



LibraryNotes

For Harvard Library staff

Harvard's AV Collections: Searching for Resources at Risk

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President and Mrs. James Bryant Conant, right, walk across Harvard Yard at the behest of a film crew, left, for the 1951 March-of-Time newsreel "Invitation to Harvard." The photograph as well as the newsreel are among the holdings of the Harvard University Archives.

It's no secret to anyone who has attempted to watch a suddenly-unplayable videotape that sound and visual recordings can be short-lived. They appear to be in fine condition one day and fail the next. The media held across Harvard's libraries and archives are no exception, and many materials in the University's audiovisual (AV) collections are rare or unique and important.

Examples abound. Houghton Library's Woodberry Poetry Room holds a 1941 Harvard Vocarium recording of W. H. Auden reading his poems. Holdings of the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies in the Fung Library include a sound disc of Mikhail Gorbachev's speech "Looking Back on Perestroika," recorded at Sanders Theatre in 2002. The University Archives holds a videocassette of Harvard's 1998 convocation honoring Nelson Mandela. Nearly all Harvard libraries hold irreplaceable audiovisual materials, some of which are already difficult to access or will become so in the not-distant future.

To help Harvard's libraries establish AV preservation priorities, the University Library's Weissman Preservation Center (WPC) is piloting a web-based survey tool that assesses format and condition and, together with a value rating, establishes preservation priorities.

Development of the pilot is supported by the Harvard University Library, the Harvard College Library, and the Adler Preservation Fund.

According to Jan Merrill-Oldham, Harvard's Malloy-Rabinowitz Preservation Librarian, "We need to understand the AV universe in Harvard's libraries and archives, and pinpoint those materials that are likely to be reaching the end of their usefulness as physical objects. Following on our work, librarians, curators, and archivists can identify among them those that are most worthy of being digitized and stored and delivered from the Digital Repository Service (DRS)."

The WPC team elected to develop an AV survey tool designed to fully meet Harvard's institutional needs. The pilot is a web-based, multi-user software tool, implemented in PHP and JavaScript with a MySQL back end. It employs user access control mechanisms to ensure survey data security and integrity, and supports the use of library-defined tags, context-sensitive web-based help, and search and report generation. It also can be extended to support additional audiovisual formats as they evolve. Software will support the myriad formats found in the Library's collections, and allow for easy incorporation of new format types

as they are discovered. It employs a standardized vocabulary for format attributes and values to ensure the accuracy, consistency, and integrity of survey data across the University.

One of the most exciting aspects of the survey tool design process has been the development of an ANSI/NISO Z39.19 (2005)-compliant taxonomy, a controlled vocabulary implemented in XML that classifies AV objects solely on the basis of their physical characteristics. This constitutes a departure from existing classification systems, which combine physical format with content and use very broad categories to describe physical formats, such as "sound discs" or "videotape." In contrast, the new taxonomy incorporated here classifies formats to a finer granularity. The taxonomy also provides an authoritative point of control for the maintenance and extension of the survey tool software, including its user interface and database tables.

The WPC is partnering with the University Archives to develop and test the AV survey. University Archivist Megan Sniffin-Marinoff notes that "the Harvard University Archives has an exceptionally good AV collection. This project will provide a much-needed assessment of the physical needs of these materials and enable us to determine not only how the Archives will preserve the collections but also how we will make them available to the community."

The project development team includes Jane Hedberg and Elizabeth Walters (WPC), and Ceilyn Boyd (administrative fellow in HUL's Office for Information Systems and in WPC). Robin McElheny is leading the University Archives team, with the assistance of Kate Bowers and Colin Lukens. Houghton Library's Woodberry Poetry Room will be a second early test site. There, Carie McGinnis (Houghton) and Christina Davis (Woodberry Poetry Room) will partner with WPC to implement a survey in FY 2010.

To learn more, contact Jane Hedberg: 5-8596 or jane_hedberg@harvard.edu.



Peter Reuell/Harvard College Library

Pulitzer Prize-winning historian **Doris Kearns Goodwin** addressed a packed crowd of Lincoln scholars on April 24 as part of the Houghton Library symposium “Abraham Lincoln at 200: New Perspectives on His Life and Legacy.” Through the two-day symposium, scholars from across the country examined Lincoln’s views on race and slavery, his role as commander-in-chief, his use of the press to shape public opinion, his relationship with Congress, his influence on the legislative process, and his roles as politician and party leader.

Houghton’s Karen Nipps Wins Bryant Fellowship

Robert Darnton, Carl H. Pforzheimer University Professor and Director of the University Library, has announced that Karen Nipps, head of the rare book team in Technical Services for HCL’s Houghton Library, has received a Bryant Fellowship to support her ongoing study of 19th-century Philadelphia printer Lydia Bailey. Nipps’s extensive work on Lydia Bailey earned her a previous Bryant Fellowship in 1999.

“My study consists of a historical essay detailing Bailey’s life and analyzing her role in the contemporary book trade,” Nipps writes, “which is followed by a checklist of her known imprints. The almost 800 imprints listed in the checklist have been located through detailed analysis of a few known surviving ledgers and established enumerative bibliographies and library catalogs. This study intends to provide much rich material for other historians of the book, as well as for historians of the Early Republic, gender, and technology.”

Nipps was recommended for the award by Bryant Fellowship jury members Annie Jo Cain, Marilyn Morgan, and Emilie Codega. That jury was appointed by the Professional Development Committee of the Librarians’ Assembly.

