A Newsletter for Employees of the University of Louisville Libraries
Vol. 30, No. 6 ✣ Winter, 2014

The Owl

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

WINTER READERS' PICKS 2014

Written and compiled by Christopher Poché, Ekstrom Library

My reading this past half year has been varied in such a way as to defy much of a unifying theme. Much of it, however, has been inspired by or connected to, in one way or another, my film interests.

Over the summer I watched as many films of Robert Bresson as I could--films such as *The Diary of a Country Priest*, *A Man Escaped*, and *Pickpocket*. This French director had a unique approach to filmmaking, and in trying to understand it, I read his short book, *Notes of the Cinematographer*. The title of his book is a key to understanding Bresson's films in that it makes a crucial distinction: he was so opposed to what we usually take to be "the cinema" or "the movies," which he considered to be merely theater that happened to be captured on film, that he called his work "cinematography" in order to distinguish his particular approach. As Bresson puts it, there are:

> two types of film: those that employ the resources of the theater (actors, direction, etc.) and use the camera in order to *reproduce*; those that employ the resources of cinematography and use the camera to *create*.

This quote suggests some of the flavor of Bresson's book, which consists of a series of aphoristic comments, in no apparent order, about the nature of vision, narrative, the role of actors (he referred to them as "models"), editing, and so on. The character of these comments varies from what seem like simple reminders to the director working on set to deeply philosophical reflections. In this way, the work reminded me of Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*, which also consist of reflections made for his own purposes. But in learning more about Bresson, I found that it was more influenced, both in style and basic viewpoint, by Blaise Pascal's *Pensées*.

Having never read the *Pensées*, I could not resist picking it up. And what a surprise and delight! It's funny how sometimes a classic surprises me by being, well, classic, and I wonder how I could have gotten so far in life without getting around to it. The *Pensées*, even though it is a very unfinished work, is an absolute treasure trove of philosophical, theological, and psychological insight. Pascal planned the book to be a systematic philosophical defense of Christianity. The work as we have it is simply called "Thoughts" because

it consists of Pascal's basic ideas—sometimes sketchy, sometimes polished—for this defense. Pascal wrote these ideas on large, individual sheets of paper, cut them up into fragments, and put some of these fragments into thematic groupings, leaving others completely unorganized. He died before he could progress any further with the work, which has left scholars with dizzying interpretational problems. In the end, it is a book a reader can take many approaches to. You can have a sort of serious fun trying to understand the work as a whole and to imagine how Pascal might have finished it. Or you can just pick it up, open it to any page, and enjoy the blast of wisdom it contains. I attempted something like the former but ended up resting content with something closer to the latter.

As a teaser, I'll tell you about just one of the better developed fragments, which contains the famous "Wager." Pascal argues that it is a safer bet to believe that God exists and lose nothing if he does not exist, rather than to believe he does not exist and suffer damnation if he does. That's the basic textbook version of the idea (and please pardon the non-inclusive language, but this is the language Pascal uses). What I found interesting in reading the whole fragment is that he recognized that even this rational appeal to a person's instincts may not compel belief. So, Pascal goes further and discusses the more psychological and non-rational aspects of belief. It is in this context that Pascal asserts this famous line: "The heart has reasons that reason does not understand." I was delighted to learn that it was Pascal who first expressed this. I had hitherto heard the line used in many contexts, including one of my favorite James Thurber cartoons (above: from *Men Women and Dogs,* Humor Collection, Rare Books and RRS, NC1429. T48), which uses the original French.

"Le cœur a ses raisons, Mrs. Bence, que la raison ne connait pas."

Another book that I read as a direct result of my movie viewing was Louise Brooks' *Lulu in Hollywood*. The Lulu of the title is the character that Brooks played in G.W. Pabst's 1929 film *Pandora's Box.* In that film, Brooks plays a free-spirited but irresponsible young woman who ruins the lives of all those closest to her and who meets a tragic end herself. It was Brooks' most important role and one that seemed to mirror her own life. Brooks was a huge star in the 1920s and 1930s, but her unwillingness to play by anyone's rules other than her own led to an early end to her career. She spent much of the 1940s and 1950s in isolation and near poverty, before finding a second life as a film writer when given support by appreciative scholars at the George Eastman House, a museum of photography and film archive in Rochester, New York. *Lulu in Hollywood* collects the best of her writing, and the essays contained therein are marked by a lacerating

The Owl is published six times a year as an online PDF publication by the University of Louisville Libraries, Louisville, KY 40292.
There is a combined June-August "summer" issue and a November-January "winter" issue.
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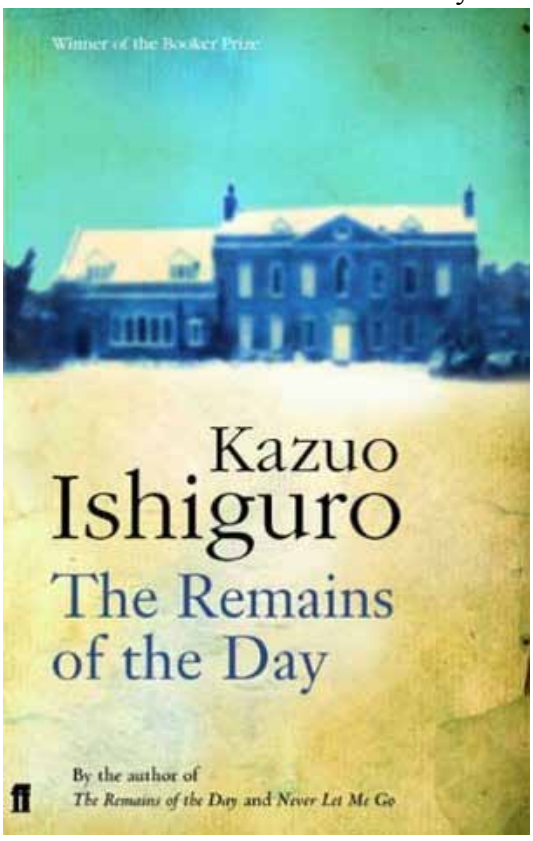
The Owl's purpose is to promote communication among the various libraries in the UofL system.
Deadline for publication is the 21st of each month preceeding publication.
Opinions expressed in The Owl are not necessarily those of the University Libraries or the University of Louisville.

wit and a disarming frankness. Several of the essays are autobiographical and detail her career and films. Others that are not strictly autobiographical, such as appreciative essays on the acting talents of W.C. Fields and Humphrey Bogart, still have a personal bent to them because Brooks knew and worked with the actors.

