throughout the novels, Flashman keeps making references to the fact that he fought on both sides of the Battle

of Gettysburg, but Fraser never got around to writing that novel.) The books are very un-pc, but they're all rousing adventure stories and, even better, absolutely hilarious. They're also all meticulously researched. Historical characters make up a lot of the cast (Queen Victoria, Abraham Lincoln, Otto von Bismarck, Crazy Horse, and even Sherlock Holmes all make appearances in the books.) Ekstrom unfortunately does not have all twelve books, but it does have my personal favorite: *Flashman's Lady* (PR6056.R287 F65), which makes a fine introduction to the series. In it, Flashman's wife is kidnapped by a swarthy foreigner (back in 1840s England, all foreigners were swarthy), and his reluctant efforts to get her back lead to skirmishes with Indonesian pirates and becoming the kept lover of Ranavalona, the insane queen of Madagascar. Exciting, hilarious, and best of all, (mostly) true.

#### Andy Clark, Ekstrom Library

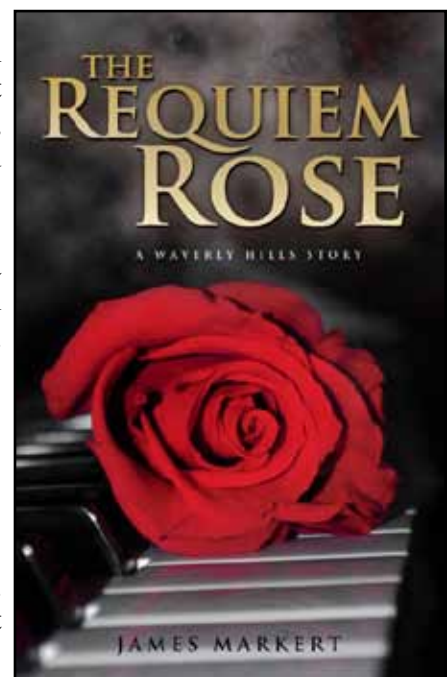
*The Requiem Rose: A Waverly Hills Story*, by James Markert (Ekstrom Browsing PS3563.A6638 R45 2010). This novel is set during the late 1920s at the height of the tuberculosis epidemic and revolves around the central character, a Catholic priest/doctor named Wolfgang Pike. Wolfgang lived and worked at the Waverly Hills Sanitarium and the book follows his experiences there.

I like the book. The author, a DeSales High School and UofL graduate, does a nice job of placing the reader at Waverly Hills and parts of Old Louisville in 1929. It has mixture of passion, pain and suffering, brilliance and ignorance, interwoven with classical music.

#### Rob Detmering, Ekstrom Library

These are books that I've returned to many times over the years:

*The Complete Stories*, by Flannery O'Connor (Ekstrom PS3565.C57A17 1971). A great Flannery O'Connor story is like an early Nick Cave song: morbid, darkly comic, fraught with religious anxieties, and filled with characters that simultaneously disgust and fascinate. O'Connor is Queen of the Southern Goths. "A Good Man Is Hard to Find," "Revelation," and "Good Country People" are excellent starting points. I also recommend O'Connor's novel *Wise Blood* (Ekstrom PS3565.C57 W5 1962b), a



super-fast read involving all sorts of disturbing behavior.

***Moby-Dick***, by Herman Melville (Ekstrom PS2384.M6 2002). Maybe my all-time favorite novel, though I admit I haven't read the "Cetology" chapter (a big list of types of whales) more than once. I recommend the original book over the new *2010: Moby Dick* film, which is missing the hyphen in the title and features Barry Bostwick as Captain Ahab. I haven't actually seen this film, but I feel confident in my recommendation.

***The Turn of the Screw***, by Henry James (Ekstrom PS 2116.T8 1983). A classic ghost story pre-dating *The Omen* and many other tales of scary kids tormenting adults to the point of frenzy (*Kindergarten Cop* being another example).

#### Mark Dickson, Music Library

***Mission of Gravity***, by Hal Clement (Ekstrom PS3505.L646 M57 1978). As an unashamed fan of science-fiction writing, Hal Clement (Harry Clement Stubbs, May 30, 1922 – October 29, 2003) was my Isaac Asimov. Clement wrote HARD science science fiction, with his masterpiece novel being *Mission of Gravity*, from 1954. The space opera is there, but the vivid descriptions of alien planet weather, tectonics, and physics is spellbinding even today.