A gift from Charles and Mary Tanenbaum established the Douglas W. Bryant Fellowships, which are awarded to individual Harvard librarians in support of the direct costs of their independent scholarly research. The gift reflects the donors’ “high regard for the able and dedicated men and women who constitute the professional staff of the Harvard University Library.” The fellowships support research by Harvard’s professional library staff in bibliography, in historical aspects of librarianship, in production of reference and bibliographic works, and in other scholarly investigations, which may be outside the field of librarianship. For more information on the Bryant Fellowship Program, contact Bette Viano, director of human resources in the Harvard University Library, at 5-3650 or bette_viano@harvard.edu, or visit <http://hul.harvard.edu/resources/bryant.html>.

HUL Adopts Quarterly Schedule for Library Notes

After a decade on a bimonthly printing schedule, *Harvard University Library Notes* is about to become a quarterly publication of the Harvard University Library. Beginning in FY 2010, *Library Notes* will appear on the third Thursdays of July, October, January, and May. News items, photographs, staff activities, new appointments, and other materials intended for each issue should be submitted four weeks in advance to administration@hulmail.harvard.edu.

All issues of *Library Notes* from 1999 to the present remain online at <http://hul.harvard.edu/publications.html>.

What’s New at the Office for Scholarly Communication?

According to Amy Brand, program manager in the University Library’s Office for Scholarly Communication, HUL’s newest office has been hard at work promoting open access and authors’ rights, developing a digital repository, and negotiating with publishers to secure agreements that serve the interests of Harvard faculty and the broader public. Dr. Brand has provided the following updates for readers of *Library Notes*.

Open-Access Policies

In the past 15 months, three of Harvard’s ten faculties have passed open-access resolutions that call for the routine deposit of faculty article manuscripts into an open-access repository. In March, the faculty of the John F. Kennedy School of Government voted to adopt an open-access policy identical to those already implemented by the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS) and the Harvard Law School (HLS).

Digital Access to Scholarship at Harvard (DASH)

The OSC has been working closely with HUL’s Office for Information Systems to develop DASH, a University-wide repository for scholarly work. We have also developed a suite of online tools to help authors quickly and easily submit works to the repository, and have enlisted the help of 40 undergraduate fellows to recruit faculty content. Still in a beta-testing phase, DASH is growing rapidly all the same—this spring the total number of works in the repository doubled over a period of six weeks.

Working with Publishers

The OSC continues to negotiate with publishers on behalf of Harvard faculty. Last month, we entered into an agreement with the American Physical Society (APS), publisher of several prominent journals in the field of physics. As a result of the new agreement, APS recognizes Harvard’s open-access license and no longer requires copyright agreement addenda or waivers of the open-access policy for Harvard authors.

Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes, 1909–1929: 20 Years That Changed the World of Art



scores, ballet manuscripts, letters from Ballets Russes founder Serge Diaghilev, portraits of dancers, and even a rare manuscript detailing the choreography for *The Sleeping Princess*.

Established by Serge Diaghilev in 1909, the Ballets Russes quickly grew into an international phenomenon, performing in Paris, Monte Carlo, and London. Though his original aim was to promote Russian culture, Diaghilev’s productions are today recognized as having fundamentally altered the notion of what a ballet could be through a unique combination of artists, writers, choreographers, and dancers.

“One of the things Diaghilev did was to bring together a group of creative people from various disciplines,” said Harvard Theatre Collection Curator Fredric Woodbridge Wilson. “The Ballets Russes included musicians, composers, choreographers, dancers, artists, and even literary people. It was largely Diaghilev’s idea to make all the aspects of a ballet comparable in importance, not just the choreography. This became a meeting of the arts, and that is what is most important about it today.”

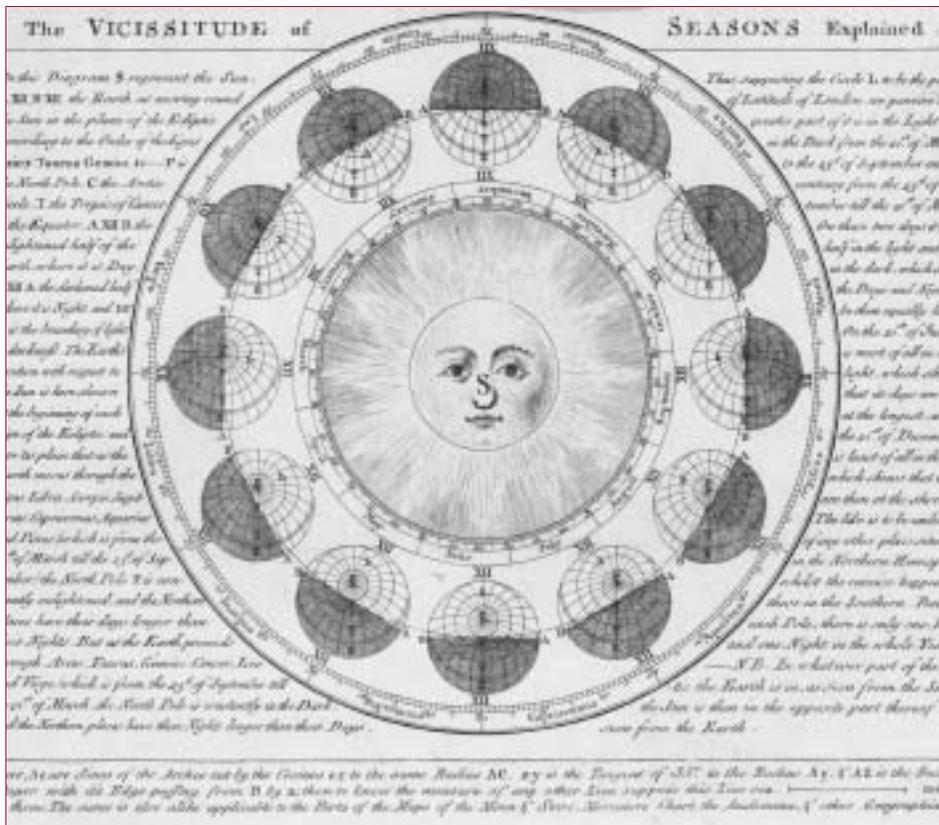
“Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes, 1909–1929: 20 Years That Changed the World of Art” will be on display through August 28 in Pusey Library.