The critic Kenneth Tynan wrote a fantastic *New Yorker* profile of Brooks called "The Girl with the Black Helmet." (The "black helmet" refers to her famous bob haircut—the "Rachel" of her times.) The profile is collected in *Show People: Profiles in Entertainment*. The essay on Brooks is just one of two that were written at the end of their subject's career. The book was published in 1979, and its other subjects—Mel Brooks, Johnny Carson, and Tom Stoppard—still had long careers ahead of them. However, rather than making these essays "dated," they are all the more interesting for offering an "in the middle of things" perspective.

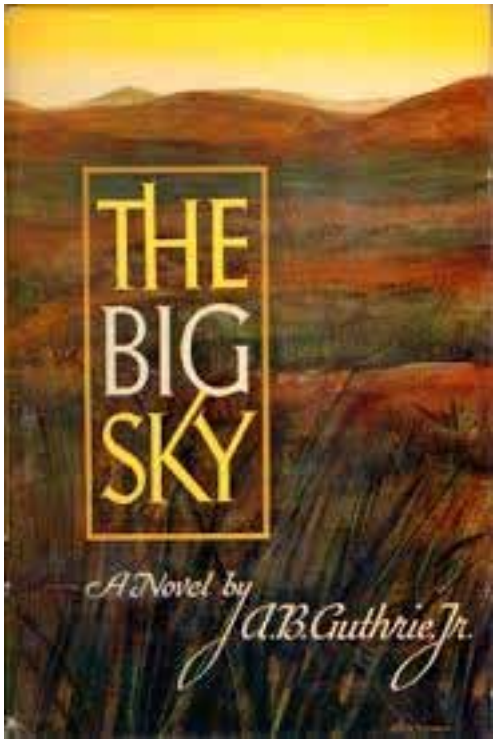
Finally, I reread Kazuo Ishiguro's novel ***The Remains of the Day***. Seeing the film adaptation way back in 1993 when it first came out was a deeply moving experience for me, and the film remains one of my favorites. The book, as often happens, is a completely different experience. Though the film is quite faithful to the book's narrative, its tone is almost entirely somber and unleavened by humor, whereas the book is filled with it. The book is narrated by its main character, Stephens, the head butler of a grand British house in the first half of the twentieth century. He is absolutely devoted to his work and makes the tragic mistake of believing that he is living an authentic life by serving his employer unquestioningly. If his employer is a great man doing great things, he reasons, then he must be serving a purpose greater than himself. However, it turns out his employer is a well-meaning, but ultimately naïve, amateur diplomat who plays into the hands of the Nazis during the years of appeasement leading up to World War II. While Stephens is lending his "support" to the disastrous negotiations that take place in his employer's home, he is also failing to make true connections to the people closest to him, including his father and the housekeeper, who could have been the love of his life. Given this synopsis, it may be hard to imagine how the book could be filled with humor. Much of the humor comes from recognizing Stephens' many self-deceptions, which he conveys in a language as impeccable as his manners. But there is also a theme about humor itself that is not in the film. As Stephens goes about his work, he struggles with what he calls "this business of bantering," by which he means being able to incorporate a little playful humor in everyday conversation. Throughout the novel, he is often flustered by the humor in other people's conversation and makes some hilariously failed attempts at humor himself. By the end of his sad tale, there appears to be hope for him even late in life as he finally recognizes that perhaps "in bantering lies the key to human warmth."



Technical note: Due to some cataloging problems we had last time around with books that were ordered for this column, we are not including library locations and call numbers. All books are available from the University of Louisville Libraries unless otherwise indicated. We're all library folk–we know how to look it up.

James Adler, Kornhauser Library

"The essential American soul is hard, isolate, stoic, and a killer. It has never yet melted." So said D.H. Lawrence in his landmark critical work, *Studies in Classic American Literature*; and when applied to the literature of the American old west, it certainly seems true enough.



It's the last minute for these picks and I'm feeling a bit lazy, so I'll just offer short synopses or titles only this time around. First, there is ***The Big Sky*** by A.B. Guthrie, a tale of mountain men in our nation's youth. Anti-hero Boone Caudill fits Lawrence's dictum to a T, and I enjoyed this book immensely.

While *The Big Sky* is a tragedy, the next book on the list, ***True Grit*** by Mr. Charles Portis, falls more on the comedic side. Mattie Ross' father has been murdered, and she hires broken-down old drunk lawman Rooster Cogburn to hunt down his killer. Many have probably seen the movies, starring either John Wayne or Jeff Bridges in the title role of Rooster Cogburn, but forget about 'em! The book is better. (Bridges makes the better Cogburn, since Wayne can't actually act and is reduced to playing himself playing Rooster Cogburn; he is, however, an iconic figure and can get away with his ham-fest simply because of that.)

Next in line is John Williams' ***Butcher's Crossing***, and it's another humdinger. Naïve dude drops out of Harvard and heads west to find himself. And find himself he does, while at the same time perhaps losing himself. Loss itself is an uncredited character in this novel.

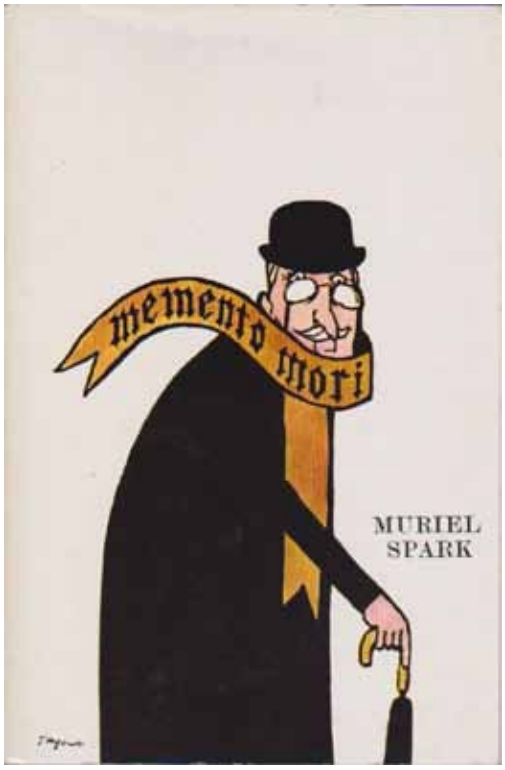
The dirty little town of ***Warlock*** is the last stop on this western tour. Oakley Hall's novel is something of a fictionalized version of the gunfight near the O.K. Corral but is quite a bit more when all is said and done. Yep, the old west was a dirty, nasty, brutal place. Yet there is still room for honor and courage.

Sketchy treatment aside, I cannot recommend any of these books highly enough. I should add, though, that none of them, saving maybe *True Grit*, are particularly "happy" reading (if that's a consideration for your wintertime reading). But these books will take you places.

