Spencer Baird Society Established at SIL

There is a new spirit of excitement at the Smithsonian Libraries these days, a collective sense of energy that has taken hold of our friends, users, and staff alike. A central focus of this energy is the creation of the Spencer Baird Society, the Libraries' premiere donor recognition organization. The Baird Society, named for the Smithsonian's second Secretary, recognizes those who provide significant philanthropic support for top priority projects of the Libraries and offers opportunities to become involved in our activities and programs. Friends who make a commitment through the Baird Society will share first-hand in our new ventures, such as learning about the latest techniques in book conservation; observing production of electronic editions of rare scientific volumes; participating in educational programs centered around one of our exhibitions; or examining wonderful new Libraries' acquisitions.

Who can join the Spencer Baird Society? Anyone who makes a gift of at least $500 each year will become a member, and those who join before September 30, 1999 will be named Charter Members. Unrestricted annual gifts to the Spencer Baird Society are encouraged; restricted gifts to underwrite a specific program or service of the Libraries also qualify you for membership. Our earliest members have made unrestricted donations or provided funds for acquisitions in specific subjects, added to existing Libraries' endowments, and supported special projects. These are only a few of the options. We are happy to discuss other possibilities with you depending on your particular interests and circumstances.

The Spencer Baird Society has three levels of membership: Benefactor ($2,000 per year), Patron ($1,000 per year), and Associate ($500 per year). All Baird Society members will be included in special behind-the-scenes tours and programs planned for the Society by the Libraries' staff, and at the higher levels members will receive more personalized services. It is a special goal of Libraries' Director Nancy E. Gwinn to become acquainted with every Baird Society member and forge a partnership between Society members and the Libraries that will be mutually rewarding.

How will Baird Society contributions be used by the Libraries? All unrestricted funds will be allocated to top priorities according to the discretion of Dr. Gwinn. Some possible uses are acquiring unusual

continued on page four
Thomas Award

The Smithsonian honored Mary Augusta Thomas in June with the Secretary's Award for Excellence in Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO). The award was based on a variety of leadership efforts in the Libraries and in the Institution for which Mary Augusta has been responsible in her 23-year career at SIL. As an active member of the Institution's Equal Opportunity Advisory Council, she assisted in developing criteria for the award which appropriately was bestowed on her this year.

Her commitment to EEO is demonstrated by the "team environment" she created as the Libraries' EEO officer "in which each individual recognizes the importance of his/her position to the attainment of the Libraries' mission ... Her crusade for diversity and equal opportunity at the Libraries and the Institution has provided new opportunities for individuals of all backgrounds" (quoted from Secretary's Award). She also has worked with selecting officials at SIL on recruit-

LETERM FROM THE DIRECTOR

Who Is Spencer Baird?

July marked the launch of the Spencer Baird Society, the Libraries' first annual giving and donor recognition organization. But who, you might ask, is Spencer Baird?

Spencer Fullerton Baird was the third person to join the staff of the brand new Smithsonian Institution. Arriving in 1850, the young Pennsylvania naturalist already had a distinguished career as a teacher and numerous contacts with such leading figures as John James Audubon. Baird's broad scope of activity working under Joseph Henry, the Institution's first Secretary, included operation of the international exchange system for books, periodicals, and specimens; the publication of the Smithsonian's Contributions to Knowledge, support of American scientists; and assurance that trained collectors accompanied expeditions to explore the American west. On top of this, Baird conducted an extensive research program to collect and identify the flora and fauna of the North American continent, specializing himself in birds and fish.

When Baird became Secretary in 1878, he promoted and built the U.S. National Museum, the progenitor of the complex of Smithsonian museums that exist today. He knew that for efficient research, the National Museum's staff needed a library close at hand where the books and journals that documented the collections could be easily found. The Smithsonian owned a library, but in 1866 Joseph Henry had placed it on permanent deposit with the Library of Congress, where it served the needs of a growing nation. Baird donated his extensive personal collection to the U.S. National Museum as the basis for a supplementary "working" library. Thus Baird's library became the core of our Smithsonian Institution Libraries and Spencer Baird our true founder. Now numbering over 1.2 million volumes, the Libraries' collection joins the Smithsonian museums' objects and artifacts as national treasures, rich with specialized and rare volumes that mirror the Institution's interests.

Baird's generous donation set a precedent. Won't you consider joining his society, the Spencer Baird Society, and make your own contribution to help carry on his legacy?