A 1916 poster for the American tour of Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes.

The Harvard Theatre Collection is celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Ballets Russes with an exhibition culled from the Theatre Collection’s extensive Ballets Russes holdings. Entitled “Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes, 1909–1929: 20 Years That Changed the World of Art,” the exhibition features hundreds of items, from posters and works of art to original costumes from the Ballets Russes. The exhibition also includes original

Harvard College Library

Harvard Libraries Launch Expeditions and Discoveries



Detail from Samuel Dunn's *Scientia Terrarum et Coelorum: or, The Heavens and Earth Astronomically and Geographically Delineated and Display'd: Containing the Most Curious & Useful Particulars in the Solar, Starry & Mundane Systems, Faithfully Enumerated & Delineated According to the Latest Discoveries*. London: Rob[t]. Sayer, [1780].

Harvard's Open Collections Program has launched *Expeditions and Discoveries: Sponsored Exploration and Scientific Discovery in the Modern Age*. Through the new collection, Internet users can find thousands of maps, photographs, and published materials, along with field notes, letters, and unique manuscript materials on sponsored exploration and related

scientific discoveries between 1626 and 1953. Visit the new collection at <http://ocp.hul.harvard.edu/expeditions>. *Expeditions and Discoveries* brings important—often unique—historical resources to students of anthropology, archaeology, astronomy, botany, geography, geology, medicine, oceanography, and zoology. The collection is made possible with the

generous support of the Arcadia Fund. *Expeditions and Discoveries* includes digitized copies of more than 250,000 pages from 700 books and serials, as well as 50,000 pages from Harvard's manuscript collections, more than 1,200 photographs, 200 maps, 21 atlases, and numerous drawings and prints.

"Each of Harvard's open collections offers a vast number of rare and hard-to-find published materials to Internet users," stated Carl H. Pforzheimer University Professor and Director of the University Library Robert Darnton, "and *Expeditions and Discoveries* is no exception. Support from Arcadia, however, has inspired and enabled a new focus on the University's legendary special collections. The result is remarkable: *Expeditions and Discoveries* brings a tremendous range of unique manuscript materials into the hands of scholars and Internet users everywhere."

Since the dawn of the modern age, the world has witnessed an increasingly organized approach to exploration and discovery: sometimes to document the geography, climate, resources, and peoples of little-known areas; sometimes to establish scientific facts, such as the earth's circumference.

Historically, organized explorations relied upon state or institutional sponsorship. By the 19th century, North America's universities were emerging as forces in a broad range

of expeditions and discoveries. Within that context, Harvard University played significant roles—as underwriter, participant, collector, and repository—for pace-setting expeditions around the world.

Expeditions and Discoveries features nine major expeditions as they are reflected in the holdings of Harvard's libraries, museums, and archives. Through the new collection, Harvard provides selective access to these multidisciplinary records.

Of equal importance, the collection offers digital access to published materials in the public domain that document worldwide exploration and discovery in general—with and without a Harvard connection. Users can search or browse materials by discipline or region, explore holdings related to 22 notable individuals, and discover information on 22 additional expeditions from the Arctic to the Antarctic, from Latin America to Africa and Australia, and more.

The Harvard University Library established the Open Collections Program in 2002, with funding from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The program received subsequent support from Arcadia, and, more recently, from Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

Arcadia Gives \$5 Million to Support Core Collections, Services in the Harvard Libraries

Britain's Arcadia Fund has awarded \$5 million to the Harvard University Library. Arcadia's five-year grant will provide flexible support for the Library's core functions: acquisitions, access, preservation, and dissemination.

University Library Director Robert Darnton announced that, initially, Arcadia's grant will be used to strengthen the Library's print collections, to support processing of 17th- and 18th-century collections in the University Archives, and to underwrite conservation treatments for fragile or damaged material from 17th- and 18th-century collections.

"In providing a high level of flexible, discretionary support for the Harvard Libraries, Arcadia has shown not only extraordinary generosity, but great insight into the complexities facing research libraries today," Darnton stated. "As we expand our involvement in digital innovation and diverse modes of communication, we must renew the core collections and services that form our traditional strengths. Arcadia has given us the means to do so."

Formerly the Lisbet Rausing Charitable Fund, Arcadia was established in 2001 by Lisbet Rausing PhD '93 and Peter Baldwin PhD '86. Arcadia's key mission is to protect endangered

treasures of culture and nature. This includes near-extinct languages, rare historical archives, museum-quality artifacts, and the protection of ecosystems and environments threatened with extinction. Arcadia has historically donated to charities working to protect free societies and human rights, to encourage education, and to promote philanthropy.

In announcing the Arcadia grant, Dr. Rausing stated, "One of the Harvard University Library's aims is to ensure its position as a premier research institution. We hope our grant to the Library will greatly assist in this aim."