Scott Campbell, Law Library

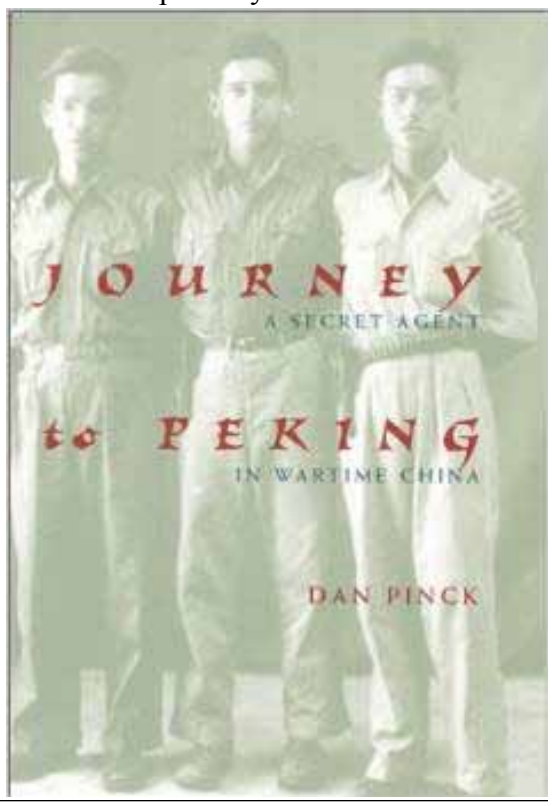
I don't know if other people are like this, but I often get an irrational prejudice against writers or musicians whose works I have never read or listened to. Muriel Spark was one of those authors. I decided a long time ago that she was an author whose works I could never possibly enjoy. I'm not sure why, but I suspect it was because of the movie *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*. As a teenager, I decided that it was an example of what was wrong with all grown-up movies (without, of course, actually watching it); and since the only thing I actually knew about it is that it was based on one of Spark's novels, I probably decided at that time I hated all of her other work as well. But recently, I started hearing her name bandied about in the press, not only as a great novelist, but also as a great wit. This caught my eye, and so when *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* came on Turner Classics last year, I watched. And of course I loved it. So when I saw at Carmichael's a copy of *Memento Mori*, which is considered by many to be her best novel, I went ahead and bought it. I enjoyed it so much that when I finished it, I went to Ekstrom and checked out another three novels by her.

Judging from just these four novels, I would say that her novels are indeed marked by a savage wit, as well as strong characterizations and plots that don't seem to be going anywhere until they do (and usually not in the direction you expect them to). They could also be classified as mysteries, but not murder mysteries, even though death often plays a large part in her plots.



Memento Mori concerns an elderly female author, her husband, and their circle of friends. Rather than mellowing with age, they hang onto past slights and resentments. Their strained détente with each other is thrown into turmoil when they start getting prank phone calls from someone who tells them "Remember, you must die." It's an interesting and funny book but not, perhaps, the best advertisement for living a long life.

The other three books shared a lot of similarities. They were all set in the London neighborhood of Kensington shortly after World War II and all have characters who are on the periphery of the London literary scene. ***The Girls of Slender Means*** takes place in a women's hostel during the final days of the war. Again, there is not much of a plot, but the action concerns primarily what happens after one of the girls introduces a soldier and would-be anarchist to her friends there, which leads to an incident that changes many of their lives. ***A Far Cry from Kensington*** is a comic novel with tragic overtones, about a war widow who works for a small publishing house and what happens when she makes an enemy of a would-be writer. ***Loitering with Intent*** is in my mind the best of the four. An aspiring novelist who is working on her first novel gets a job with a rich and possibly sinister eccentric who is encouraging a set of people to write their autobiographies. After a few weeks, her novel seems to be influencing the actions of the people around her. Or is it the other way around?



I'd also like to recommend a book that I picked more or less randomly off the shelves at Ekstrom: ***Journey to Peking*** by Dan Pinck. It is the author's reminiscences of how, during World War II, he joined the OSS at the age of eighteen and was sent behind Japanese lines in China with a suitcase of money and no training. The book reads like a *Terry and the Pirates* adventure as written by Joseph Heller. If Pinck is to be believed, he spent most of the war drinking, sleeping in late, and trying to pick up women. He was involved in one battle that killed only one Japanese soldier and nearly got him court-martialed. It is an absurdist take on a terrible time, and all the funnier because it's a true story.

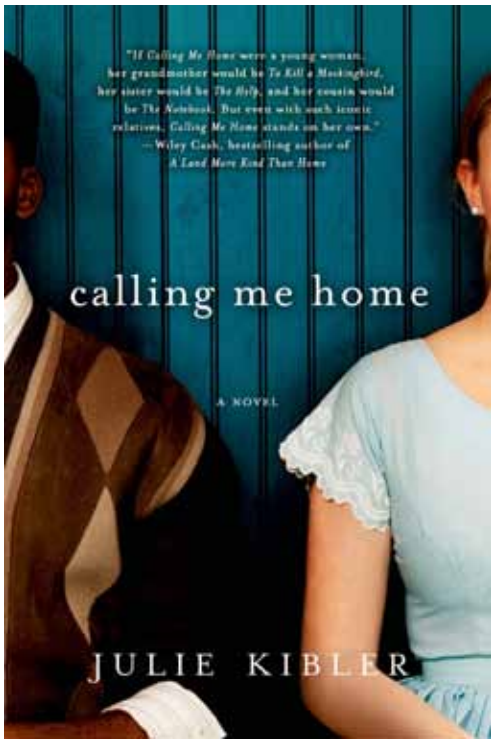
Chris' Note: Scott's theme is one I wish I had thought of. There are many authors and books I avoid for any number of imagined or dubious reasons. One such author is Chrétien de Troyes. I

have wanted to read his work for a long time due to my general attraction to all things medieval, and yet I have avoided it for much the same reason, somehow getting it in my head that he would epitomize the worst of a dusty old author. I feared that his style would be difficult and off-putting and that his subjects would be boring ultimately. I think I picked up this prejudice from Kenneth Clark, who name-checked Chrétien in a discussion of the literature of courtly love, which he dismissed as "unreadable." Fortunately, my fears were dispelled when I finally picked up ***Erec and Enide***, considered to be the first Arthurian romance in European literature. Actually, Chrétien's style is easy and fluid, almost conversational, and his subject is exciting and absorbing. His romance recounts the exploits of Erec, one of King Arthur's most dashing knights, and his marriage to the beautiful Enide. If anything, the style is *too* easy, such that it can be easy to miss the implicit commentary upon the nature of courage, kinship, and love that builds with each successive challenge faced and overcome. I now look forward to reading Chrétien's other romances, which include the stories of the famous Lancelot and the search for the Holy Grail. If you're interested, I recommend the recent, sprightly translations made by Burton Raffel.