Nancy E. Gwinn
Director

"Authors Working in the Smithsonian Libraries"

"Telephone, Tractors, and Trains" was the title of Russell Flinchum's January 24 illustrated talk on his book about Henry Dreyfuss, Industrial Designer: The Man in the Brown Suit (1997). In collaboration with The Smithsonian Associates, the Libraries offered two free programs for TSA members featuring writers who have conducted research for their books at the Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum Branch in New York City. Branch Librarian Stephen Van Dyk introduced both speakers. TSA plans to continue the series, "Authors Working in the Smithsonian Libraries," with a program in January.

Dreyfuss color study for John Deere tractor, 1959.

Nancy E. Gwinn
Director
Airmail, V-mail, rocket mail, missile mail, Mr. Zip, zip+4, commemoratives, definitives, lick & stick, self-stick, block of four, plate blocks, postal cards, stationery, Benjamin Franklin, Marvin Runyon, Cinderellas, Pony Express, overprints, spide press and many more materials of interest to the historian, collector, and hobbyist. The examples noted are part of the philatelic and postal history of the United States, with representative materials for each topic in the library. These items, along with books and articles in journals and newsletters devoted to each of those particular subjects are available for study to staff of the Postal Museum and other parts of the Smithsonian as well as to outside scholars and interested members of the public.

Most philatelic literature in general, and this library collection in particular, was researched and written by the collectors themselves. Their publications often require years of research, and the finished publication is frequently donated to the Smithsonian Institution Libraries by the author or by another devoted collector.

The collectors who acquired the postal history literature are part of the “hidden history” of the branch. George Turner, a former Smithsonian curator at the Museum of History and Technology (now known as the National Museum of American History) collected stamp literature assiduously. His collection weighed in excess of twelve tons. Thaddeus Hyatt, the father of preventive dentistry, helped form the section on philately at the Brooklyn Institute of Arts & Sciences at the turn of the 19th century. He later developed a postal museum in his home in Brooklyn. William Ricketts created philatelic indexes while managing the family ice, lumber and coal businesses near Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania. Hundreds of other collectors have contributed material to the branch. Two publications derived from information in gift collections now in the branch library demonstrate the popular and continuing interest in philatelic literature. The William Ricketts Index and the George Turner listing of Anglo-American philatelic literature, compiled by two philatelists extraordinaire, were published by the 55,000+ member American Philatelic Society.

The National Postal Museum Branch Library was established in 1993 when the museum opened its doors to the public. Situated in the remodeled City Post Office building, next to Union Station and a few blocks north of the Capitol, the branch houses 3,000 books, 3,700 serials, and nearly 400 feet of manuscripts. The Branch Librarian, Tim Carr, is assisted by Dawn Hawkins, Library Technician, and several knowledgeable and loyal volunteers.

Librarian's Favorites

Cinderella Stamps

The Libraries’ National Postal Museum branch collects the literature of Cinderella philately. Examples of Cinderellas are Christmas seals, registration labels, bogus and phantom issues, telegraph stamps, local stamps, fiscal (revenues) and advertising and exhibition labels, and almost everything not issued by governments for postage. The broad collecting field of Cinderella philately provides an introduction to stamp collecting. Because they are often given away as promotional materials, they can be easily collected by newcomers to philately. Due to their non-postage status, they are normally not included in general philatelic catalogs. And while Cinderellas are not collected by the National Postal Museum, the NPM Branch Library keeps books and journals with articles about Cinderellas available for library users, recognizing the philately community’s interest in this varied and colorful field.
Grant for Preservation

The Smithsonian Women’s Committee made a grant of $12,296.50 to the Libraries for purchase of 840 protective enclosures for rehousing rare natural history books. This grant is particularly valuable now, as the Libraries prepares to move the vast majority of natural history rare books from a variety of storage facilities to the new Natural History Rare Book Library in the National Museum of Natural History next year. The custom-designed enclosures will both protect the most threatened volumes during the move and provide long-term environmental protection in the new branch.

Development Watch

continued from page one

or especially important rare books, purchasing new equipment to support our collections digitizing efforts, providing stipends for a book conservation graduate fellow or a minority postgraduate residency for a young librarian, cataloging a new collection, or enabling conservation treatments of rare, but fragile volumes. Each year, the Director will report to Baird Society members on the use of their collective donations.

We are actively planning the Baird Society’s first year programs and will soon send members information about our plans. To whet your appetite, all Baird Society members will be invited to be among the first to see the Libraries’ newest branch, opening soon at the Cultural Resources Center of the National Museum of the American Indian. Members will also receive invitations to a private preview in November of the Libraries’ next exhibition, “Make the Dirt Fly!,” which focuses on the construction of the Panama Canal.