Arcadia also provides critical support for Harvard's Open Collections Program (OCP). Through OCP, the Harvard Libraries create subject-specific, web-accessible collections, open to anyone with an Internet connection. Arcadia has supported three "open collections" since 2004: *Contagion: Historical Views of Diseases and Epidemics*; *Expeditions and Discoveries: Sponsored Exploration and Scientific Discovery in the Modern Age*; and a forthcoming project on the history of reading that is due online in the spring of 2010.

Staff Activities

Wallace Dailey, curator of Harvard College Library's Theodore Roosevelt Collection, recently authored an article entitled "The Theodore Roosevelt Sesquicentennial at Harvard University," which was published in the Fall 2008 issue of the *Theodore Roosevelt Association Journal*.

In April, Dailey spoke at *The President's Wife and the Librarian*, an exhibition at the New York Society Library. His essay, "A Note on Edith Roosevelt's Papers at Harvard University," was included in the exhibition catalog.

Michelle Gachette, reference assistant at the University Archives, Harvard University Library, served as a judge for the Senior Division category of Individual Documentary (Grades 9–12) at the annual Massachusetts History Day Northeast District competition at Reading Memorial High School in Reading, Massachusetts. The winners chosen were sent to a state-level competition in April to compete for the chance to present their projects at the National History Day program held in Washington, DC. Students submitted a ten-minute documentary with a process paper describing their research experience with library and archival materials, and a bibliography of the primary and secondary sources used in their original work. This year's theme was "The Individual in History: Actions and Legacies."

Cheryl LaGuardia, research librarian in Widener Library, Harvard College Library, has been awarded an Emerald Literati Network Award for Excellence 2009. The award, Outstanding Reviewer, is for her work with the journal *Reference Services Review (RSR)*. LaGuardia was nominated for the award by the RSR editors, Eleanor Mitchell, director of library services at Dickinson College, and Sarah Watstein, associate university librarian for research and instructional services at UCLA, based on "the very impressive and significant contribution [she has] made as a Reviewer to *Reference Services Review* throughout 2008."

Steven Riel, head of HCL/FAS Cataloging Support Services, HCL Technical Services, recently published an essay titled "Cyndi Lauper: The Sadness in Her Rasp" in the collection *My Diva: 65 Gay Men on the Women Who Inspire Them* (Madison, Wis.: Terrace Books, 2009).

Connie Rinaldo, librarian of the Ernst Mayr Library of the Museum of Comparative Zoology, FAS, published an article with Nancy Gwinn, director of the Smithsonian Institution Libraries, in the March 2009 *IFLA Journal* entitled "The Biodiversity Heritage Library: Sharing Biodiversity Literature with the World."

University Archivist **Megan Sniffin-Marinoff** was appointed by Massachusetts Secretary of State William F. Galvin to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Archives Advisory Commission.

Pamela Spitzmueller, the Weissman Preservation Center's James W. Needham Chief Conservator for Special Collections in the University Library and the College Library, spent her winter vacation working in Cairo managing, with a colleague, a Getty Foundation-sponsored condition survey of the Coptic Museum's manuscript collection. The collection includes single sheets and fragments of papyrus, parchment, and paper housed between glass; bound manuscripts of parchment and paper; scrolls; and other miscellaneous items. Items ranged from the 4th century to the 19th century. A team of nine young conservation lab staff members from several institutions in Cairo were trained and worked on the survey, reviewing between 4,000 and 5,000 items. Preliminary results show items that are much in need of protection (new glass and/or boxing) and a fair amount of iron gall ink damage, particularly in paper manuscripts. Spitzmueller credits the Supreme Council for Antiquities project manager, the project's database expert, and its "wonderful translator" for making the work a success.

Harvard Gets a New HOLLIS

On April 7, students, faculty, and staff began exploring a trial version of a completely new web interface for HOLLIS—Harvard's Online Library Information System.

"Worldwide, library systems are undergoing continuous and dramatic change," said Tracey Robinson, head of the University Library's Office for Information Systems. "We are pleased to report that HOLLIS is no exception. HOLLIS now offers users a simple, intuitive interface for discovering library resources in significant new ways. And the best thing about it is, it will be easy to expand and enhance in the weeks and months to come."

Robinson described the new HOLLIS as "a discovery environment," and not just a catalog. Located at <http://discovery.lib.harvard.edu>, HOLLIS now reflects a new generation of creative thinking about how searching on the web differs from searches in traditional library catalogs. As users experiment with the new system, the older version—dubbed "HOLLIS Classic"—remains in place, providing traditional search methods at <http://holliscatalog.harvard.edu>. Both can be accessed from the Harvard Libraries portal at <http://lib.harvard.edu>.

Searching in the new HOLLIS is easier and friendlier than in HOLLIS Classic. As with many web-based search engines, a simple search box provides an easy, familiar starting point for any search. Results are ranked for relevancy and users are provided with tools that make it easy to refine searches. To narrow a search, a right-hand column presents numerous facets—such as library location, genre, language, dates, and much more.

With the choice of any facet, search results are instantly narrowed and a bread-crum trail clearly reminds the searcher of the search path. A color-coded word cloud suggests associated terms that can be used to execute a new search. The new search results incorporate the previous search term(s) into the relevancy ranking. The "discovery trail" shows the path the user has taken to arrive at the current results.