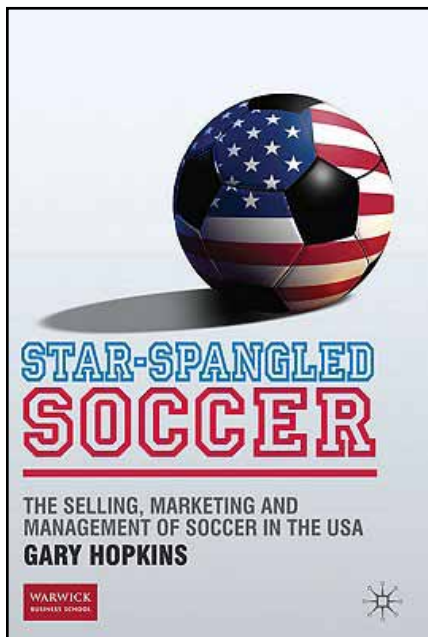


A rare first edition of *Moby-Dick, or The Whale* in Rare Books.

***Wise Blood***, by Flannery O'Connor, contained in the Library of America volume *Collected Works* (Ekstrom PS3565.C57 1988). Flannery O'Connor is next to William Faulkner as Southern writers go. I read this after watching the film treatment by John Huston, starring Brad Dourif. I like the book better.

***Bring the Jubilee***, by Ward Moore (Ekstrom PS3563.O668 B75 1953). My all-time favorite alternative history science-fiction novel. I re-read this after finding a used copy of the Easton Press edition (Collector's Edition with illustrations by A.C. Farley, Easton Press, 1987). The brilliant descriptions of a post-Civil War North that lost the war and a South that won, their relationship with Central American and European nations, and the technologies that emerged and didn't emerge from these altered times continues to leave me breathless.

***Famous Science-Fiction Stories: Adventures in Time and Space***, edited by Raymond J. Healy and J. Francis McComas (Ekstrom PS648.S3 H42 1957). This is a massive anthology from the late 1950's containing some of the best novelettes from science-fiction's golden era.



***Star-Spangled Soccer: The Selling, Marketing and Management of Soccer in the USA***, by Gary Hopkins (Ekstrom GV944.U6 H67 2010). As a charter member fan of Major League Soccer who was converted to the sport during 1994 World Cup, this history of the game in the U.S. was essential reading. I already knew about the spread of the game from reading W.J. Murray's *The World's Game: A History of Soccer* (Ekstrom GV942.5.M88 1996), but exactly how the U.S. became an Olympics-focused nation during the 1930's-1960's instead of a World Cup-focused nation, like the rest of the world, was eye-opening. However, there's still hope for us soccer fans.

***Native American History: A Chronology of the Vast Achievements of a Culture and Their Links to World Events***, by Judith Nies (Ekstrom E77.N56 1996). The single most important historical account I have ever found of the European genocide of Native American cultures. Colonial mendacity promoted in order to colonize a "New World" already occupied by several million citizens of 500 Nations.



***American Poetry: The Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries***, a collection in the Library of America series edited by David S. Shields (Ekstrom PS601.A53 2007). The oldest English tradition poetry in the US tradition, many of the earliest poems written by first and second generation European immigrants point to the Native Americans as the model they admired for living in their new land at peace with nature and other people instead of the European model. It is ironic that I began reading in this book while I was just finishing up *Native American History*, seeing how that early respect was systematically undermined.

### **Gail Gilbert, Art Library**

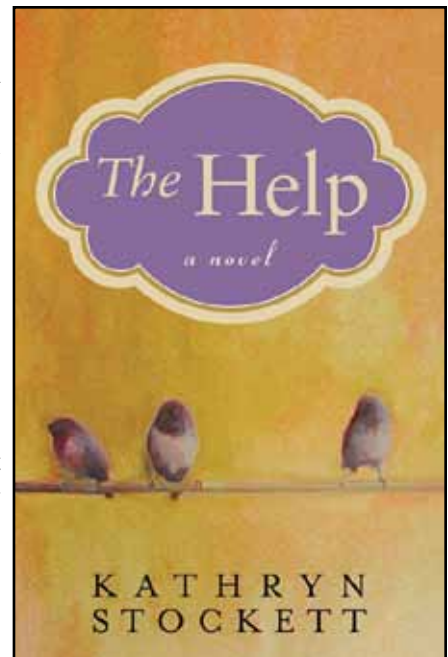
My book club thoroughly enjoyed ***Remarkable Creatures***, by Tracy Chevalier (Ekstrom Browsing PS3553.H4367 R46 2010). [Gail provided Ron Charles' review of the book for the *Washington Post*, which can be found at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/01/12/AR2010011203279.html>]

### **Robin Harris, Law Library**

***The Help***, by Kathryn Stockett (Ekstrom Browsing Collection PS3619.T636 H45 2009). Set in Jackson, Mississippi during the early 1960s, *The Help* is a riveting story told from three points of view. Skeeter, an educated young white woman from a well-to-do family, is a recent Ole Miss graduate with no real plans for the future. Aibileen and Minny, the “help” who reveal their stories, are black. *The Help* begins with Aibileen's narrative, a sad story of loss—the literal loss of her only son to an industrial accident and the figurative loss of the seventeen white children she raised for local white families. As the story begins, Aibileen is working for Miss Leefolt, caring for her daughter, Mae Mobley.