SIL Acquires a “Herald of Science”

Guido Guidi’s Chirurgia è Graeco in Latinum Conversa (Paris 1544), p. 435

Gifts from both the Smithsonian National Board Annual Giving Fund and the Office of the Provost enabled the Libraries to purchase Guido Guidi’s Chirurgia è Graeco in Latinum Conversa (Paris 1544) for the Dibner Library of the History of Science and Technology. This 16th-century folio has visual depictions and descriptive text valuable to understanding the early medical arts. The book is exquisitely illustrated with over 200 woodcuts of surgical instruments and procedures, bandages, and orthopedic machinery. Guidi translated and added commentaries to an assortment of ancient texts by Hippocrates, Galen, and Oribasius which had been compiled in the 10th-century by Nicetas. Part of the text is traceable to a 1st-century manuscript, providing a direct link to the Hippocratic tradition of medicine. The importance of Guidi’s work to the history of medicine led Bern Dibner to list it as #118 in his Heralds of Science (1955, 1980), a bibliography of the 200 seminal works in science and technology that have contributed to man’s understanding of the universe. In 1976, a portion of Bern Dibner’s collection, some 10,000 books and 1,800 manuscript groups, was donated to the Institution, including nearly all of the Heralds. The Guidi copy is one of only four Heralds not previously held in the Smithsonian Libraries.

Joining the Spencer Baird Society is easy. Simply complete the enclosed reply form in the center of this newsletter and return it with your donation to Nancy E. Gwinn, Director, Smithsonian Institution Libraries, NHB 22, Washington, D.C. 20560-0154. If you have additional questions about the Baird Society or other ways of supporting the Libraries, please call Gwen Leighty, Development Officer, at 202-786-2875, or email to gleighty@sil.si.edu.

Thomas Award,

continued from page two

This spring, Mary Augusta was elected to the American Library Association (ALA) Council for a 4-year term. The Council is the governing body of the 55,000-member association and determines all association policies. She also served as president of the District of Columbia Library Association, the 450-member local chapter of the ALA, this past year.

Guido Guidi's Chirurgia è Graeco in Latinum Conversa (Paris 1544), p. 435

Dale Miller
Development Assistant

Gwen Leighty
Development Officer

Dale Miller
Development Assistant
Special Collections

SIL Co-sponsors Curtis Symposium

“Edward S. Curtis and The North American Indian Re-Viewed,” a symposium held November 16, 1998, was co-sponsored by SIL and the National Anthropological Archives. Held in connection with American Indian Heritage Month, the symposium featured a documentary film-maker and three descendants of Native Americans photographed by Edward S. Curtis.


The afternoon panel discussion was led by documentary film-maker Anne Makepeace.

She is currently in production on “The Curtis Project,” a documentary film for public television. Panelists included Smithsonian staff Paula Richardson Fleming, photograph archivist at the National Anthropological Archives (National Museum of Natural History) and George Horse Capture (A’Ani, Gros Ventre), deputy assistant director for cultural resources at the National Museum of the American Indian. Horse Capture’s grandfather was the subject of one of Curtis’s famed photogravures. Other panelists were Gloria Cranmer Webster (Kwakiutl) of Alert Bay, British Columbia, Canada, and Hartman H. Lomawaima (Hopi) of Sipaulovi village on Second Mesa, Arizona. Webster, former director of the U’miata Cultural Centre in Alert Bay, is the granddaughter of Curtis’s interpreter for his 1914 film, “In the Land of the Head-Hunters.” Lomawaima, like Horse Capture the grandson of a Curtis subject, is associate director of the Arizona State Museum and associate curator of ethnology on the faculty of University of Arizona, Tucson.


from left, Mick Gidley, Gloria Cranmer Webster, George Horse Capture, Paula Richardson Fleming, Hartman H. Lomawaima, Anne Makepeace, William E. Baxter

Greg Wickliff

Wickliff with D. P. Todd’s Photographs of the Corona Taken During the Total Eclipse of the Sun (1889)

Dibner Library Resident Scholar Greg Wickliff, Associate Professor at University of North Carolina at Charlotte, is researching photographically illustrated 19th-century books and serials in science and technology, looking at the claims for truth made by scientists for the evidence presented in early photographs. Nineteenth-century astronomers were especially sensitive to both the potential strengths and the weaknesses of written arguments based on photographic evidence, an area where the Dibner Library collection is strong. Wickliff remarks, “one notable book in the Dibner Library’s collections which I found quite useful is Charles Piazzi Smyth’s presentation copy to Smithsonian Secretary Samuel P. Langley of his Report on the Teneriffe Astronomical Experiment of 1856 (1858).” The Dibner Library Resident Scholar Program is supported by The Dibner Fund.
The annual Dibner Library Lecture, supported by The Dibner Fund, was delivered on May 21 by Charles Brownell of Virginia Commonwealth University on the theme of "Horrors! Changing Views of the American Victorian House." Linking to this year’s Washington Collegium for the Humanities’ lecture series on “Changing Perspectives in History, Art and Culture,” Brownell presented illustrations of the Victorian house as a cultural landmark that has in the past few decades evoked settings for horror movies and novels, providing ghostly images for pulp fiction in the horror genre. His engaging slide presentation tracked the enduring effects on American perceptions of the Victorian house of an Edward Hopper painting, a William Faulkner story, and a Charles Addams cartoon. The Collegium is a consortium of nine local institutions which includes the Smithsonian Libraries. The free, public lecture was held in the Carmichael Auditorium of the National Museum of American History.