"The new HOLLIS transforms the tools of a traditional library catalog into an intuitive, user-friendly experience," commented Susan Fliss, associate librarian of Harvard College for research, teaching, and learning. "Our students have high expectations of technology that are rooted in their experience of search engines—Google in particular. The new HOLLIS offers the simplicity of a Google search with the depth and authentication that are the hallmarks of a great research library."

HOLLIS will be updated continuously over the coming months, providing users with new sources of data and additional functionality. Since the April 7 launch, enhancements have included "Request PDF" links for Harvard's new "Scan and Deliver" service, "Print Record" buttons on full record views, display of non-Latin characters in catalog records, item grouping for items with temporary location displays, and improved relevancy ranking.

According to Robinson, development of the new discovery platform is a reflection of the Library's mandate to enhance and simplify the digital environment for everyone.

"Library users should look for the rollout of additional HOLLIS features in September 2009. In the meantime, feedback is vital. Using the new HOLLIS will be rewarding and fun, but user feedback will help us to streamline current resources and to prioritize future enhancements. Users should use the feedback form at <http://discovery.lib.harvard.edu>."

Librarians from Cabot, Lamont, and Widener Engage in HCL Pilot Program



Nine of HCL's Research Services librarians took part in a pilot program to share staff among Cabot, Lamont, and Widener libraries. Front row, from left: Sue Gilroy, Diane Sredl, Kathleen Sheehan, Laura Farwell Blake, Ann Robinson, and Ellie Clement. Back row, from left: John Baldisserotto, Carrie Kent, Joe Bourneuf, Martin Schreiner, Stephen Kuehler, Reed Lowrie, and Lynne Schmelz. Not pictured: Fredric Burchsted.

An HCL pilot program to share Research Services librarians among Cabot, Lamont, and Widener libraries took shape in February with two goals—improving reference services for library patrons and offering librarians the chance to learn from each other as they practice the craft of research assistance.

The pilot program, which was concluded early in May, included librarians from Widener, Lamont, and Cabot libraries who have worked two two-hour shifts per week at one of the other two libraries. Each has “shadowed” another librarian, with the goal of learning about the different resources at various libraries, and the different ways in which Research Services staff respond to questions from researchers and students.

The nine participating librarians are:

- **from Lamont:** Diane Sredl, data reference librarian, John Baldisserotto, reference librarian, and Stephen Kuehler, reference assistant;
- **from Widener:** Kathleen Sheehan, research librarian, Carrie Kent, research librarian, and Fredric Burchsted, research librarian;

- **from Cabot:** Ann Robinson, science reference librarian, Ellie Clement, head of reference, and Reed Lowrie, science reference and cartographic librarian.

“We’re trying to redefine how we undertake research services and how a reference desk functions in our modern, electronic, interdisciplinary environment,” said Martin Schreiner, interim librarian of Lamont Library, who planned and designed the pilot with Laura Farwell Blake, interim head of Research Services at Widener Library, and Lynne Schmelz, librarian for the sciences and librarian of the Cabot and Tozzer libraries.

“In the world of research, nothing is isolated anymore,” Schreiner said. “The idea is that Research Services librarians will be able to assist patrons up to a point, and then refer them to a librarian with more expertise in a particular subject. In years past, if someone asked a question about a resource that was held in a different library, we would simply send them to that library. What this program hopes to do is give everyone a basic awareness of what the resources are, how to find them, and how to use them. And when they need to send someone to another librarian, they will know who that person might be.”

While knowing which resources are available across HCL will certainly improve service for patrons who visit the reference desk, that isn’t the pilot program’s only aim. Research and reference work has always been as much art as science, Schreiner said, and by bringing librarians of diverse backgrounds and specialties together, the program will encourage staff to study the different ways others might confront a problem. The pilot also included a handful of classroom cross-training sessions on subjects like the Government Documents collection, which were open to Research Services staff from all three pilot project libraries.

“We have wanted to do this for a long time,” Blake said of the pilot program. “There’s really nothing like spending time in another environment to learn how other librarians work and understand what resources librarians there bring to bear on reference requests. We also want to build an infrastructure for cross-training, so librarians at Houghton, librarians at Loeb Music, librarians at Fine Arts and other HCL libraries can help us understand how scholars and students use their resources.”

Such cross-fertilization pays off in two ways, said Susan Fliss, associate librarian of Harvard College for research, teaching, and learning. In addition to improving service for library patrons, the interaction fostered by the pilot program will help librarians continually improve their reference and research skills.

“So many courses are interdisciplinary now,” Fliss said. “This will allow HCL to better support those courses. We have incredible collections, and it’s important that our staff be aware of the variety of information and resources, as well as the network of people with deep knowledge of the collections.”

An evaluation is under way in HCL to determine whether the program should continue, or expand to include other libraries next year.

Harvard University Library Notes, in print and online at <http://hul.harvard.edu/publications.html>, is published by the Office of the Director of the Harvard University Library. Beginning in FY 2010, *Library Notes* will be published quarterly, with nominal publication dates falling on the third Thursdays of July, October, January, and May. Inquiries and submissions are welcome at least four weeks in advance. URLs cited are accurate at press time.

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New Appointments

Michelle Durocher

Associate Director (February)
HCL Technical Services
Harvard College Library

In this new role, Michelle Durocher will work closely with Marilyn Wood on strategic planning activities, take a leading role in designing and implementing new approaches to the work, and provide oversight for the day-to-day operations and activities on-site at 625 Massachusetts Avenue. She will continue in her current role as head of the English Division in HCL Technical Services.