Aibileen's close friend Minny is outspoken and stubborn, the mother of five and married to a man who beats her. Minny is known around Jackson as the best cook in the city and the one with the biggest mouth. Ostracized by most of the white families in Jackson, Minny eventually accepts a job with a ditzzy white woman named Miss Celia, referred to by the upper class whites as “white trash.”

The trials and tribulations of Aibileen and Minny are chronicled by Miss Skeeter, an aspiring writer. She interviews Aibileen, Minny, and several of their friends and puts their stories in a book, which is picked up by a major publisher in New York. Plot twists and turns abound, both in the stories of the maids and in the story of the publishing of the book and its aftermath.



All three of the narrators change and grow as Stockett uses segregation and the women's movement as the backdrop to this emotionally gripping tale. *The Help*, Stockett's first novel, was a runaway bestseller and, from what I've heard, people either loved it or hated it. I loved it, hence the second reading in less than six months!

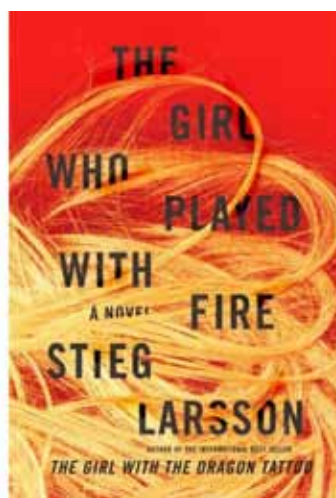
### **Anna Marie Johnson, Ekstrom Library**

***Confessions of an Eco-Sinner: Tracking Down the Sources of My Stuff***, by Fred Pearce (Ekstrom GE195.7.P43 2008). Each chapter looks at a different aspect of the author's personal consumption, beginning with the gold in his wedding ring to the bananas and shrimp that he eats, to his fair trade socks. In many cases the author travels to the source of his stuff and interviews the people involved in that industry. Later chapters also include recycling and waste. While there are some parts that made me cringe with the reality of what my own consumption is doing to the planet, the author is careful to provide a balanced view, helping readers see the complexity of the equation when it comes to global industry. Some consumption (like green beans from small farmers in Kenya) really does provide a reasonable living for the people involved in the industry, and small scale farming seems to be actually improving the land. A hopeful book despite the title.

***A Mercy***, by Toni Morrison (Ekstrom PS3563.O8749 M47 2008). Not so much an historical novel as a meditation. Each chapter is told from a different character's perspective and the book was to me about dependency and the

complicated relationships among people, as well as a look at the issues surrounding servitude in early America. The language is really lovely but this is not an easy book to get into. It takes some work but it was worth it.

Stieg Larsson's books *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (Ekstrom Browsing PT9876.22. A6933 M3613 2008), *The Girl Who Played with Fire* (Ekstrom Browsing PT9876.22. A6933 F5713 2009), and *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet's Nest* (Ekstrom Browsing PT9876.22. A6933 L8413 2010). No need to describe in depth. High literature: no. Just plain fun: absolutely.

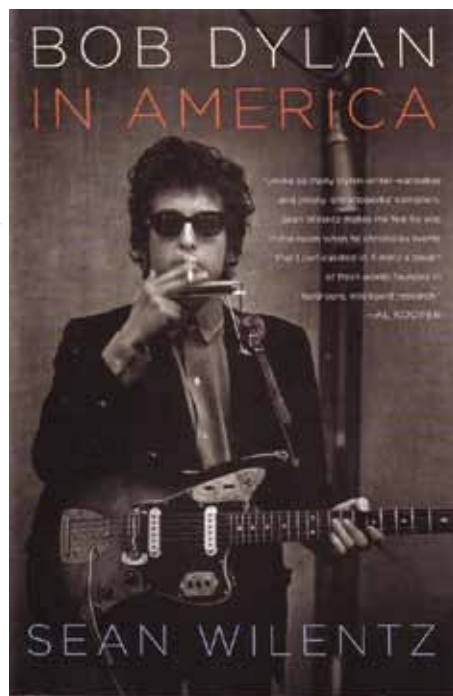


*Half-Broke Horses*, by Jeannette Walls (Ekstrom Browsing PS3623.A3644 H35 2009). Walls, author of *The Glass Castle*, writes this book as a novel but it is based on her family's stories of her grandmother, Lilly Casey Smith. This amazing woman, who at fifteen left her father's ranch to ride her horse five hundred miles to her first teaching job in Arizona, overcomes personal tragedies, a bad marriage, and hardship to become a teacher, ranch manager, mother of two, and pilot. If you enjoyed Wall's previous book, this book is lighter with laugh-aloud moments, but is every bit as inspiring.