Rob Detmering, Ekstrom Library

I recently read ***Modern Music and After*** by Paul Griffiths, a survey of art music produced since World War II. The book was mostly way above my head, but I learned more about some of my favorite composers (Boulez, Carter, Ligeti) and became acquainted with some new ones (Grisey, Lachenmann). I also read J.R.R. Tolkien's ***Lord of the Rings*** trilogy for the first time. I'm a big fan of the movies but had never read the original source material. Overall, I enjoyed the books, though I do tend to agree with those who find Tolkien's writing somewhat tedious and oddly structured. Still, I was impressed by his ability to build a vivid fantasy world. I can see why his work has remained popular for so many years. Recently, I started reading Jan Swafford's new biography ***Beethoven: Anguish and Triumph***. So far, it's a detailed but highly accessible account of the great composer's life.

Robin Harris, Law Library



Calling Me Home: A Novel by Julie Kibler 🕮 This debut novel is a wonderfully told story of a road trip. Isabelle, an 89-year-old white woman, asks her 30-something black hairdresser, Dorrie, to drive her from Arlington, Texas, to Cincinnati, Ohio, for a funeral—the reader does not know the identity of the deceased until the very end of the novel. (This book has been described as part *Driving Miss Daisy* and part *The Help*—I think there's also an element of *Thelma and Louise*, but with intergenerational and interracial overtones). Along the road, Isabelle reveals a detailed and heartbreaking story from her youth, involving forbidden love in 1930s Kentucky—and Dorrie (who is dealing with problems of her own) is drawn in completely. The friendship between the two women, strong even before the trip, grows deeper and more complex during the trip—as does the long-ago love story Isabelle reveals. The friendship is depicted beautifully, and the book's ending hits a perfect, and heartbreaking, chord. Julie Kibler based this book on a true story from her family. I highly recommend *Calling Me Home*. (Warner Brothers has picked up the movie rights.)

(*Note*: Julie Kibler will speak at the 2015 Kentucky Women's Book Festival, on Saturday, March 7, 2015, in Ekstrom Library.)

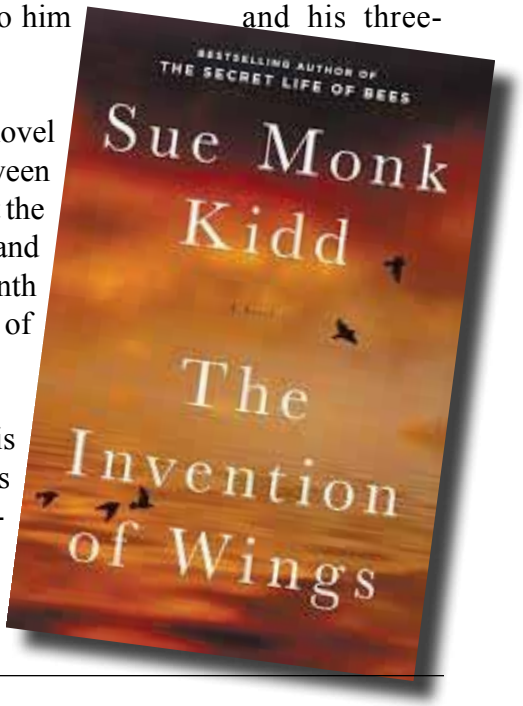
Dear Committee Members: A Novel by Julie Schumacher 🕮 Many in academe will appreciate this short and clever book, which consists entirely of letters of recommendation written by the long-suffering Jason Fitger, a jaded and frustrated professor of creative writing and English at the non-descript Payne University. Everyone charged with writing these kinds of letters will immediately recognize the form and will probably laugh at many of the situations unveiled in the stories that unfold in the letters. Of course, there's also sadness in the letters, including references to the dire straits in which academic institutions now find themselves and to the desperate lengths to which students will sometimes go. While Schumacher, who teaches at the University of Minnesota, certainly pillories "The Ivory Tower" effectively, she also shows her affection for the academy. This book would make a fine holiday gift.

Kinsey and Me: Stories, by Sue Grafton 🕮 Before she became a bestselling author, Sue Grafton taught at UofL. In this collection, the Louisville native gives readers a glimpse into the origins of her heroine, Kinsey Millhone, and a rare look at Grafton's own childhood and adult life. Even if Grafton's detective fiction is not your thing, you may want to read this book to see how one of America's beloved authors came to be the person she is—a skillful wordsmith and a fine storyteller.

Anna Marie Johnson, Ekstrom Library

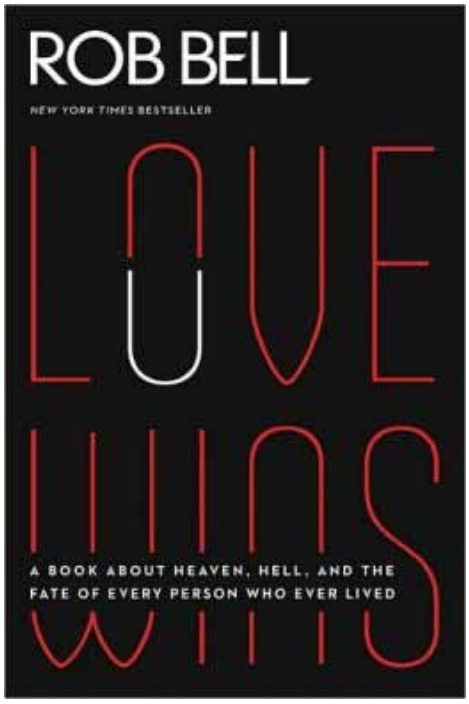
Consuming Kids: The Hostile Takeover of Childhood by Susan Linn 🕮 Written by a psychologist, this book, though now slightly dated, is compelling in its argument that marketing to children has crossed a line and now is actively trying to cause disruption and conflict within families as a means of selling products to kids. (Just look at what awaits you at the entrance to Wal-Mart the next time you are unfortunate enough to have to go there.) The helpful part of the book is that the author offers concrete suggestions and recommendations for parents, educators, and policy makers that could change the situation for the better.

Fortunately, the Milk by Neil Gaiman 🕮 Silly fun from Gaiman about the art of storytelling. I checked this slim novel out for my eight-year-old who read it in a couple hours and said, "Mom, you have to read this" and then who delightedly listened to it again as I read it aloud to him and his three-year-old brother.



The Invention of Wings by Sue Monk Kidd 🕮 Really lovely historical novel about the abolitionist Sarah Grimke, told in alternating chapters between Sarah and a slave in her family named Handful. Characters (well, at least the female ones, the male characters don't fare quite as well) come to life, and the horror of the slavery in South Carolina in the early part of the nineteenth century is not minimized. Lovely imagery, especially in the description of the quilt that tells Handful's mother's history.