Nancy Bojan Quinn

E-Resources Coordinator for the Social Sciences (April)
Harvard College Library

Nancy Bojan Quinn also serves as reporting librarian for HCL Collection Development, and she will continue in this role in addition to her new duties. She has been at HCL since 2002; prior to her arrival at Harvard she worked at the Massachusetts State Law Library and at ZDNet/CNet. She earned her BA in political science from Boston University.

Thomas Scorpa

Systems Administrator (April)
Office for Information Systems
Harvard University Library

Thomas Scorpa worked most recently as an engineer at Vertex Pharmaceuticals in Cambridge. He has also held system/network administrative positions at Harvard in Alumni Affairs and Development and in the NSS (Network and Server Services) group within University Information Systems (UIS). He is certified in Unix and in NetApp Data ONTAP fundamentals and holds multiple administrator certificates.

Larry Stone

Digital Library Software Engineer (April)
Office for Scholarly Communication
Harvard University Library

Larry Stone has worked since 1997 at MIT, most recently in the MIT Libraries as a member of the Digital Library Research Group, and prior to that in MIT Information Systems, designing, implementing, and contributing to multiple projects. He has also held positions with Harlequin, Inc., ICAD, Inc., and BBN Systems and Technology, all in Cambridge. He has a BS in computer science from Yale.

Harvard College Library Digitizes Iranian Oral History Interviews

Following the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran, Habib Ladjevardi, MBA '63, while working as a research associate at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University, launched the Iranian Oral History Project (IOHP) to preserve eyewitness accounts of the upheaval before they were lost. After nearly three decades, however, the recordings are in increasingly fragile condition.

To preserve the physical quality of the material, and make it available worldwide, the Harvard College Library in 2003 began digitizing some of the more than 700 cassette tapes and thousands of transcript pages, and created the Harvard Iranian Oral History Project web site. To date, 118 of the 134 interviews conducted as part of the project have been digitized, and are freely available to scholars on the site, which includes searchable indices of the interviews as well as background on the project itself.

“One of the most significant events in Iranian history was the overthrow of the monarchy and the rise of the Islamic republic in 1979,” Ladjevardi said. “Ned Keenan, then Dean of the Graduate School of FAS, suggested the idea for this project, because some of the stories and some of the memories regarding what happened, and how it happened, would be lost if we didn’t talk to and record people who had been eyewitnesses or who had reliable secondhand accounts.”

While the IOHP is widely considered the most comprehensive collection of eyewitness reports on the revolution, it’s one many scholars may not be aware of, said Leslie Morris, curator of modern books and manuscripts at HCL’s Houghton Library, where the material is held. Digitization and the project web site, she said, allows the College Library to disseminate the material to a worldwide audience, and ensure the material is preserved for future generations.

“Houghton is not particularly known for contemporary Persian history,” Morris said. “However, as part of a project to digitize the finding aids for all manuscript collections at Houghton, several years ago we put the finding aid for this collection online, and we have since seen much more use of the collection.”

Given the condition of the tapes—some of which are more than two decades old—Morris believes the digitization was of critical importance, and will ultimately allow scholars to make wider use of a fascinating resource.

“Magnetic media are very fragile, much more so than paper,” she said. “Even though they make up a relatively small proportion of what we have in the collection, it is the video and audio tapes we worry most about, because we know they get brittle with time. We have a lot of tapes in our collections that people aren’t allowed to listen to because they haven’t been reformatted, and we don’t want to risk damage to the material.”

Initially funded with a \$300,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the IOHP began in 1981, when Ladjevardi and several other researchers began recording interviews with foreign diplomats, nationalist leaders, members of the Islamic movement, and leaders of various Iranian political parties about the revolution. Over the next 19 years, with more than \$1 million in funding from over 100 foundations, corporations, and individuals, the project expanded to include more than 130 interviews, and thousands of pages of written transcript.

Sponsored by the Middle Eastern Division of Widener Collection Development, the digitization of the IOHP material began in 2004, and involved both HCL Imaging Services staff and Loeb Music Library’s Audio Preservation Studio (APS). Staff from HUL’s Office for Information Services (OIS) also worked on the project, creating a database for the digitized materials.

“Due to the large number of tapes and the importance of the historical era—both for the Middle East and the world at large—the IOHP offers substantial and unique primary-source documentation of supreme historical importance,” said Virginia Danielson, the Richard F. French Librarian of the Loeb Music Library. “The material also illustrates the importance of audio preservation services to libraries. The tapes were made on inexpensive and ubiquitous equipment and material: consumer cassette players and tape. After exploring numerous consumer-based options for ‘preservation’ that resulted in unclear, difficult-to-understand results of uncertain longevity, Habib Ladjevardi ultimately chose Harvard and APS as home for his collection because of the clarity our engineers could produce using professional staff and equipment, and the longevity offered by Harvard’s Digital Repository Service. The results he and his colleagues heard when using the tapes convinced him of the value of professional audio preservation. The research completed by Ladjevardi and other scholars using this valuable material is a credit to Dave Ackerman and the APS staff.”

From the very beginning, Ladjevardi said, his intent was to see the material and its inimitable perspective on the tumultuous days of leading up to the revolution, preserved for future scholars.

“Whether they were digitized or in some other form, the idea from the beginning was always to have the interviews preserved somehow,” he said. “I can remember going to Iran as a doctoral student to look for a particular book published by the Iranian government on communist influence over labor unions, but when the librarians there realized what I was looking for, they told me, ‘Don’t even bother looking, they were all taken away in 1953.’ It is my belief that somebody has to, in whatever way they can, preserve these materials while they can. My mission has been to preserve this history in any way I can.”