In answer to Chris's question, there are not many books I return to. I tend to the theory of too many books, too little time. Still, I do re-read poetry, especially Wendell Berry and Mary Oliver. Also, the *Lord of the Rings* series bears re-reading in my mind.

### Ben King, Ekstrom Library

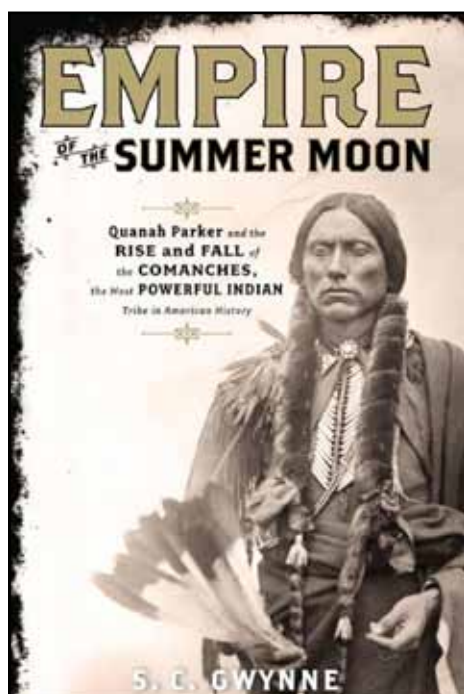
*Bob Dylan in America*, by Sean Wilentz (Ekstrom Browsing ML420.D98 W53 2010). Music has meant a great deal in my life, and to this day is something that gives me some of the greatest pleasure. As I was delivering this book I did a cursory thumb through. Two names leapt out at me from the pages: Ricky Nelson and Joe South. In the early 1960s I was a big Ricky Nelson fan, and bought many of his 45 rpm's. In the later 1960s I came to really appreciate Joe South, and do to this day. I liked both his music and a lot of what he was trying to say through his music. South also wrote many hits for other artists. South met with tragedy when his brother Tommy, who was in his band in the 1960s, committed suicide. South also played guitar on some tracks of Bob Dylan's album, *Blonde on Blonde*. This book has quite a bit of information about the *Blonde on Blonde* sessions. This is probably the most information you would get about that. Of course, this is a book about Dylan, but seeing these other two names is what pushed me into checking it out. Nelson and South are briefly featured in the book but I was gratified to see that South was referred to as "the great Joe South." Also, this book was interesting to me because it talked considerably about Blind Willie McTell. I was intrigued by McTell, and started sampling some of his music. But this is about Dylan. This book ties McTell and Dylan together and talks about some other influences on Dylan. Wilentz has a lot of behind-the-scenes



knowledge. This book also has interesting pictures in it of Dylan on stage and throughout his career. This includes the “Rolling Thunder Revue.” The book is not written in any particular chronological order. The author sometimes skips around to make his points, but this can make it even more interesting. The author does not dwell on the 1960’s because so much has been written about that, but tends to hit on some lesser known points. A good read for any fan of Dylan or music in general.

#### Aaron Patrick Vowells, McConnell Center

***Christmas Holiday***, by W. Somerset Maugham (Ekstrom PR6025.A86 C4 1939). Before you go rushing to the shelves to find what sounds like a novel to complement your usual holiday fare à la *Miracle on 42nd Street* or *It’s A Wonderful Life*, be forewarned. This book is not your typical Christmas story, yet still holds an interesting tale. Charley Mason is blessed with a holiday in Paris upon his agreement to join the family business. He meets up with his best friend Simon, a journalist, who is intent on becoming a leader in the impending communist or fascist revolution that is certain to topple the English government. Simon introduces Charley to a young lady named Lydia who yearns for her man, a murderer in prison. They become companions for the length of the holiday and there is an exploration by both of class struggle and human nature. Written just at the outset of World War II, it seems a cautionary tale that is short on plot, but interesting nonetheless. Again, not your typical holiday story, but a good read from a great author for those days when the snow has blanketed the city.

