

# Perspectives



# Oberlin Libraries 190 Mudd 50

## From the Director

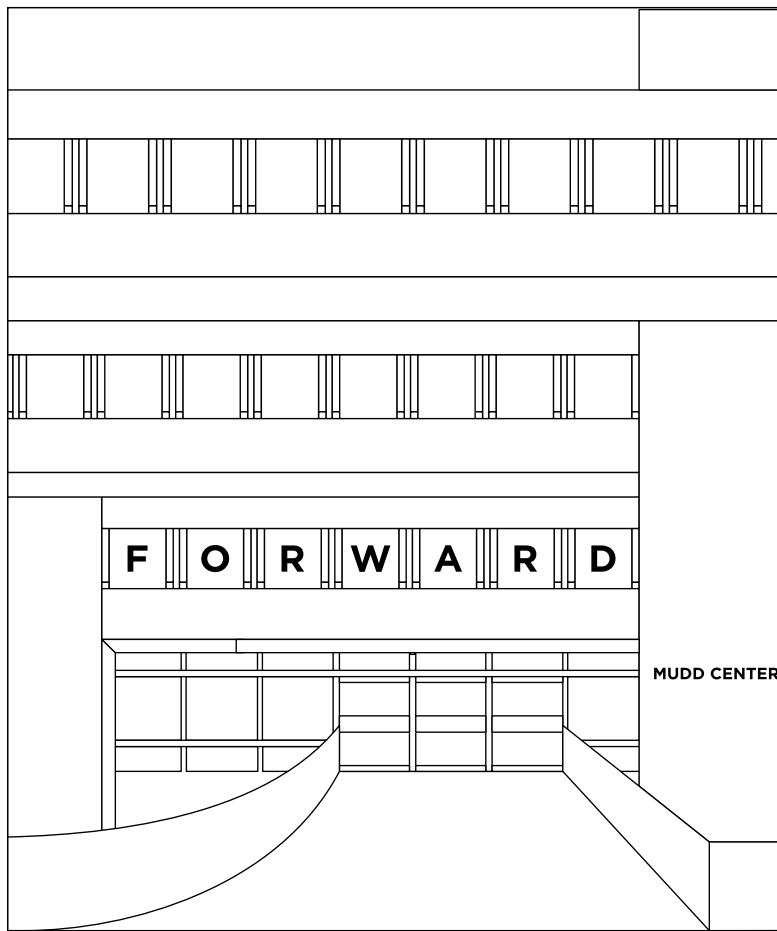
The Seeley G. Mudd Learning Center celebrated its fiftieth anniversary this year! The building is named for Seeley G. Mudd (1895-1968), an American physician, professor, and major philanthropist who built libraries and other academic buildings on over thirty-five campuses across America. Designed by M. Rosaria Piomelli for the firm of Warner, Burns, Toan, and Lunde, the brutalist beauty is home to what is now known as the Mary Church Terrell Library. We've been marking this milestone with exhibits and programs, with a new sculpture commissioned by the Friends of Oberlin College Libraries in our new Contemplation Garden, with a few interior design improvements, and by completing a comprehensive plan for a facilities renewal to see us through the next fifty years. We've also chosen this landmark year to embark on a two-year project to implement a new integrated online catalog with enhanced access to resources of all kinds. In short, we are always moving forward!

Our Libraries can boast of a rich legacy and an on-going commitment to supporting scholarship, research, learning and discovery at Oberlin. Today the Oberlin

Libraries include not only the main library in the Mudd building, but also two beautiful branch libraries for Art and STEM fields, Special Collections, the College Archives, and the world-renown Conservatory Library, along with distinctive spaces and services such as the Letterpress at Oberlin and the new OCL Digital Collaborative. Our collections are varied in format and in content, representing a broad spectrum of ideas and knowledge. And we go far beyond our 1.5 million physical volumes,

our archives, and our electronic resources to offer our students and faculty access to over 44 million electronic and physical resources from every academic library in Ohio. All this information and knowledge activity is overseen by expert staff members, who partner with faculty to teach students the information and research skills they need now and for their futures and to assist all curious minds in our community and from around the world

We have come a long way since 1974 when Mudd was new. In this annual report, we'll look back and forward to give you an idea of how far we've come... and where we are going!