Harvard Review Contributors Receive Literary Honors



Selections from issue 34 of *Harvard Review* have been nominated for the prestigious Pushcart Prize, and selected for inclusion in the *Best American Essays* anthology.

For the seventh of eight years running, literary works first published in *Harvard Review* have been selected for inclusion in the highly selective *Best American* series, and have been nominated for a prestigious Pushcart Prize.

Featured in issue 34, Kevin Moffett's short story "In the Pines" was nominated for the Pushcart Prize, which recognizes the best short stories, poems, and essays published by small presses. James Marcus's essay "Faint Music," which appeared in the same issue, was recently selected by the editors of the *Best American Essays 2009*. Published since 1915, the *Best American* series is a showcase for the year's finest poetry, short stories, and essays.

Marcus's essay had a somewhat unusual provenance, owing its publication as much to the modern technology of blogging as to more traditional publishing pathways, said *Harvard Review* editor Christina Thompson.

"I had been looking around in the blogosphere, trying to figure out which literary bloggers I wanted to read, and I came across a piece by James Marcus about a party thrown by the *Atlantic Monthly*," Thompson said. "The publishers had hosted a party on the stage of a theatre, and invited people to come and watch. He wrote a piece about being in the audience, and after I read it I wrote to him to say I

thought it was very funny. We began corresponding, and I invited him to contribute something to *Harvard Review*. He sent us this very witty essay about fainting. But, it was the first time I had discovered a writer in quite this way."

For both writers and the journal, the benefits of such high-profile recognition are incalculable, Thompson said.

"For the writers, this sort of recognition is a huge step up. In many cases, it's been younger writers that we've managed to propel onto this stage, and if we get them at a certain point in their careers, it can make a big difference in how easily they make the jump to the next level, which is signing a book contract.

"For us, on the other hand, a series like *Best American* is one of the only places we can get national recognition, and it's an affirmation that what we're printing is comparable to other national-level journals," Thompson said. "It's also helpful to me, because it confirms the fact that the material I'm selecting is on a par with that published by our peers."

Harvard Review is published twice yearly, in spring and fall, and subscription information can be found at <http://hcl.harvard.edu/harvardreview>. The journal can also be purchased for \$10 from the Harvard Coop, from the Harvard Book Store, or directly from the *Harvard Review* office in Lamont Library. (For a list of additional bookstores that carry the journal, contact the office at harvrev@fas.harvard.edu or 617-495-9775.) The staff includes Christina Thompson, editor; Matthew Hotham, managing editor; Major Jackson, poetry editor; Nam Le, fiction editor; and Judith Larsen, visual arts editor.

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Interview: Dale Flecker

LN
Has Harvard ever gone down the wrong road, technologically speaking?

DF
You could argue about the speed of adaptation and whether we had the speed right. We were fast, slow, fast, slow over the years. Decision-making here is very complex. For a while, we were in the middle of the pack, and then we were fast followers, then we were out in front. It's varied over the years.

I don't think we've made any profoundly wrong moves, but if you're going to make a lot of decisions, you're not going to get them all right. If you look back, it looks pretty solid to me, though I think the big argument could be about speed.

LN
LDI has earned a great deal of respect for building the infrastructure first and getting the content later.

DF
We were way out in front on that, way out in front. And we're still out in front of a lot of our peers. It was utterly clear that we were going to have digital collections. It was utterly clear that it was going to happen all over the place and that you needed a way to support it the same way you need a way to support a physical book stack. We built it in time and coaxed people in.

LN
What are the big issues for research libraries in the next ten years?

DF
The big thing is to figure out what it means to be an archival research library in a digital environment. Libraries used to mostly be about things we went and bought and kept in house, but now most digital resources are remote and you don't have your hands on them, and many of them are offered for free. What does that mean if you're going to continue to have a role in the preservation of resources—if the stuff is remote and you have no relationship with it other than you can go and consume it like anyone else? That's a really big question.

Second, we've been mostly about formal publications. Now a lot of information is in some other state that's not quite formal publication. What are the implications for us? We have to define our scope in the exploding digital environment and define the library's engagement with the creation of things.

LN
What about the issue of digital preservation?

DF
It's fundamental, and nobody's doing enough about it. It's shocking how little digital preservation activity is happening in the research library community in this country. The number of places that have formal programs is tiny. We at least have a very sophisticated person whose responsibility it is to worry about digital preservation. Most places don't even have that.

A lot of the preservation we did in the physical world was implicit activity. We acquired something, with access and use in mind, and just kept it. The thing just persisted. Yes, we took some actions, we worried about the environment, and handled binding and shelving things in smart ways. We did preservation almost as a byproduct—not quite but almost (Jan Merrill-Oldham may kill me for saying that . . .). In the digital world, that is not at all the case. If you're going to preserve a digital object, you're going to have to do it consciously, and much of what you preserve won't be the copy you're using for daily access. You've got to ask questions. What's the right level of preservation activity for this institution? How much are we willing to invest in it? How much of this is a core activity?

We have a massive e-journal collection and we have none of it stored here. We're taking a little bit of responsibility because we're sending money to Portico to do some preservation. That's a good model; it may be a fine model for lots of stuff. But only that.

LN
After June 30, will you continue to engage with these issues?

DF
That's to be seen. I'll probably do some level of consulting for a while. But this is not a field where you can rest on yesterday's information. The half-life of my expertise is probably reasonably short. So, we'll see.