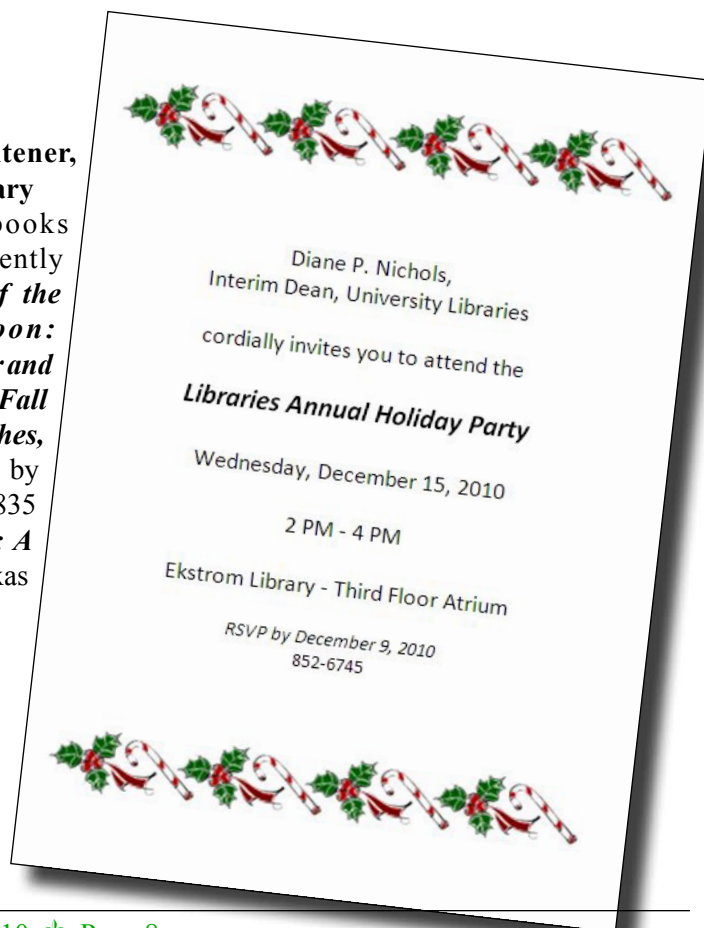


***The Big House: A Century in the Life of an American Summer Home***, by George Howe Colt (Ekstrom F72.C3 C57 2003). Many of us are lucky to own one home, much less be privy to the idea of a summer home. Still, I believe the notion of a summer home is one we aspire to, and with the onset of winter, this novel will certainly bring a fresh breeze of sunlit sea air to a dark and cloudy day. The story of a man who spends one final summer in his family’s cottage on Cape Cod before the sale of the title home, it is full of the memories that one accumulates over the course of a life lived. It’s an ideal look in on a bygone generation.

#### Barbara Whitener, Ekstrom Library

Two good books I’ve read recently are: ***Empire of the Summer Moon: Quanah Parker and the Rise and Fall of the Comanches***,

***the Most Powerful Indian Tribe in American History***, by S.C. Gwynne. (Ekstrom Browsing Collection E99.C85 P3835 2010); and ***Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy: A Righteous Gentile vs. the Third Reich***, by Eric Metaxas (Ekstrom BX4827.B57 M47 2010).





# From the Dean of Libraries . . .

By Diane Nichols, Interim Dean, University of Louisville Libraries

## UofL Cares, and so do you!

Thanks to your generosity, the University Libraries are among the top two units in percentage of employees contributing to the UofL Cares Campaign this year! Congratulations and thanks to all who have participated and to Karen Nalley for leading such a successful campaign. It's Karen's fourth year to serve as campaign coordinator and her enthusiastic effort in gathering incentives and prizes is greatly appreciated.

In my October report I shared information on the approved new funding model for the Kentucky Virtual Library (KYVL) and the 2010/2011 financial shortfall. Letters of intent to continue supporting the database subscriptions provided through KYVL have now been signed by most groups, including the academic libraries and 115 school districts. However, there are still 54 districts that have not signed and 6 districts that have said they cannot participate, which means there is still more than \$75,000 needed to cover the KYVL subscription costs. Unfortunately, students in school districts unable to participate financially may not have access to library resources and databases, since they are in areas with very limited public library resources. For additional information please go to <http://www.kyvl.org/advocate.shtm>.

On October 12-14 I attended the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) annual membership meeting in Washington, D.C. Following the ARL meeting I attended an ARL/ CNI sponsored institute: *Achieving Strategic Change in Research Libraries*, October 14-15. Program highlights of the ARL meeting included: continuing work with the ARL 2030 scenario planning; safeguarding collections and preservation activities in ARL member libraries; assessment, metrics and scorecard development; and, developing strategies for influencing public policies, particularly in the areas of copyright and intellectual property, orphan works, access to federally funded research, privacy and civil liberties. The ARL membership voted to extend a membership invitation to the National Archives and Records Administration which would bring ARL member institutions to 127.