## Library System Platform Migration

Oberlin Libraries currently depend on a decades-old system of multiple specialized software processes connected behind the scenes to provide access to library services and resources across locations and online. But this year, we will move forward with a new state-of-the-art library systems platform (LSP) from Alma/ExLibris. Since the beginning of this calendar year, staff have been cleaning up and migrating data in anticipation of the transition.

The new library services platform will better support the underlying library staff work to acquire, describe, catalog, track, and retrieve materials—everything from purchasing, cataloging, and checking out books to managing thousands of databases and licensed electronic resources and in-person and online patron interactions to access or borrow materials. All these processes will soon be fully accessible and integrated with each other and with systems across the College in such areas as information technology, security, and budget.

It's a big project—and big news for library users!

Oberlin Libraries staff members are leaders in the process on campus and statewide, lending their expertise to the consortium:

- Rebecca Belford, Cataloging & Metadata Working Group
  - Paul Heyde, Reporting & Analytics Working Group
  - Tim Keller, Discovery & User Experience Working Group
  - Michael McFarlin, chair of OCL Migration Task Force
- Michael and Paul are also representing Oberlin as Project Co-Leads within OhioLink.

In mid-September 2024, Ex Libris delivered a test instance of Alma with our catalog records (“Build” phase) and staff will begin testing the new system and preparing for the switchover (or “Go Live”) to Alma in June 2025. Look for focus groups and surveys as we seek your comments and opinions about the look and feel of the new online catalog.



# Research and Learning

## Research and Instruction Team

You may notice new faces and a new name if you visit the reference librarian offices in the Terrell Main Library. Now known as the Terrell Research and Instruction Team, three talented librarians (Clint Baugess, Yilin La, and Zeb Wimsatt) joined the group this summer following several retirements. They are looking forward to fall collaborations with faculty and fostering unique educational experiences for students.

The team's primary focus is supporting Oberlin students in the classroom, in research appointments, and at the Research Help Desk. Each team member serves as a liaison to academic departments, working closely with faculty and staff to support their teaching and scholarship, and brings unique skills and focus to the Oberlin community.

- **Alonso Avila, he/him/his, Outreach and Student Success Librarian**, coordinates library events and outreach and promotes best practices for mentorship and creating welcoming environments for students.
- **Clint Baugess, he/him/his, Information Literacy and Assessment Librarian**, assists librarians across the branches in developing their reflective teaching practice and coordinates the assessment of information literacy learning outcomes.
- **Yilin La, she/her/hers, East Asian Studies Librarian**, embeds with East Asian studies courses, catalogs and purchases East Asian studies materials, and has already received a digitization grant for the Mary Ainsworth Collection.
- **Elizabeth Sullivan, she/her/hers, Head of Research and Instruction**, coordinates faculty outreach.
- **Julie Weir, she/her/hers, Reference and Academic Commons Assistant**, supervises research and instruction student workers and coordinates library social media.
- **Zeb Wimsatt, they/them/theirs, Collections and User Experience Librarian**, coordinates collection assessment and usability testing.



After last summer's retirements, students sometimes had to wait up to a week to book a slot in the popular research appointment program, which allows students to meet with a librarian for half an hour or more and work through complex questions. Oberlin was an early adopter of the appointment service model, which is now widely used by colleges across the world. Last year Obies in appointments found rare English translations of Bengali newspapers, requested digital copies of works held at the British Archives, prepared for an in-person visit to the Biblioteca Nacional de México, and located citation datasets for a temporal pagerank analysis.

"The degree of difficulty in the research that Oberlin students do always surprises me," says Elizabeth Sullivan, Head of Research and Instruction. "Whether it's literature capstone students writing about novels that have only been the subject of a handful of scholarly articles, or a first year seminar student learning to find a geotagged dataset of dollar store locations so that they can build an interactive food desert map, our students do not give up when they're passionate about a topic."

