Celebrating 40 Years!

The Ruby Anniversary
Red, red, red

No doubt you will notice there is a color theme to this issue: ruby red, which draws attention to 2008 as the 40th—Ruby—anniversary of the Smithsonian Libraries. This issue features an assemblage of ruby-colored images from our collections. On October 30, our Ruby Gala with author David Baldacci will be the capstone to the year. Writing this on October 1, the day after the close of federal fiscal year, I’m glad to say that, thanks to our capable administrative staff, we ended in the black, not the red!

In July we welcomed our new Secretary, G. Wayne Clough, to the Institution. In his October column in Smithsonian Magazine he wrote of his support of libraries, http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/atm-castle-200810.html. To those who predicted our demise, he responded that we “are quickly transforming” ourselves, “from information providers to connectors, of people with common interests with each other, and with millions of images of scientific specimens, historic artifacts, works of art and all kinds of digitized documents about them.” The Smithsonian Libraries is using this year as a springboard to that transformation. With grand environmentally controlled space in a new Smithsonian-leased building in Landover, Md., we have the space to move lesser-used collections and take the pressure from over-stuffed stacks on

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Best-selling author David Baldacci will be a featured guest at the Smithsonian Institution Libraries 40th anniversary gala, *Paint the Town REaD*, Thursday, October 30 at the Kogod Courtyard of the Donald W. Reynolds Center for American Arts and Portraiture. The event, which will also feature a ten-piece band and a silent auction, will benefit the purchase of materials for the Smithsonian’s art libraries.


Born in Virginia where he continues to reside, Baldacci received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Virginia Commonwealth University and law degree from the University of Virginia. Before going on to be a successful author, Mr. Baldacci practiced law for nine years in Washington, D.C., as both a trial and corporate attorney.

Baldacci’s works have been translated into more than 40 languages and sold in more than 80 countries. All of Baldacci’s books have been national and international bestsellers, and over 50 million copies of his books are in print worldwide. Baldacci participates in numerous charitable organizations and is currently the U.S. ambassador for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. He also sits on boards at the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and Virginia Commonwealth University.

For more information about *Paint the Town REaD*, visit: [www/paintthetownread.com](http://www/paintthetownread.com).

—Catherine Fraser
the Washington Mall. Renovations at the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum and the National Museum of Natural History are providing opportunities for us to re-organize reading rooms to provide more flexible spaces for researchers to work together as well as study. We are digitizing collections and experimenting with new communication tools like Twitter, Facebook http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=1502173559&ref=profile#/pages/Smithsonian-Libraries/14518110807, blogs http://smithsonianlibraries.si.edu/, and wikis to interact with our users. Secretary Clough sees our ability to adapt our methods to our historic mission of providing and preserving the Institution’s knowledge resources as pluses, and so do I.

While we celebrate our past, in our strategic planning work this year, we are keeping our eyes focused firmly ahead to the next, exciting, 40 years!—Nancy E. Gwinn

p.s. A “Donate” button now appears on our website. Go to www.sil.si.edu and try it out!
The Future of Information

Libraries, museums and archives are living in times of revolutionary changes, reported James Neal, Vice President for Information Services and University Librarian at Columbia University, and as a result, we are all feeling anxious and disrupted. We have to get rid of the idea that there’s a best way to order information, challenged David Weinberger, best-selling author of *Everything Is Miscellaneous: The Power of the New Digital Disorder*. Neal and Weinberger were speakers in the Libraries’ 40th Anniversary series designed to bring into the Institution new ideas about the future of libraries, archives and museums and the new digital information environment. Co-sponsored by the Office of the Chief Information Officer and the Smithsonian Institution Archives, the series offers top-notch authors, futurists, and librarians to challenge staff to rethink traditional ways of communicating with users and visitors.

“Library 2023: a (provoked) discussion on the future of libraries and librarians(hip)”—Gregg Silvis, Assistant Director for Library Computing Systems, University of Delaware Library asked a group of 100 staff: suppose it is the year 2023 and there are 100 million books online? What would the library look like? He drew the audience into a robust consideration of how library services, space, and collections could change.

“We Can’t Get There From Here: The Intersection of Research Library Aspirations and Copyright Challenges”—James Neal outlined elements affecting user expectations, including personal computing, digital preservation, open source, open content, push technology, and a huge shift to mobile technology. He discussed his experience with the Library of Congress’s Section 108 Study Group, which made recommended exceptions to the copyright law to address how libraries, archives and museums can responsibly handle copyrighted materials in a digital environment. Three more speakers (see right) will conclude the 2008 series.—Marcia Adams

Future speakers:

Roy Tennant, OCLC Programs and Research
“Libraries in a Networked World”
October 23, 2008
10a.m.-12p.m.
S. Dillon Ripley Center, Lecture Hall, 1100 Jefferson Drive, S.W., Washington, DC 20024

R. David Lankes, Director of the Information Institute of Syracuse University
“Not Done Yet: Charting a new Course for Librarianship,”
November 3, 2008
10a.m.-12p.m.
S. Dillon Ripley Center, Lecture Hall, 1100 Jefferson Drive, S.W., Washington, DC 20024

Clay Shirky, New York University, Interactive Telecommunications Program
“Finding Content as a Social Problem,”
November 12, 2008
2p.m.-4p.m.
Location to be determined. Check the Libraries’ blog for updates; http://smithsonianlibraries.si.edu/
Talking with... Ann Juneau, Natural History Library

The increasing availability of digital information forces self-reflection on the part of librarians. What is the necessity of a medium between users and the information itself?

In the Natural History Library, the term ‘reference librarian’ is often a misnomer. The scholars usually come in with specific bibliographic information and the librarians point them to the correct source. In other words, the librarians do not direct them ‘from scratch.’