In November I attended the Association of Southeast Research Libraries (ASERL) annual membership meeting in Durham, North Carolina. The primary theme of the meeting was deep collaboration among the ASERL libraries. Several models were reviewed including the 2CUL model developed with Cornell and Columbia universities, and the North Carolina Triangle Research Library Network (TRLN) model. Georgia Tech Dean of Libraries, Catherine Murray Rust, also presented the GALILEO Knowledge Repository as a potential model for deep collaboration within ASERL. A major highlight of the ASERL meeting was the opportunity to visit the North Carolina State University Libraries. Under the direction of Dean Susan Nutter, NCSU libraries are renowned for their technological innovations, creativity and especially for student engagement. I also had the opportunity to visit the construction site of NCSU's new James B. Hunt Jr. Library which will house a four aisle robotic retrieval system with aisles as long as a football field! Dean Nutter hopes to send her RRS team to visit UofL to learn about RRS implementation and management from our personnel.

Two library faculty members, Fannie Cox and Melissa Laning, attended the ARL Library Assessment Conference held October 25-27 in Baltimore, the only conference in North America to focus solely on library assessment.

As we near the close of 2010, I want to thank you for your many accomplishments and the excellent support you provide for the students and university community. Best wishes for a joyous holiday season and a healthy, prosperous New Year.

# Library and Department News

## Ekstrom Library

### Learning Commons

In January the Library will begin an eBook Reader Loan Pilot to allow UofL students, faculty and staff to experience a portable reading device. An eBook reader is a device that displays books, magazines, newspapers and blogs. Readers can take notes, highlight and bookmark text, and some models give readers access to a



built-in dictionary and a web browser. We have selected the Amazon Kindle WiFi for use during the pilot. The Kindles will be available for checkout from the Media Resources desk. During the pilot we will evaluate the level of interest in eBook Readers and gather subject and title feedback from patrons. Marketing for the pilot will include a website, feedback form and campus-wide announcements. Feedback gathered during the pilot will enable us to modify equipment and content purchases, review loan periods, policies and procedures. If the pilot is successful, we hope to increase the number of eBook readers and title offerings. Additional details will be shared in the upcoming weeks. The eBook Reader Pilot team consists of Tyler Goldberg, James Manesco, Bob Roehm and Rae Helton.

The carpeted space in Media near the Digital Media Suite will be used for yoga stretching and massage on December 8 from 6:30p.m.- 7:30p.m. The event is a collaboration with the Student Activities Board and REACH as part of the Finals Blitz.

## Media

### *2011 Multidisciplinary Graduate Student Conference*

Congratulations to Justy Engle, whose paper "The Influence of Views of the Plague: Texts in the First Black Death Outbreak (1340s-1360s)" (originally written for Blake Beattie) has been accepted for presentation at the Newberry Library Center for Renaissance Studies 2011 Student Graduate Conference (<http://www.newberry.org/renaissance/conf-inst/gradstudents.html>) on Thursday, January 27 – Saturday, January 29, 2011.

## Office of the Dean

### *Resignation*

**Teresa "Tess" Payton**, Library Assistant, Media Resources resigned effective November 17, 2010. Congratulations and well wishes to Tess with future endeavors.

## Reference Department & Information Literacy

### *ARL Assessment Conference*

Fannie Cox attended the ARL Assessment Conference in Boston, Massachusetts and describes it as a helpful but intense experience. She also attended the Kentucky Community Engagement Conference hosted by UofL, and served as the chair of the call for proposals and conference proceedings.

Toccara Porter published "Putting the You First: Learning How to Be Yourself as a New Librarian" in LIScareer.com, an online collection of practical career articles at [http://liscareer.com/porter\\_you.htm](http://liscareer.com/porter_you.htm).

The Information Literacy Interest Group had a wonderful session with jazz pianist and University Ideas to Action consultant Harry Pickens. Harry got us thinking about obstacles to our work and how we might work around those challenges.

We have taught 107 information literacy sessions this fall so far!

Latisha Reynolds and Anna Marie Johnson attended (despite US Airways' best efforts to prevent us) the Georgia Conference on Information Literacy in Savannah, Georgia co-sponsored by the Library and English Departments of Georgia Southern University. It was a small, focused conference and both Latisha and Anna Marie came away with lots of information to ponder and some ideas to try to implement here. As a nice aside, we were able to have dinner with former Stacks Manager Rachael Elrod at a lovely Thai restaurant!

The Reference Department is missing Sarah Jent, who left us at the end of October!

## Law Library

*Welcome, Marcus!*

On November 1, Marcus Walker joined the staff of the Law Library. Marcus holds degrees in Psychology and Religious Studies from Southern Methodist University and has worked at four academic libraries, including the Valparaiso University Law Library. We know Marcus will be a great addition to our library family.