Students' day-to-day search experience with tools like Google is evolving rapidly. Many are coming to Oberlin with vast experience carefully crafting nuanced natural language queries for Google but less experience with processes needed to use library catalogs and databases, like the keyword brainstorm, boolean operators, and controlled vocabulary. The research appointment program complements classroom instruction by providing coaching tailored to individual students. It allows Obies to quickly scale from brushing up on basic information literacy concepts to working on research projects that would not be attempted before the graduate level at many other institutions.

Over the next year, the research and instruction team will promote media literacy during election season, prepare for the LSP migration, work on textbook affordability, and explore how the increasing influence of AI natural language processing on search engines is changing the context students bring to their research.



# Research and Learning

## Libraries' Winter Term Courses – Teaching and Partnering

The College's 2024 Winter Term included seven courses taught or supported by Library experts Heath Patten, Ed Vermue, Emerson Morgan, Emily Rebmann, and Ken Grossi. Many of these classes fulfill the practicum requirement for the Book Studies minor.



Letterpress Intensive

Terrell Library Special Collections offered its *Letterpress Intensive*, experience-based instruction for students in operating four types of hand-operated presses, movable type, and linocuts. The class also engaged in lively discussions of printing terminology and typography. Students designed and printed projects of their own and contributed to a creative group project, an illustrated version of Lewis Carroll's *Jabberwocky*.

An annual favorite among students, the popular studio course *Papermaking and Book Art* by award-winning artist and author Aimee Lee '99 was again sponsored by the Libraries this year. Using East Asian and European techniques, students processed plant materials to make paper, decorate it, and bind it into books. This year the course included a special focus on historic and contemporary methods of sustainable papermaking and how it began in harmony with the environment in Asia as an extension of responsible agriculture.



Digital Archiving Practicum

Celebrating its second year, the *Digital Archiving Practicum* used the Theater Department's archive and examples of historic period costumes and costume accessories to learn digital scholarship skills. The Libraries' Digital Imaging Lab ("DigiLab") collaborated with the Theater department to offer students an introduction to the theory and best practices behind digitally archiving a cultural materials collection. Throughout the class, students were introduced to different two- and three-dimensional digitizing technologies and the creation of archival object records and associated metadata.

The Conservatory Library Special Collections sponsored two students' independent projects on *Japanese- and Chinese-language Music Materials*. Emma Wei '27 visualized the geographic names of mountains, rivers, and towns in people's songs for the Long March (1934–5) under Mao



Japanese- and Chinese-language Music Materials

Zedong, with text by Xiao Hua and melodies in *jiǎnpǔ* 简谱 numeric notation. Adriana Hernandez '27 visualized the artistic networks of jazz musicians across the U.S. and Japan by gathering information from the obi 帯 and liner notes of albums released in Japan from 1968 to 1988. Some of these jazz titles are unique to the Neumann Collection at Oberlin, with no other copies held by libraries worldwide.