The Fault in Our Stars by John Green 🕮 My daughter Madeline read this and urged me to read it, too. She had previously read Jordan Sonnenblick's *Drums, Girls, and Dangerous Pie* for school, which is the story of four-year-old Jeffery who has leukemia, as told by his older brother Stephen. Continuing in the children-with-cancer genre, *The Fault in Our Stars* is the funny and tragic story of two teens with cancer who fall in love.



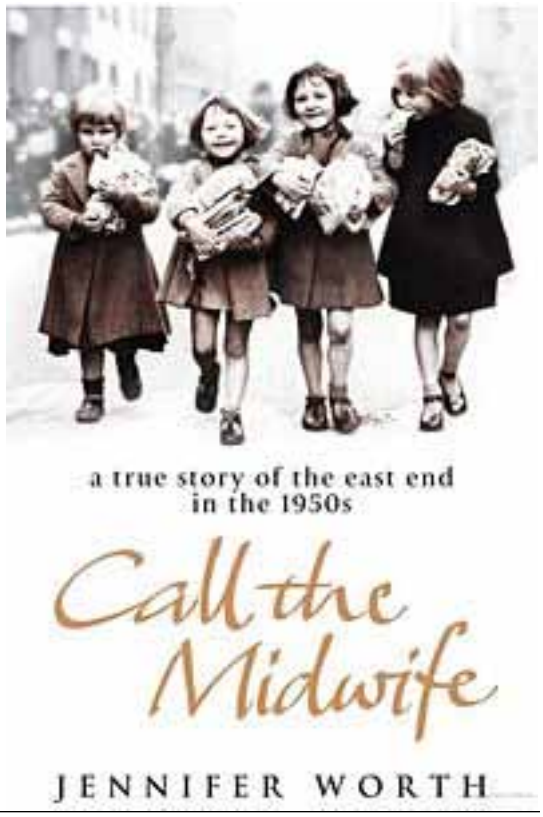
Think Romeo and Juliet but lacking the swordplay or the family animosity. It was translated into a really well-done movie, which we watched together, and despite knowing the outcome, I still cried. My favorite line that I now quote to my daughter (and probably will make her re-think asking me to read anything again): "Life is not a wish-granting factory."

Love Wins*: *A Book About Heaven, Hell, and the Fate of Every Person Who Ever Lived by Rob Bell 🕮 Bell is a former mega-church pastor and author of a book I enjoyed a number of years ago called *Velvet Elvis: Repainting the Christian Faith*. This book was branded as heretical in some conservative circles, so I was, of course, intrigued. I found it an affirming book written to folks who gave up on the whole idea of Christianity because it is hard to reconcile a God of love with the idea of eternal punishment. Bell's style is easy to read, but he includes Biblical passages to make his points.

Bad Monkey by Carl Hiassen 🕮 Silly title, but one of the best Hiassen books I've read in a while because it deviates from his formula a bit. Lots of typical Hiassen bits: some gross-out humor, environmental awareness, and high silliness. The titular monkey is actually one of the least interesting characters. Despite my initial reaction to the main character, former Key West detective Andrew Yancy (I won't spoil the plot but what he does to lose his job is well, just, icky), I became quite fond of him and his coroner girlfriend. The plot, while typically nutty, was a little more intricate and the writing, for me, a step above his usual.

Kathie Johnson, Kornhauser Library

Call the Midwife, A Memoir of Birth, Joy and Hard Times by Jennifer Worth 🕮 As I mentioned in a previous book review, when we travel I try to purchase a book set in the location we are visiting, as my souvenir of the trip. Usually it is a work of fiction, but in this case I could not pass up this memoir, which provides the basis for a favorite television series. So this is really a book and television series review.



Call the Midwife is a series on PBS entering its fourth season. It is a wonderful program filled with interesting characters and situations, all of which are taken from the stories told by Worth in her book about working as a nurse and midwife in the East End of London in the 1950s. The East End was not a pretty place: overcrowded with dock workers and their families, usually crowded into small apartments and sharing toilet facilities. Children had nowhere to play but in the streets, women were tied to home with cooking, cleaning and childcare, and the men worked long hours at a dirty and often dangerous job.

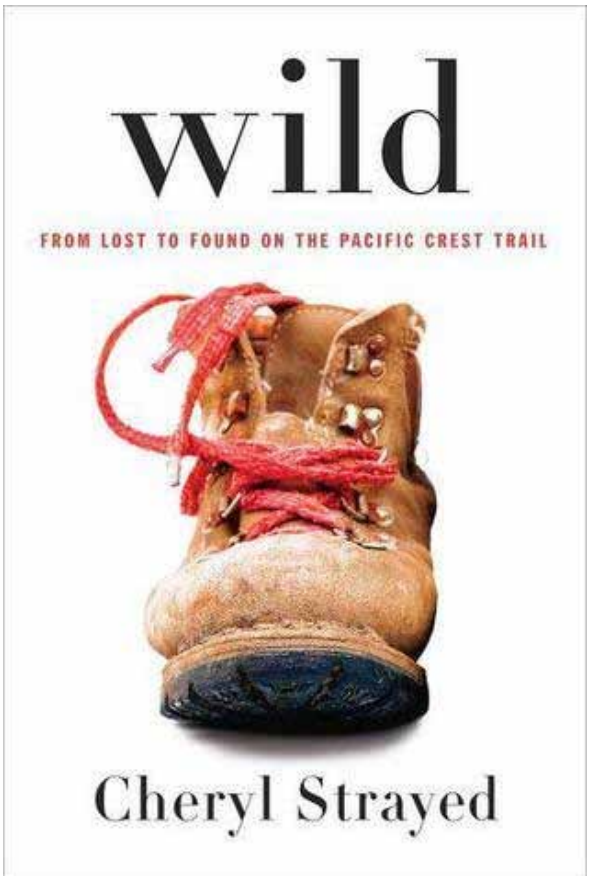
In the midst of this setting is a group of nuns and young laywomen who provide health care and midwifery service to the

population, along with one physician. Jennifer Worth worked in the East End at this place alongside other laywomen and nuns. She describes the individual women with great detail and the daily life of the nurses without romanticizing the situation. It was grueling work with long and erratic hours; and these young (and sometimes naïve) women faced domestic violence, malnourishment, terrible living conditions, and even death, along with the joy and happiness of assisting with the birth of a newborn child.

The best part of the book for me was that each chapter is like a short story in itself, so once you know the characters, you can read a chapter and it feels complete in itself. The other great thing I loved is related to the TV series: the writers and director kept the characters and stories as close as possible to the book. The personalities of each individual follow the book to a T, and a lot of the dialogue is taken verbatim from Worth's writing.

Season Four begins in March 2015, so you have plenty of time to catch up by reading and/or watching Seasons One, Two and Three.

