New Library Building in Panama

On March 16 the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI) in the Republic of Panama held an inaugural ceremony to open the renovated library building and a new 4-story library stack annex. The STRI Branch Library, which houses a collection of 55,000 volumes of scientific works relating to the tropics, has served as the premiere Central American research library for the scientific community since 1956. The Branch serves over 1,500 users monthly, including Smithsonian staff of the Institute, an international community of students in the natural sciences and anthropology, and students from the University of Panama majoring in the biological sciences. Librarian Vielka Chang-Yau assisted by Library Technicians Angel Aguirre, Elizabeth Sanchez, and Ricardo Beteta answer an average of 965 reference questions a month. Three volunteers assist with other tasks.

Books and scientific journals, collections of maps, and microform copies of journals are housed in the 1,800-square-meter annex with appropriate environmental controls. Designed and built as a double-lined, insulated structure with a 24-hour air conditioning system, the annex ensures the protection needed in this tropical climate to preserve the invaluable research collection.

The library boasts one of the finest and most complete bibliographic collections in tropical biology. Collection strengths are Mesoamerican archaeology,

Continued on page 6

Bonita Perry, Vielka Chang-Yau, and Barbara J. Smith at new library annex in Panama
COMING EVENTS

DIBNER LIBRARY LECTURE

"Chemistry Imagined"
by Roald Hoffmann
of Cornell University

An illustrated public lecture
May 30, 1995
4:00 p.m.

Reception Suite
National Museum of American History

Based on the Smithsonian Institution Press publication, Chemistry Imagined (1993, 1995) by Roald Hoffmann and Vivian Torrence

Presented in conjunction with the Libraries’ exhibition Science and the Artist’s Book

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LIBRARY FAIR

October 19, 1995
10 a.m.-4 p.m.
Ripley Center

Smithsonian Institution Libraries presents demonstrations of library services and products, featuring the CD-ROM Network, Internet, and World Wide Web. Staff available to answer questions, two lectures scheduled.

Call 202-357-2139 for information

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Libraries’ Reach

The Smithsonian Institution Libraries’ first priority is to serve the information needs of the researchers and staff of the Smithsonian. We do, additionally, serve a wider community and with considerable impact. In the two branches featured in this issue (pages 1 and 3), a service emphasis is users from outside the Smithsonian community. The Libraries’ Exchange Program includes 4,614 partners at libraries, museums, research institutes, and universities in 150 countries, with 1,215 in the United States. The program offers publications of the Smithsonian in exchange for those of our partners. Through Interlibrary Loan the Libraries answers annually approximately 5,200 requests for information from other libraries. Information about the Libraries is available on the Internet; the catalog of our holdings is available there as well (telnet\siris.si.edu). Questions by phone and written inquiry from the public are answered routinely by staff in all our locations, although more slowly of late given constraints on staff time. With the support of The Getty Grant Program, the Libraries will create an online index and guide to the literature of African art and culture over the next three years. Through the Internet, students and scholars of African art and culture will have at their desktop computers access to some 52,000 citations for publications including books and journal articles of value to researchers as well as students and laymen interested in topics concerning African life. The announcement of the availability of the index and guide will be shared widely.

Selected rare books and special items are displayed in the Libraries’ Exhibition Gallery adjacent to the Dibner Library of the History of Science and Technology in the National Museum of American History where the bulk of our rare book collection is now housed. The Gallery provides the Libraries with an important vehicle for making the public aware of the riches in our collections and the value of books and words on paper in making connections to the past, whether focused on the physical or natural sciences, the arts, or the humanities. Science and the Artist’s Book is on view May 26, 1995 through May 28, 1996. This thought-provoking exhibition is based on the Heralds of Science identified by the Libraries’ benefactor Dr. Bern Dibner as “landmarks in the history of science and technology.”

Through the generosity of The Dibner Fund, the Libraries supports research directly by hosting two scholars annually whose work qualifies them as worthy students of the history of science and technology.

Barbara J. Smith

RECENT GIFTS TO THE LIBRARIES’ COLLECTIONS

A copy of Thunberg’s Drawings of Japanese Plants (1994) and the four-volume set of Siebold’s Florilegium of Japanese Plants (1994) were recently added to the collections. The volumes were a gift to the Museum of Natural History by the publisher, the Maruzen Company, Ltd., of Tokyo, Japan. These collections of illustrations which have been in the library of the Komarov Institute in St. Petersburg, Russia, since the mid 1800s, have never been published before. The reproductions are of very high quality and add an important resource to the Botany Branch collections.
**Museum Reference Center**

The Museum Reference Center (MRC) branch library and information center, one of the gems of the Smithsonian Institution Libraries' 18-branch system, is the first-line reference resource for museological information. Established in 1974 to merge all the various collections of museum reference material located throughout the Smithsonian, the Museum Reference Center houses one of the largest collections of bibliographic and documentary materials related to museum theory and practice in the United States. Patterned after the UNESCO/ICOM (International Council of Museums) Documentation Centre in Paris, the collections today include over 4,000 books, 70 current journal titles, 1,500 microfiche of ICOM indexed documents, the audio cassettes of the American Association of Museums' annual meetings since 1979, and 90 running feet of vertical files. These information sources are the tools of the trade for the many museum professionals who are regular users of this branch.