### *Louisville Mandolin Orchestra Holiday Concert*

On Sunday, December 5 from 3:00 - 4:00 p.m. at St. Francis of Assisi (1960 Bardstown Road) the LMO will present a free holiday concert. Everyone is welcome! The LMO performed on Red Barn Radio ([www.redbarnradio.com](http://www.redbarnradio.com)) at Arts Place in downtown Lexington on November 10. A YouTube video of the opening tune from that show, Armonie Alpine, is at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZEgk8XRaJs4>. For more information about the LMO, please contact Robin Harris at 852-6083 or [robin.harris@louisville.edu](mailto:robin.harris@louisville.edu).



## UARC

Evelyn Mae Owen, Tom and Phyllis Owen's fifth grandchild, was born on November 2. "Evie's" parents are Andrew Owen and Nancy Shives.







## CHRISTMAS MOVIES: A FAMILY TRADITION

By Meredith C. Fehler, Media Dept. student assistant

Almost every family in America has grown up with traditions that surround the holidays. Beyond setting up the Christmas tree, opening presents on Christmas morning and maybe going to grandma's house for a delicious Christmas dinner, each family has its own traditions. In my family we all packed into the kitchen on Christmas Eve night, arguing over how many pigs-in-a-blanket we would need to make to constitute a dinner for the five of us, and bumping into one another while we all prepared our hot chocolate and hot apple cider. We then progressed to the living room where we all settled in with down comforters and quilts we pulled off our beds. Our dinner of snack food in hand, we began selecting a movie to share together and laugh over.

As usual, the entire family got into the movie selection. Every year without fail my mother would suggest *White Christmas* (SGA DVD Collection), a musical about two guys who become a popular song-and-dance-duo. Someone would always pipe up with the American classic *A Christmas Story* (SGA DVD Collection), followed by a resounding "no" as we all knew that it would be aired all 24 hours of the following day and no doubt would be on constantly at our grandparents' house.

Some years we would settle on a newer comedy like Will Ferrell's *Elf* (SGA DVD Collection), a favorite of my brother and me.

I was happy to learn that all of these movies plus many other holiday favorites could be found year round at the Media Resources Department. So if you would like to make one of these part of your Christmas tradition, or you just need a little break from the finals rush, come over to Media and check out our staff favorites on the chalk board behind the desk. Or browse around our SGA collection for even more films to make part of your traditions this year.



# DigiNews

## Digital Collections Update

Through the auspices of the Libraries Assessment and Resource Planning Team (ARPT), Emily Symonds developed a usability test for our Digital Collections website. Members of the CONTENTdm Administrators team suggested tasks, which Emily adapted into a SurveyMonkey questionnaire available for two weeks in early October.

Although the total number of responses was relatively low, the results confirmed some suspicions as well as raised new issues. For example, very few respondents knew to use the wildcard operator (\*) to truncate search results. To quote from the Digital Collections “Help and Settings” page, “Using an asterisk (\*) at the end of a search term will search for results with none, or any number of any characters appended to the root search term. For example, test\* will find results with the words ‘test,’ ‘tests,’ ‘tested’ and so on.” We knew anecdotally that even our information professional colleagues were not aware of this feature (one had sought my assistance after unsuccessfully attempting to use a “?,” a common wildcard operator in other systems), and also that the asterisk was used in WorldCat Local, the latest OCLC database used by the UofL Libraries, so it seemed especially important to find a way to convey this feature more readily to users who are not looking to “Help and Settings” for assistance with their searches. We also learned that users typically don’t know about Advanced Search options (such as the ability to limit search by field), and that the way CONTENTdm treats searchable text (by hyperlinking all of it!) confused users, interfering with their ability to locate the hyperlinked controlled vocabulary phrases.

After Emily presented the findings to the CONTENTdm Administrators at our monthly meeting in October, we discussed what changes we could feasibly make to improve the search experience for users, given the limitations of the CONTENTdm software in its current version and the apparent reluctance of users to read the “Help and Settings” document (a fate we feared would also befall any additional tutorials we would create).

Terri Holtze quickly created a prototype of a new home page interface, which will replace the old one by the time you read this. The new design (below) includes a search tip beneath the search box, with a link to Advanced Search immediately below that and the various browse options available via drop-down boxes at the right. I also sought the assistance of the CONTENTdm user community to come up with a fix to the excessive hyperlinking problem; Liren Liu implemented the revised code, resulting in a much cleaner metadata record display.

Thanks to all who created and implemented the assessment and the modifications resulting from its findings, as well as to those of you who took the test, our Digital Collections site has evolved in user-friendliness as well as in its rich and varied content.