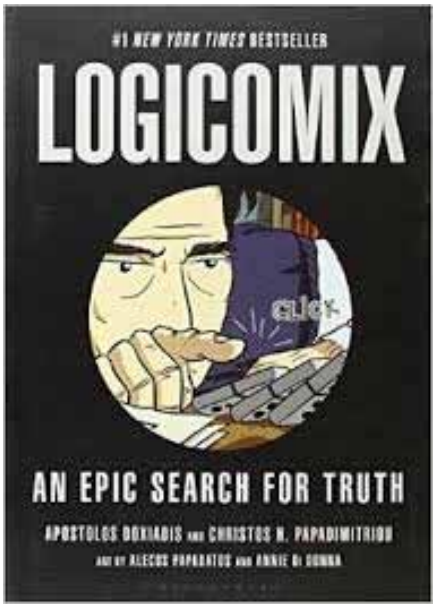
Ben King, Ekstrom Library

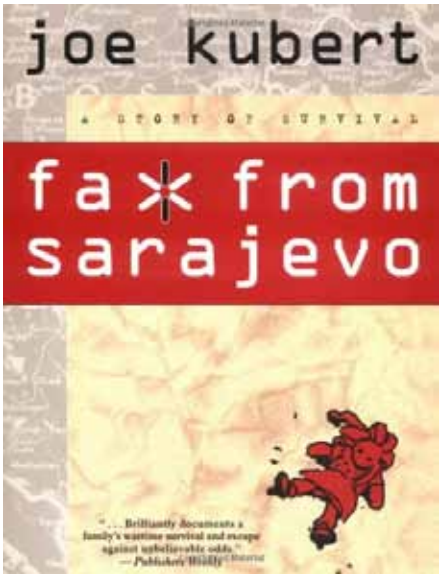


I enjoyed ***Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail***, by Cheryl Strayed 🕮 The author had been through some personal crises in her life, such as the death of her mother and a divorce. So after much planning she set off to hike the Pacific Crest Trail. This book was hard for me to put down. I almost felt like I was on the adventure with her, except for the fact I was safe in my living room. She talks of seeing mountain lion tracks, and a couple of times looking up and seeing a bear standing not far from her. There is also a wolf that appears and investigates her, and ultimately goes away. Most of the people she runs into on the trail or in a nearby town are friendly and helpful. There are exceptions, such as a guy with questionable motives that comes into her tent, and says "it is a free country," seemingly oblivious to the obvious fact that he is invading her home. At this point, I wished that I could have materialized there myself to offer her support. There is also a couple that makes her leave her spot in the corner of a campground, insisting that she pay, but she had hardly any money on her. This made her pack up and hike into woods to try to find the trail again in the dark. She occasionally runs into other hikers and forms lasting bonds with them. But ultimately she will tell them that she wants to go on alone because her goal was to hike the trail alone. She is offered a ride but refuses because she wants to walk the trail alone. There is one point where there is so much snow that she is not sure she is even on the trail. Before her trip she had arranged for packages of supplies to be mailed to her at various towns along the way. This sometimes works smoothly and sometimes does not, as when she was counting on twenty dollars being in this one package, and it was not there. The money did not show up until later. She calls her backpack "Monster" because with her full supply of water it weighs about 24.5 pounds. Then with her other supplies in her pack she said her pack came to about half of her body weight. She could not pick it up at first when she was getting ready to leave her motel room and had to develop a rocking, back-and-forth motion to hoist it up on her shoulders. She talked of the many abrasions

and bruises that got rubbed on her by her pack, and of losing toenails, and of what awful shape her feet got into. She squeezed several of her toenails off that were about to fall off. She hiked from the Mojave Desert in southern California to the "Bridge of the Gods" in northern Oregon at the Washington border. It would be impossible to describe all of her adventures here, but I tried to kind of "take the trip along with her" in my mind as I read. I found it so interesting that I sometimes went back and read sentences again. I am not saying that I think what she did is the smartest thing, but I admire her for going off and doing what she wanted to do. At various points along the trail, hikers sign a register. Most of the signatures are men in pairs. It is extremely rare to see a woman by herself hiking it. I admire her for it, even though I think it was a questionable thing to do.

Rosie Linares, Ekstrom Library
A triptych of graphic novels:





One hundred and eleven years ago, Bertrand Russell, wunderkind of philosophy and mathematics, set forth a tome entitled *Principia Mathematica*. In it, he audaciously attempted to fuse logic to the mathematical process and changed the course of mathematics as we know it today. This effort, however, is simply a blip in the life of a man whose renown resonated both within and without academic circles.

In the graphic novel ***Logicomix: An Epic Search for Truth***, Apostolos Doxiadis uses Russell's voice to explore the landscape of early twentieth-century philosophical thought and its complex interplay with mathematics. In a nested story that begins in present-day Athens, with the writer debating the storyline of the comic with his fellow mathematician, this work uniquely colors the history of mathematics as an adventurous quest for the truth.

Ervin Rustemagić, a Bosnian comic book publisher, found himself documenting by telefax the devastating realities of the Siege of Sarajevo, where he was trapped with his family during the Bosnian war in 1992. Joe Kubert, well-known American comic book artist, received those faxes and created ***Fax from Sarajevo***, a graphic novel that humanizes the atrocious events of such a dark moment in human history through one man's experience.

The sometime king of the illustrated mundane, Chris Ware, deconstructs the despairing lives and everyday stories of residents in a Chicago apartment building in ***Building Stories***, a graphic novel told, quite literally,