In contrast to some of the other branches of the Libraries' system, approximately half of the Museum Reference Center visitors and users are members of the public rather than Smithsonian staff. Regular customers are local university students from the George Washington University museum studies program, visiting scholars and fellows, and museum professionals from the national and international communities. The MRC branch works closely with the Institution's Center for Museum Studies (CMS), formerly known as the Office of Museum Programs, supporting the research and information needs of its staff, and actively participating in the educational and training programs held regularly by the CMS for museum professionals around the world.

The Museum Reference Center provides a full range of reference services including online database access. The wealth as well as the distinction of its reference service is located in the ephemera contained in the MRC vertical files. These materials include examples of collection management policies, by-laws, charters, educational programs, docent manuals, tourism information, membership and fundraising promotions, visitor surveys and evaluation studies, and training and exhibit techniques. The branch library provides files of "Current Information" for its patrons which hold news releases, calendars, exhibition notices, and information about scholarships, workshops, and conferences.

The Museum Reference Center is located adjacent to the Center for Museum Studies in the Arts and Industries Building, 900 Jefferson Drive, NW, Room 2235. Valerie Wheat is Librarian and Robert Poarch is Library Technician. The branch is open Monday through Friday, 8:45 am - 5:15 pm, except Federal holidays. Visitors from outside the Institution are asked to telephone for an appointment. Telephone: 202-786-2271.

Valerie Wheat

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**Publications**

"The Ricketts Index of the United States and Possessions," *Philatelic Literature Review (PLR)*, 2nd series, 44 (no. 1): 13-63. The index which Ricketts began to compile in the 1890s and covers the years 1853 to 1927 will be published serially in the next 12 issues of PLR. The original index cards are in the collections of the National Postal Museum Branch. The compiler, William R. Ricketts (1869-1956), is described as "the greatest indexer in philatelic history" by Dr. Herbert A. Trenchard, Trustee of the American Philatelic Research Library. Timothy Carr, Librarian of the National Postal Museum Branch, cooperated with PLR in making Ricketts' index cards available for publication.


The Getty Grant Program has awarded the Libraries $197,250 for a three-year project to create records of an Online Index and Finding Guide to the Literature of African Art and Culture. International in scope, the index is a powerful educational tool for all levels of students of African art and culture. With its 52,000 citations to subjects in articles and books, the index will be available on the Internet as part of the Libraries’ online catalog.

The project is under the direction of Janet Stanley, Librarian, Museum of African Art Branch, and Vicki Avera, Cataloging Department.

This relatively young discipline reaches across fields in the humanities and social sciences, covering subjects ranging from design to oral traditions. The index responds to the public’s growing interest in non-Western art and increasing demands from scholars and the public alike for information in this expanding field.

The index will use authoritative subject terms from the Art and Architecture Thesaurus (AAT), the Library of Congress List of Subject Headings, as well as new terms proposed by the Libraries’ subject specialists for the AAT.

The Dibner Fund has awarded a grant of $12,000 to the Libraries, $10,000 to support the fourth year of the SIL/Dibner Library Resident Scholar Program, and $2,000 to fund the Dibner Library Lecture Series. (See p. 5 for 1995 scholars, p. 2 for 1995 lecture)

The Smithsonian Women’s Committee recently made two grants to the Libraries: one for $15,000 to support an official 150th anniversary exhibition, From Smithson to Smithsonian: The Birth of an Institution. The exhibition is a joint endeavor of the Libraries, the Smithsonian Archives, and the Office of Architectural History and Historic Preservation. A second grant of $986 to the Preservation Services Department is to purchase special foam book supports to protect rare books when being used by researchers.

Other Exhibition Awards: The Libraries received a grant of $25,480 from the Special Exhibition Fund for Science and the Artist’s Book which opens May 26. The Glen Eagles Foundation contributed $15,000 towards funding this exhibition which is co-sponsored by the Washington Project for the Arts. (See p. 8, Calendar)

The Pauline Tina Lesnik Memorial Fund proceeds will be used for acquisitions in all branches. The fund is in memory of Ms. Lesnik (1948-1994), head of the Acquisitions Services Department from 1987 to November 1993, who died in a highway accident in Colorado in December, 1994.