I bought this old house in the Berkshires, and now I've got to fix my old house. We're going to travel some. And I'll probably do some kind of socially useful work, pro bono—something that makes some use of what I'm good at.

LN
Thank you.

DF
You're welcome.

Interview: Dale Flecker



Brian Smith/Harvard University Library

Dale Flecker, associate director of the Harvard University Library (HUL) for systems and planning, was educated at Wayne State University and the University of Michigan. After serving as a systems analyst in the libraries of Michigan and Yale, he came to Harvard in 1978, initially as a systems librarian. He directed the Office for Systems Planning and Research from 1979 to 1985, and became an associate director of HUL in 1985. Flecker plans to retire on June 30, following 31 years of Harvard service. He was interviewed for Library Notes on May 1.

LN
How did you choose librarianship as a career?

DF
I was hanging around in Ann Arbor in the '60s, and working in IT at the university. One of my customers was the library. And I found the application and loved it. I started library school at Michigan and hadn't quite finished when I went to work at Yale—I finished my library degree from there by writing a paper or two. I think that I got notification of my library degree and my appointment as head of OSPR the same day.

LN
What was your first Harvard assignment?

DF
To put out a version of the Harvard union catalog on computer output microform.

LN
The DUC?

DF
Yes. The distributable union catalog, or DUC. It was a big change because all of a sudden, instead of the union catalog being in one room in Widener, it was all over the University. Massive numbers of microfiche generated by a company way off someplace or another. It was a terrible technology, but it was still a big step forward from just having a card catalog in Widener.

LN
What equipment did you use?

DF
In those days we were still mostly using punch cards. We had a keypunch staff as part of the office. We were in Widener—I can't remember the room number—but it had a room cut off within the big space that was soundproofed because we had "unit record" [punch card] equipment. We had machines that sorted cards, collated decks of cards, and things like that because the circulation system was on those cards. You filled out a card when you circulated a book, the data was punched into the card. We'd have to put the cards in due-date order so you could find the overdue ones and produce notices. Then you'd sort them back into call-number sequence for the call-number file upstairs so they could tell where a book was. We spun a lot of tape, too.

LN
How many people were involved?

DF
About a dozen. There were probably three or four analysts, data control staff, and keypunchers. We were all about running the business of the library, you know: buying books, circulating books, keeping shelf lists, things of that sort.

LN
Is it fair to say that you were a freestanding service?

DF
We used data about who could borrow books that we got from the University. And we could do the DUC because tapes were coming in from OCLC with catalog data on them. My job was to corral that data and put it into a maintainable form. It's that data that generated the DUC.

LN
Your goals and assumptions about technology must have been changing rapidly.

DF
You could look at the work we've done as having three stages. The first stage was worrying about the business operations—acquisitions, circulation, cataloging, shelf-listing, etc. The second stage was using the computer for information retrieval—so that one actually used a computer to search the catalog. The third stage—and it's the big one—is when we moved from having computers know about physical collections to having computers maintain and deliver digital collections material. That's the big, profound change, and it's much more fundamental than the first two.

LN
As Harvard moved from one stage to the next, what were the biggest turning points?

DF
Certainly the first HOLLIS was a big change. It represented a view of the Library as a whole, which you didn't have before. It also of course represented the computerization of operations, which is a big step.

The second has to be the online catalog: suddenly, all of our users were on computers trying to find things in the Library. For many people at Harvard, that was probably the first time they ever did computer-based information retrieval.

The third is the LDI [Library Digital Initiative]. We got money from the president and provost, and we took a big step. LDI is the foundation of much of what we're doing these days.

LN
Was there resistance?

DF
To the second stage, yes. There were definitely people who didn't want their jobs to change, who didn't want to use computers to do what they were doing before. For the third stage, not at all. What was happening in the Library was just reflecting what was happening in the larger environment.

LN
What about the people who fear that technology will be the end of books?

DF
Well, first of all, an e-book is still a book, isn't it? Second, I suspect that digital books and paper-based books will co-exist for a long time. Journal articles work beautifully in electronic form . . . they're easy to view, store, and print. Books aren't the same thing.

There are good reasons e-books are developing more slowly, although we're seeing lots of interesting experimentation these days.

LN
Do you have a Kindle?

DF
I do not. There are some things about e-books I don't like. I would guess that a third of the books I read are secondhand. Books are passed around in my circle of friends. You can't pass around books on Kindle. At some point the dam will break on this. I'm not convinced it's broken yet.

LN
What about print-on-demand—sophisticated situations where you might press a button and get a book?

DF
Print-on-demand is just here. I think it's going to be extremely widespread because that's what's going to happen with books that start in digital form. It will change the business because books won't have to go out of print.

LN
Your Harvard colleagues often speak of you as our digital visionary. What can you tell us about your vision?

DF
I'm not sure that's a good label for me. While I've had a vision of where we're going for quite a while—the LDI is an expression of that—I'm not really given to sweeping and prophetic statements, nor toward exhorting people around me to get on with the future. When I hear "visionary" that's sort of the image that comes to mind.

LN
Have you ever thought you might have been wrong in retrospect?

DF
Oh, wrong about a thousand things. I would never have believed I'd want a computer at home. Now I can't imagine not having a network-attached computer in the next room. We now use the Internet at home the way we used to use our collection of books. The breakthrough is less the computer—that's just enabling. The important thing is the wild explosion of useful things on the Internet. The Internet opened up the possibility for a billion people to do a billion things, and a lot of those are good and useful things. That's a real revolution that I don't think anybody could have predicted.

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