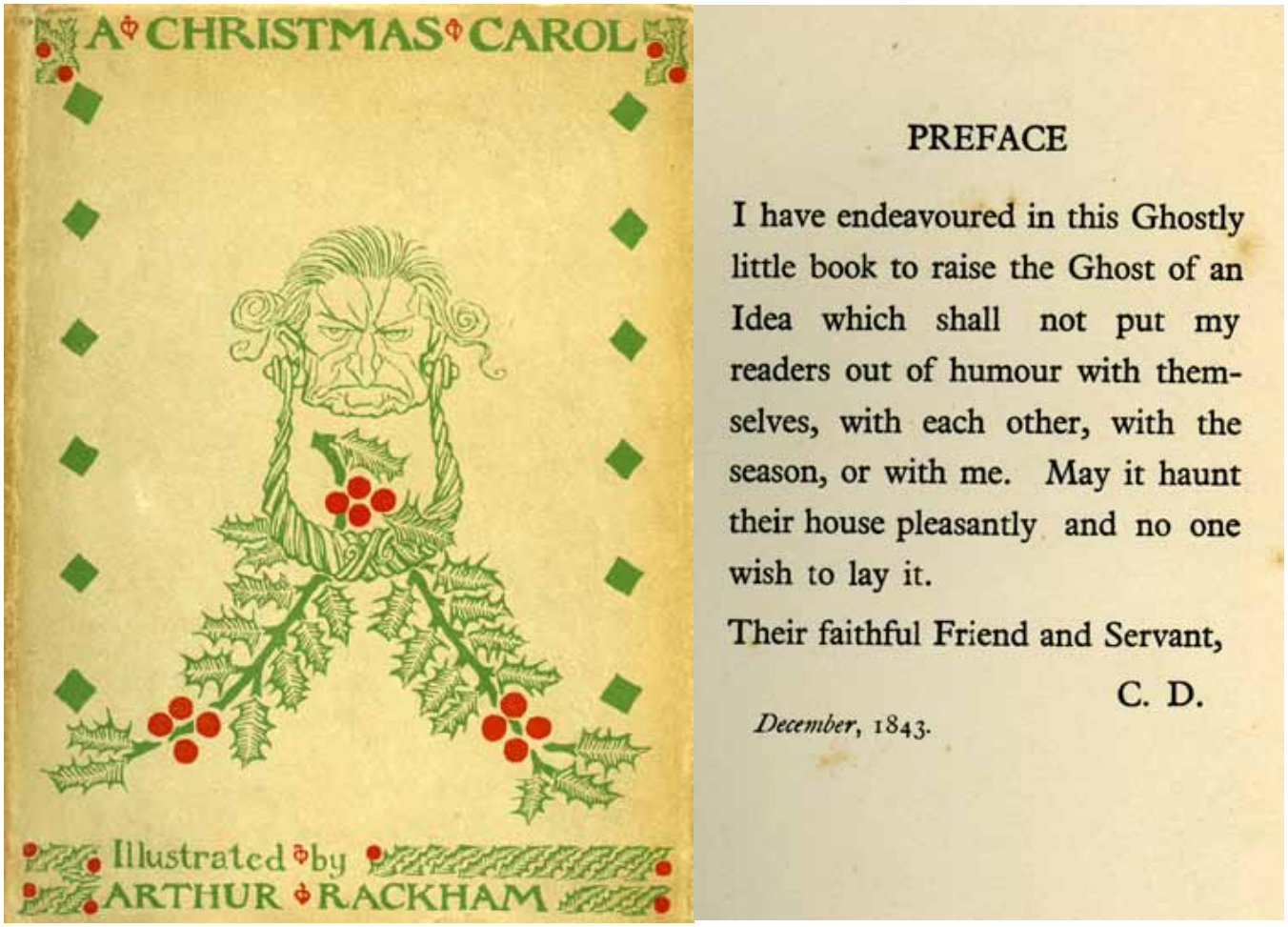
part by part. Upon checking it out at the local library, this catalogue-designated "kit" comes in seventeen pieces, ranging from a massive fold-out "board game" style map to a small and delicate accordion-folded pamphlet.

Rayanne Turner, Ekstrom Library
A great deal of my reading these days involves Dr. Seuss and the Berenstain Bears (which I highly recommend and could suggest some good ones, if needed!) but here is my grown-up pick!

The Picture of Dorian Gray by Oscar Wilde 🕮 I was amazed at how well Oscar Wilde set the tone of the novel. From the very first chapter there was such a feeling of eeriness. As I was reading it, I expected to look up and see someone standing over my shoulder or, if I listened closely, I might hear strains of ominous music. It reminded me of the Val Lewton horror movies of the 1940s where the threat or evil was alluded to but never quite revealed. I applaud Wilde on this impressive feat and greatly enjoyed the book!

As a Charles Dickens fan, I would be remiss not to suggest ***A Christmas Carol***. Its timeless message of goodwill to others is especially appealing and needed during the craziness of the holidays!

Chris' final note: Definitely a good book with which to end this edition of the Winter Readers' Picks! Thanks to all who contributed to this column and happy holidays to all!



1915 book jacket and preface from *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens. Rare Books' Arthur Rackham collection.

Library and Department News

Ekstrom Library

Administrative Office

Ekstrom 1E project update

Several architectural firms responded to the request for proposal (RFP) to provide architectural and engineering design for the Ekstrom 1E project. After narrowing those firms down to three finalists, the Louisville firm of JRA architects was selected to serve as the architectural and engineering design consultant. Members of the JRA team were here Monday, December 1 and will be visiting again several times in December and January to work on the programming and design phases of the project. Their team has significant experience working on library design and has worked on other projects for U of L. They shared some very exciting first thoughts on how we can transform the space based on all the input we have received. We will share these ideas as they develop and when we receive some preliminary designs.

We were approached by the Steelcase furniture company about conducting a study on how furniture might be used in the renovated 1E space. Steelcase has a large research department looking at furniture use in educational settings. A Steelcase team was in Ekstrom recently to observe the space. They returned to provide information that will help our project and we plan to share their findings with JRA.

The User Services Manager position posting recently closed after we had received over 70 applications! The search committee is beginning its review of the applicants. The search committee is chaired by Margo Smith with the other members being Alice Abbott-Moore, Matt Goldberg, and Gwendline Chenault.

Congratulations, Regina!

Mrs. Regina Brown was recently recognized by the University of Louisville Physical Plant as Employee of the Year during a breakfast held in her honor at the University Club. Mrs. Brown received zone 8's Spirit Award and Mayor Greg Fischer's Office presented her with a framed proclamation declaring November 4, 2014 as Regina Brown Day. Physical Plant also presented her with a lovely UofL ladies wrist watch as a symbol of the department's appreciation.

Remember to check the 1E Renovation website for updates and for information about the project background and goals.

Promotion
Effective 12/12/14 Angela Ren has been promoted the position of Library Specialist, Kornhauser Library Technical Services. Angela will report the Elizabeth Osoffsky. Congratulations to Angie!

Reference and Information Literacy

Georgia International Information Literacy Conference
Toccara Porter and Samantha McClellan presented "Expanding Our Reach: Integrating Softchalk Modules to Impact Student Learning Outside of the Library" at the Georgia International Information Literacy Conference, in Savannah, Georgia on October 10, 2014.

Rob Detmering and Anna Marie Johnson presented "Re-defining Information Literacy in a For-Credit Interdisciplinary Honors Seminar" at the same conference.

Johnson and Whitacre article published
"Seeing Things Differently: Assisting a Student with Blindness in the Research Process" by Anna Marie Johnson and Josh Whitacre was published in issue 4, vol. 78 of *Kentucky Libraries*.

Noel Studio visit
Latisha Reynolds, Barb Whitener, Sue Finley, Rob Detmering, and Anna Marie Johnson went to the Noel Studio at Eastern Kentucky University on October 20, 2014 to learn more about the relationship between the Library and the Studio, and the administration and pedagogy that the Studio uses. We're happy to talk about what we learned. Come ask us!