However, the historical value of the Natural History collections will place unique demands on its librarians in the future. Because the majority of the library’s collection aids research in taxonomy and systematics, scholars often

Libraries Materials to FedScan

On July 31 the Library of Congress picked up the first batch of 198 Entomology and other volumes to be scanned at the Internet Archive FedScan facility.

The scanned volumes will be accessible through the Biodiversity Heritage Library portal, http://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/.

As of September 4, over 1,000 volumes had been sent.

Above: Books leave the National Museum of Natural History for scanning at the Library of Congress.
rely on works that are hundreds of years old to accurately classify certain species. Moreover, certain copies of works in the library contain marginal notes by previous users, which make them uniquely valuable to current scholars.

Unlike other disciplines, which can afford to digitize only recent publications, natural history is still quite reliant on its foundational texts. Head librarian Ann Juneau explained that since the majority of the scholars who currently use the Natural History Library are “aging baby-boomers,” they are still accustomed to working from written text. A younger generation of scholars, however, will have been exposed to an academic climate that encourages online research. It will be the task of the librarians to ensure that this younger generation does not neglect the printed texts that form the historical foundation of their discipline. In other words, one of the chief responsibilities of Natural History librarians will be preserving the place of the past in future research.—Kannan Mahadevan


Opposite: Librarian Ann Juneau, National Museum of Natural History Library.
Strategic Planning

To begin our next 40 years, with the facilitating help of consultants Lou Wetherbee and Susan Loving, the Libraries is developing its strategic plan to shape our future. The plan will demonstrate and foster the Libraries’ leadership role as information broker in an era of rapidly changing technology, while aligning with the Smithsonian Institution’s mission for the increase and diffusion of knowledge. Two Town Hall staff discussions plus a survey identified concerns and issues. A Libraries Steering Committee focused on communication and outreach, customer review, current and emerging research methods, and training and staff development. A sizable

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group of staff used both the web and professional contacts to prepare an analysis of trends in the external environment.

In July, Libraries staff, Advisory Board members and invited guests participated in a two-day retreat to identify core strategies and new programs. They brought a strong customer focus to discussions about the best communication tools and the need to help staff develop appropriate skills. It was a forward-looking group, working under the principle that 20% of our enterprise should be spent on keeping things going and 80% should be spent on things that move the Libraries toward its goals. Retreat participants and volunteers are now working to flesh out strategies, refine projects, and seek additional initiatives.—Marcia Adams & Mary Augusta Thomas
Three new exhibitions featuring Libraries collections are opening this year.

Stephen Van Dyk, Librarian at the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum in New York, curated *Wall Stories: Children’s Wallpaper and Books*, which opened on October 3. On display are 30 wallcoverings dating back to the 1870s and the books that inspired them. Think *Pilgrim’s Progress*, *Peter Rabbit*, *Winnie the Pooh*, *Alice in Wonderland* and children’s nursery rhymes. It’s also an exploration of children’s literature.

*Picturing Words: The Power of Book Illustration* opens November 21 in the Libraries Gallery on the first floor of the National Museum of American History as part of the re-opening of the renovated museum. Displaying 40 volumes from the Libraries’ extensive rare books collection, the exhibit explores the function, power and beauty of book illustration throughout history, as well as highlighting the history of illustration technology. Guest curators Helena Wright and Joan Boudreau of the Graphic Arts Division of the National Museum of American History have brought considerable expertise to the presentation.

*The Art of African Exploration* opens December 9 in two magnificent, new, custom-built exhibition cases in the Constitution Avenue lobby of the National Museum of Natural History, featuring visual materials from the Russell E. Train Africana Collection, including printed illustrations, portraits, illustrated books, and original art. Libraries’ staff Kirsten van der Veen and Daria Wingreen-Mason served as curators and selected such items as original pen and ink drawings by the famous explorer Richard Francis Burton (1821-1890), which he used in *Zanzibar: City, Island, Coast, 1872*, also on display.
When George Zug, Smithsonian Emeritus Research Zoologist, first arrived at the National Museum of Natural History, most of the library materials in the division of amphibians and reptiles originated from the personal collections of the scientists and researchers and subsequent donations of books and periodicals by SI curators. Eventually, Jim Peters, head curator of the division from 1964-1972, created SHIS or the Smithsonian Herpetological Information Series. After Peters’s death, Zug continued publishing the series and established an exchange program with other herpetological organizations for their periodicals. The exchange provided scientists and researchers with many serials, especially herpetocultural publications that were largely inaccessible in academic libraries. Zug says the exchange has enabled the division to keep up with current literature.

"Over my career at the Smithsonian," he said, "and especially during the past decade and a half, many new herpetological periodicals have appeared but the inflationary shrinkage of the Libraries’ budget has prevented us from subscribing to these and most have not been available for exchange."

However, Zug has now ensured that future scientists will not have the same problem. Ten years ago, the Zug family (wife Pat and children Jon and Erin) established a limited liability corporation for their philanthropic and financial goals. Recently, the family decided to dissolve the LLC and donated the proceeds to the Libraries to establish the Zug Family Amphibian and Reptile Endowment for the Smithsonian Institution Libraries.

Director Nancy E. Gwinn was thrilled to receive the donation. “When an active library user—and one of our leading scientists—gives back in this way, it is very special,” she noted. “An endowment will keep on giving to support the work of future colleagues.”

—Catherine Fraser
The Libraries 40th Anniversary Gala

Featured Guest David Baldacci

Paint the Town REaD

October 30, 2008

The Kogod Courtyard of the Donald W. Reynolds Center for American Art and Portraiture