The Lillian Saxe Memorial Fund has been established by family and friends of Mrs. Saxe (1913-1995) to purchase library materials relating to Japanese art and culture. The Libraries purchased several valuable books with funds received in honor of Mrs. Saxe on her eightieth birthday in 1993.

The Wells Endowment Fund in memory of Ellen Baker Wells (1934-1995) and her father Professor John W. Wells, paleontologist emeritus of Cornell University, was established at Ms. Wells’ direction. Proceeds from the fund will be used to purchase rare printed and manuscript materials relating to science, technology, and instrumentation. Ms. Wells, head of the Libraries’ Special Collections Department from 1979 and Libraries’ Exhibition Officer from 1990, died of cancer on April 2. She had curated a number of exhibitions for the Libraries’ Gallery. A respected author, she was co-author of The Annotated Black Beauty (1989) and the popular Libraries’ pamphlet, Book Collecting and the Care of Books, and she published in a number of other fields. (See Information # 77 for summary of Ms. Wells’ career, p. 2)
Special Collections

Natural History Rare Book Library

Some of the oldest and rarest materials in the Libraries' Special Collections will be moved to a new Natural History Rare Book Library, scheduled to open in 1998. Architectural plans provide for optimal environmental conditions to preserve these valuable materials. The library will have study space for readers with wiring for their personal computers, and a secured area for the books, maps, manuscripts, and other library materials. The Library, to be constructed in the East Court of the National Museum of Natural History (NMNH), will consolidate special collections materials in all fields of natural history and anthropology, and assure environmentally sound housing for these Smithsonian treasures, many of which are irreplaceable.

Practical manuals like John Coakley Lettsom's collector's manual, 1774, are of particular interest to Smithsonian staff who study specimens in the Institution's natural history collections.

The Library has been located in the Museum of Natural History to better serve the primary users of the natural history and anthropology library collections. The library's design includes a small exhibit area with exhibition cases for temporary displays. The Libraries also plans to show selections from the Audubon double elephant folio Birds of America, on permanent loan from the National Audubon Society.

The largest transfer of materials will come from the Jewett Room in the Arts and Industries Building which since the 1970s has housed Libraries' special collections materials in the fields of natural history and expeditions and voyages of exploration. Charles Coffin Jewett, for whom the room was named, was the Institution's first librarian, appointed by the Board of Regents in 1847.

Manuscripts and printed volumes in various natural history subjects, currently housed for security and environmental protection in the Dibner Library of the History of Science and Technology (located in the National Museum of American History) and which are not part of the Burndy Library gift, will be moved to the new library. The special collections in anthropology which include impressive materials on Native Americans will be transferred to the facility. Other valuable books now housed in locked closets, wire cages, and on secured shelves in other parts of the Natural History building will also be housed there. In total, some 14,000 volumes will be shelved in this 5,000 square foot library.

Federal funds have been made available for construction. The responsibility to raise private funds to furnish, to provide staff, and to operate the library once construction is complete has been charged to the Libraries.

SIL / Dibner Library Resident Scholars

Supported by the Dibner Fund for the study of the history of science and technology, the Libraries welcomes the 1995 scholars.

Kenneth L. Caneva, Associate Professor of History at University of North Carolina, Greensboro, is conducting a study of 19th-century physics, with attention to physiology in connection with his study of Robert Mayer and the conservation of energy.

Bruce Janacek, a Ph.D. candidate at University of California, Davis, will work with the more than 130 manuscripts and publications in the Dibner Library relating to alchemy for his study of the religious significance of alchemy in early modern England.
Jean Hines was appointed Reference Librarian at the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum Branch. She comes to the Libraries from the Pratt Institute where she was the art and architecture librarian. She also worked at New York Public Library as librarian for the art collection at the Mid-Manhattan Library. Ms. Hines earned her M.L.S. at C. W. Post Long Island University, and her B. A. in art from Oswego State University, New York.

Margaret D'Ambrosio, Cataloger, on leave of absence through January 1996, is serving as resource librarian at the Biblioteca Berenson, the Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies in Fiesole, overlooking Florence, Italy. The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation provided funds for the automation of four Florentine libraries, the Biblioteca Berenson, the Biblioteca degli Uffizi, and the libraries of the Fondazione Roberto Longhi and the Dutch University Institute. The newly installed automated system will enable readers to search library catalogs available on the Internet. Ms. D'Ambrosio is providing guidance in training staff, consulting on issues of bibliographic control, and serving as a resource person developing standards for a union catalog.