Statistical highlights from 2013-2014 Information Literacy Instruction efforts

- ✓ **5,103** students attended face-to-face library sessions.
- ✓ **1,255** students completed online information literacy modules in Blackboard.
- ✓ **34** academic departments participated in library instruction.
- ✓ **29** new LibGuides were created by Reference and Information Literacy librarians.
- ✓ **93%** of faculty rated library instruction as excellent or good.
- ✓ **84%** of faculty strongly agreed or agreed that library instruction helps students think more critically about information sources.
- ✓ **100%** of students strongly agreed or agreed that research appointments will help them with future research.

HOLIDAY CHEER!

It all started with one staff member, Brittany Sutton, asking this question: "Can we decorate our doors for Christmas?" It turned into a full-on holiday explosion on the first floor of Ekstrom, with Reference, Circulation and Media participating in what we hope will be the first annual departmental decorating contest.

Next year, we hope to expand and have more than just the first floor participate!

FIRST PLACE – MEDIA RESOURCES

Photos by Karen Nalley

SECOND PLACE - REFERENCE

THIRD PLACE - CIRCULATION

Kornhauser Library

Good news for the Johnson family!

Kathie Johnson is happy to report that the really bad side effects from chemotherapy that her daughter Cassidy was having are a thing of the past. The oncologists were able to tweak the drugs used and find an

effective anti-nausea medication for her. The chemo is still difficult as it makes Cassidy very tired and listless, but she can eat and is not getting sick. November 26 was treatment #6 meaning this is halfway over.

Travel news
Kathie Johnson had a great time in Savannah, Georgia, November 1-4 despite the fact that on Saturday, November 1 the temperatures there were in the 40s with high winds. This did not damper the enthusiasm shared with her friend Phyllis for the city and all it has to offer. They stayed in a hotel on the riverfront, toured the city, then visited four historic homes, two museums, and one historic church, shopped a lot, and ate at a different restaurant for every meal. They learned that Savannah's founder, James Oglethorpe, wanted a colony without slavery but was not able to hold off the economic pressures of the cotton barons.

Welcome, Matt and Todd!
Kornhauser welcomes temporary employees Matt Snyder and Todd Read. Matt is working with the print retention project. Todd recently graduated with an MA in History and is working with Kathie Johnson to get some experience with archival collections.

Area 51
The employees at Kornhauser ventured into "Area 51" for their annual Halloween party. The storage facility at 614 E. Chestnut that we are using for the print retention project is a pretty spooky place and deserves its moniker! Everyone got a tour, along with pizza and pot-luck goodies.

Law Library

Braden Trial exhibit
The Law Library is proud to be hosting the exhibit, "Black Freedom, White Allies & Red Scare: Louisville, 1954," thanks to the generosity of the Anne Braden Institute for Social Justice Research. This moving chronicle of events leading up to and including Carl and Anne Braden's sedition trial will be open to everyone through January 23, 2015. If you did not see the exhibit when it was housed at the Louisville Free Public Library during the fall of 2014, you have another chance! Please stop by during any of the library's operating hours. And if you want to know more about the Braden's story, the NPR show "Here and Now" recently ran a detailed story on the 60th anniversary of the case.

Thank You

Trish Blair
Gwendline Chenault
Robert Fox
Rachel Hodge
Rachel Howard
Anna Marie Johnson
Kathie Johnson
Melissa Laning
Mary K Marlatt
Karen Nalley
Christopher Poché
Jessie Roth
Marcy Werner

... for contributing to this issue of The Owl

DigiNews
Digital Collections Update

By Rachel Howard, Digital Initiatives Librarian

Every month, I check Digital Collections usage reports in WebLogExpert (generated by OLT and available on SharePoint) and Google Analytics (used by Web Services and requiring a subscription to view), and report on my findings to the group of cross-library collaborators concerned with metadata creation, scanning, and server administration for our Digital Collections site.

From these tools, we learn useful information about the operating systems and browsers used to access the site (Chrome is now the most popular); search terms and referring sites that bring them to it; and the most-accessed collections and items in a given month.
Our "page views" generally range between 60,000 and 220,000 per month, with about 80% of them being new users and 20% returning.

Most users come to us from a Google search. This demonstrates the value of detailed metadata. Genealogists search for names; the Herald-Post and Kornhauser History Collections have been particularly rich sources for images of ancestors, but even the Art Library's baseball card collection has been useful for this purpose, as this blog post demonstrates. For some reason, many people each and every month are performing searches that bring them to this image of a Dental School anatomy class from our UofL Images collection.

If you clicked on that link, you will add to the percentage of those who access our site via referral, the second most common method for discovering our site. I scan the list of referring URLs every month; these include the Libraries home page and various LibGuides as well as Wikipedia (we have embedded links to relevant collections in the "External Links" section of Wikipedia pages). Recent referrals to us have also included:
Studio 360 (radio program)'s website, which featured one of our ghost sign images; WFPL promoted the addition of the Burt the Cat fan-zine to the Louisville Underground Music Archive collection; and Broken Sidewalk, a local blog, frequently links to our images.

After referrals, direct links are the next most-used method for accessing our site, following by social media. Facebook is our biggest social referrer; now that the UofL Facebook page is posting images from our collections for "Throwback Thursdays," that number is likely to grow.

Those of us who work to make these materials available online believe that there is value in doing so; it is heartening to see evidence that they are being discovered and used, often in unexpected ways. I am reminded of the library science classic, S. R. Ranganathan's Five Laws of Library Science, with its tenets of "Every reader his book" and "Every book his reader." Updated to this context, the more content we add to Digital Collections, the more possibilities there are for every user to find a relevant digital item, and every digital item (even those representing 1970s-era dental training) to find a user.

I'd like to thank Sarah-Jane Poindexter for her exemplary work organizing the Archives Month award ceremony for Jack Fox. Mr. Fox received the 2014 "Notable Service To and Advocacy of Archives in Kentucky by a Private Citizen or Organization" for his work on the WHAS Oral History Project housed at Archives and Special Collections.

—Heather Fox

Library Exhibits

Archives & Special Collections

Photographic Archives Gallery

Recent Acquisitions to the Fine Print Collection

January – February 2015

Fishermen at Weligama, 1995 by Steve McCurry

Kain Gallery
Pennington Gallery

ACLU of Kentucky:
Moving Justice Forward for 60 Years

January 8 – March 31 2015

Ekstrom Library

1st Floor West Display Cases

Redolent Objects & Identity:
Place, Culture and Common Ground

December 12, 2014 – January 16, 2015

Law Library

First Floor, Reading Room

Black Freedom, White Allies & Red Scare: Louisville, 1954

December 10, 2014 – January 23, 2015

Music Library

First Floor

Works of Wolgang Rihm:
Winner of the 2015 Grawemeyer Award for Music

Through January 2015