Treasures of the Libraries’ collections that have previously required a visit to SIL branches are now available to anyone with Internet access. As part of its Electronic Library Program, the Libraries opened its Imaging Center on March 2 where SIL staff are producing digital editions of selected holdings from the Libraries’ collections and publishing them online at www.sil.si.edu. A collateral benefit to this digital editions program is that access to online editions will reduce handling of fragile originals, thereby extending the life of materials in the collections.

Initial projects are digital editions of rare natural history texts, early scientific texts from the Dibner Library of the History of Science and Technology, and selections from the Libraries’ collections of American manufacturers’ trade literature, the largest such collection in the world. Textual descriptions, biographical notes, finding aids, and materials on the historical context of these editions are provided by SIL staff. Currently online are Tycho Brahe’s Astronomia instauratae mechanica [Instruments for the restoration of astronomy], Nuremberg, 1602; Christiaan Huygens’s Systema Saturnium [The System of Saturn], The Hague, 1659; J. D. Larreëtagui’s Description botanique du Chiranthodendron, Paris, 1805; and Jakob Sturm’s Verzeichniss meiner Insecten-Sammlung [List of my insect collection], Nuremberg, 1796.

The Libraries’ Imaging Center will also scan materials for SIL’s educational and outreach functions which will increasingly have an Internet presence. SIL exhibitions will have an Internet-accessible component. Funding for the equipment was provided by the Atherton Seidell Endowment Fund and the Jaques Admiralty Law Firm. The Libraries’ Preservation Services Department operates the Imaging Center with support and guidance from the Libraries’ Information Systems Division.

Tom Garnett
Assistant Director
Information Systems Division
SIL News Digest

"Library and Archival Exhibitions on the Web," maintained by Rare Book Cataloger Diane Shaw, was named the USA Today Hot Site for June 22, 1999 and the Library Spot Site of the Month for July 1999. The site features links to over 500 online exhibitions that have been created by libraries, archives, and historical societies, as well as to museum online exhibitions with a significant focus on library and archival materials.

Ameritech Library Systems’ Horizon will become the new technical foundation for the Smithsonian Institution Research Information System (SIRIS), replacing the current mainframe computer system. SIRIS is an online catalog which supports several Smithsonian units including the SI Libraries, the combined catalog of seven archives in the Institution, and a number of research bibliographies on subjects such as cephalopods and museum studies. SI staff are working to implement the new system by the close of 1999.

Director Nancy E. Gwinn is serving as Chair of the Chesapeake Information and Research Libraries Alliance for the year beginning July 1999. CIRLA is a consortium of 8 research libraries in the mid-Atlantic region who are all members of the Association of Research Libraries.

In Brief...

Send an electronic postcard to your co-workers, family, or friends. Colorful images from SIL collections in World’s Fairs materials, trade literature, and the fields of natural history from botany to zoology, are available to send via e-mail with your personalized message. Visit www.sil.si.edu/card.html and send one today.

Soros Fellow

Agnieszka Koszowska, Librarian in the Acquisitions Department at the Library of Silesia, Katowice, Poland, trained with Acquisitions Services Department, headed by Lu Rossignol. For seven weeks, Ms. Koszowska assisted the department with ordering and receiving monographs, and maintaining a department order-status report. Ms. Koszowska was one of twelve librarians selected for 1999 by the Library of Congress-Soros Foundations Visiting Fellows Program. The program introduces librarians from central and eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union to libraries and librarianship in America. Upon returning home, the Fellows will continue the program by conducting seminars and workshops.

Photography Credits

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Horticulturist and journal of rural art and rural taste, Vol. 10 (1855)

More electronic postcard images available at www.sil.si.edu/card.html


Vauxhall Royal Balloon, 1836
William Upcott Scrapbook
National Air and Space Museum Branch

Smithsonian Institution Libraries

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Calendar of Exhibitions

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION LIBRARIES
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Frontier Photographer: Edward S. Curtis
William E. Baxter, Curator
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Open November 20, 1999 to January 5, 2001

"Make the Dirt Fly!" Building the Panama Canal
William Worthington and Jeffrey Stine
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