CD-ROM Network Upgraded

The Libraries has upgraded the equipment in its CD-ROM Network, increasing the number of CD-ROMs that are available at one time. The Network allows quick access by Smithsonian library users through local area networks to a sizeable library of discs. The CD-ROM Network, established in 1991 with funds provided by the James Smithson Society, is heavily used, providing Smithsonian researchers with remote access from their desktop computers to indexes and abstracts of information published in CD-ROM format. Databases now available are Agricola (agriculture), American History and Life, Art Index, Bibliography of Native North Americans, Biological Abstracts, ERIC (education), Periodicals Abstracts, The Species Information Library, Wildlife and Fisheries Review, and Zoological Record.

NEW LIBRARY BUILDING  CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

anthropology, geology, evolutionary biology, ecology, plant physiology, molecular biology, behavioral ecology, paleoecology and paleobotany, entomology, marine invertebrates, tropical forest dynamics, plant systematics, coral reefs, and conservation and management of protected areas. Librarian Vielka Chang-Yau commented, “This library collection is truly a biologist’s paradise.”

The collection grew from a core of 60 volumes donated in 1925 by Barbour Lathrop and housed on Barro Colorado Island in the Panama Canal. In 1956 the collection of James Zetek was added, in the 1970s the volumes were transferred to Panama City, and in 1983 STRI moved the Library to a new building named for its benefactor Earl Silas Tupper.

The annex was funded by the Tupper Foundation, with the support and assistance of STRI Director Ira Rubinoff. Members of the Tupper family attended the inauguration ceremony where a bust of Earl Silas Tupper was unveiled. Others in attendance were Libraries’ Director Barbara J. Smith and Bonita Perry, Assistant Director, Research Services, Dora de Perez Ballardes, wife of the President of Panama, and members of the diplomatic corps, the cabinet and legislature, and the local library and business communities.

The exterior wall of the annex is decorated with a colorful mosaic titled “The Exchange” (El Trueque) by Panamanian artist Brooke Alfaro. The title refers to the role of the Isthmus of Panama in both biological and international commercial exchanges.

The STRI Branch Library is open Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.; and Saturdays 9 a.m.-12 noon, except on U. S. Federal holidays and on Panamanian holidays.

Vielka Chang-Yau
**SIL NEWS DIGEST**

**Users Advisory Committee**


**MEDIA FAIR**

Libraries' staff participated in the Institution-wide Media Fair held on January 31 in the Information Age space at the Museum of American History which showcased the latest information resources offered by numerous Smithsonian offices. Tom Garnett, Systems Head, gave a presentation on SIRIS, the Smithsonian Institution Research Information System. Martin Kalfatovic, Information Access Coordinator. Anne Gifford, Systems, Amy Begg, American History Branch, and Alvin Hutchinson, Natural History Branch, gave demonstrations of Libraries' services and products including the Digital Imaging CD-ROM, Word Wide Web access, SIRIS, First Search, the CD-ROM Network, and the Libraries' catalog on CD-ROM. The demonstrations generated great interest among the attendees. Mimi Scharf and Anne Gifford, Systems, set up and took down the equipment in record time.

**IN BRIEF**

**Preservation Microfilm Storage**

Benefitting from membership in the Research Libraries Group (RLG) preservation program, the Libraries is now storing its preservation microfilm master negatives in a secure climate-controlled vault at the National Underground Storage in Pennsylvania. Providing optimal archival storage conditions off-site brings the Libraries into compliance with standards developed by RLG, the Library of Congress, and the Association for Information and Image Management.

"Come Up in My Balloon"

SIL presented 4 public performances of music about balloons written between 1890 and 1910, from the collections of the Air and Space Museum Branch Library. Performed by U.S. Navy Band Sea Chanters, Ron Chiles, Director, with Dwight Bowers, National Museum of American History, as Master of Ceremonies.
END NOTES

Calendar of Exhibitions

LIBRARIES EXHIBITION GALLERY
National Museum of American History, first floor, west wing
10:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m. daily

May 26 - November 3, 1995

Science and the Artist’s Book, Part 1 Co-sponsored by the Washington Project for the Arts
Carol Barton and Diane Shaw, curators
Part 2 shown May 26 - September 2, 1995
at the Washington Project for the Arts, 400 7th Street NW

November 17, 1995 - May 28, 1996

Science and the Artist’s Book, Part 2

Opening July 1996
From Smithson to Smithsonian: The Birth of an Institution
Co-sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution Archives and Office of Architectural History and Historic Preservation
Pamela Henson, curator

SIL LIBRARY HALL
National Museum of Natural History, first floor, east hall
Restricted access. Call Director’s Office, 202-357-2240, for appointment to view

Opens July 1995
Nineteenth-century Publisher’s Bindings
Claire Dekle, curator