# THANK YOU HAPPENINGS

I would like to thank **Andy Clark** for going out of his way to assist us with a projector problem. Andy is always willing to step in when needed! ~*Sheila Birkla*

I would like to extend a special «Ekstrom Library» thank you to Mr. **Rom Meeron @ IT** for his cooperation and willingness to troubleshoot our projectors and thanks to **Sheila** for being awesome and asking Rom Meeron @ IT to troubleshoot the projectors. Lastly, I want to thank **Sheila, Rom Meeron @ IT and our OLT** for keeping all of the projectors going. ~*Andy Clark*

Thanks to **Sheila** for her thoughtfulness and help with the employee lounge microwave replacement. The second microwave transaction went very well because of her diplomacy with the vendor. ~*Andy Clark*

I'd like to thank **Sheila Birkla, Adam Lawrence, and Josh Whitacre** for their work on installing new projectors in Ekstrom W102 and W103. Great job! ~*Rob Detmering*

I'd like to send a special thank you to **Sue Raymond**. Sue, thanks for being a GREAT boss and a friend. Thank you for your smiling face, your supportive spirit, your understanding, and your constant willingness to share your wealth of knowledge with me. I am really going to miss you when you retire at the end of this year, but I know that there are spectacular adventures ahead for you and I can't wait to hear the stories and see the pictures! ~*Tiffney A. Gipson, MHA*

Thanks to **Bill Carner and Karen Nalley** for helping out with maintenance and parts ordering for the BetterLight scanner, which has been pushed to its limits in the past year with our in-house mass digitization of the yearbooks. ~ *Rachel Howard*

Thanks to **Emily Symonds and Terri Holtze** for the execution and implementation of the Digital Collections user assessment. ~ *Rachel Howard*

## Student Assistant Appreciation Halloween Party

The Student Assistant Appreciation Halloween Party was a huge success! We gave away approximately \$350 worth of door and costume contest prizes to 46 of our student assistants. Some great tokens from the Athletic Department were sent to supervisors who had students who were unable to attend the party.

We want to thank the folks who brought desserts: Delinda Buie, Kelly Buckman, Tyler Goldberg, Latisha Reynolds, Anna Marie Johnson, Sheila Birkla, Mioshi Cobble, Barbara Whitener, Rob Detmering, Claudene Sproles, Kathy Moore, Alice Abbott-Moore, Trish Blair, Rachel Hodge, Diane Nichols, Tess Payton, Gwen Chenault, Ben King and anyone else we missed!

**Right: Our costume contest winners were:**

**1st - Matt Goldberg - Crazy Cat Lady**

**2nd - Tremain Farrar - Burlesque Masquerade**

**3rd - Angela Clark - Rosie the Hobbit**

**Honorable mentions - Erika Ryan (Zombie Prom Queen) and Ashley Langen (Totally 80's girl)**

Thanks to our costume contest judges Melissa Laning, Bethany Poston and Michelle Strickland!







Thanks to Numeriano Rodenas for taking pictures and to him and Karen Nalley for making sure we had pizza! Thanks to Erea Marshall for making sure we had ice and drinks!

Thanks to Sheila and Mioshi for manning the sign-in desk and to Amy Purcell for helping clean up!

We can't thank you all enough for helping to show our students how much we appreciate them. Don't forget to show your appreciation for our students year round!



# Thank You

Delinda Buie	Anna Marie Johnson
Jodi Duce	Diane Nichols
Justy Engle	Tom Owen
Meredith Fehler	Christopher Poche
Rae Helton	Numeriano Rodenas
Rachel Hodge	Jessie Roth
Rachel Howard	

... for contributing to this issue of The Owl

# Library Exhibits

## **Ekstrom Library**

*Media Resources, Ekstrom Library*

*League of Women Voters of Louisville*

Photographs and archival materials from the League of Women Voters, University Archives and Photographic Archives  
**Through December 2010**

### ***West Wing First Floor Display Cases***

*Black Poets in Rare Books' poetry broadside collection*

**&**

*Authors' Books Represented at the 4th Annual Kentucky Women's Book Festival*

**Summer 2010**

### ***Special Collections***

***Photographic Archives Gallery***

*Latino Culture and Latin America*

A selection of fine print and documentary photographs from the Photographic Archives' collections

**October 4, 2010 - January 10, 2011 →**

### ***Rare Books Lobby Cases, Lower Level***

*Nationality, Nature & Nuance*

11 Student Art Expressionists

**Through December 2010**



Woman making tacos. Mexico City 1936. Photo by Lou Block.

## **Music Library**

### ***First Floor***

*Works of Louis Andriessen*

Winner of the 2011 Grawemeyer Award for Music Composition

**Through January 2011**

### ***Third Floor***

*Music Therapy @ UofL - 10 Years and Counting*

**Through December 2010**