Oberlin Review Winter Term



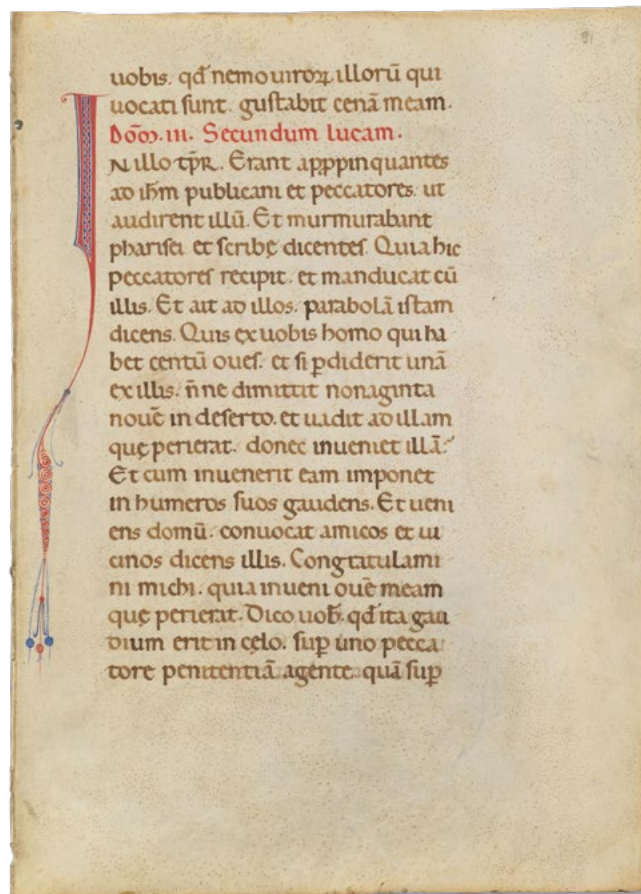
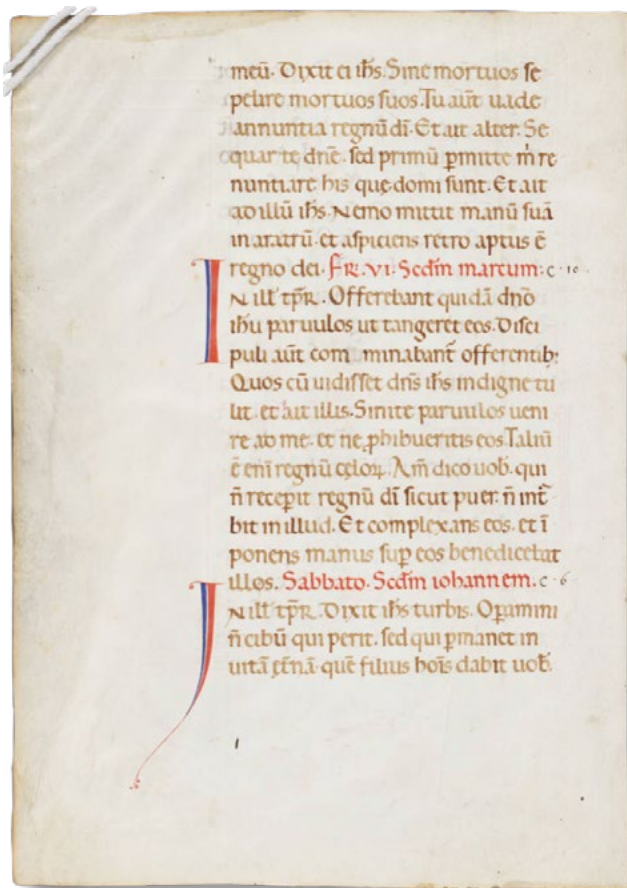
Affinity Groups Archiving — Preserving Minority Student Life

The Oberlin College Archives oversaw ten students in the *Oberlin Review Winter Term project*. The group researched the newspaper's archives to select articles and photographs for a commemorative edition celebrating the *Review's* 150th anniversary (first issue: April 1, 1874). The students used the *Review's* Archives and the College Archives, learning about events, people, and issues in Oberlin's history.

The Archives also had nine students participate in its sponsored project *Affinity Groups Archiving — Preserving Minority Student Life*. The students got hands-on training on arranging and describing organizational records, including the Asian American Alliance and Afrikan Heritage House. It was a great lesson in the rewards and challenges of preserving records.

These Winter Term projects are essential to the Libraries' mission and complement our strong record of collaboration, instruction, and educational programming.

# Research and Learning



**Left:** Leaf from a Gospel lectionary. Northern Italy, middle 12th century. Brown and red ink on parchment with blue and red decorated initials, 34 × 24 cm. B 7, Terrell Main Library Special Collections, Oberlin College Libraries. Gift of Frederick B. Artz.

**Right:** Together again... matching up leaves with MS Typ 953, Houghton Library, Harvard University Library.

## Dismembered Leaves

Recently, four leaves of medieval Latin manuscripts held in Terrell Main Library Special Collections have been identified as having siblings in other libraries. Two leaves, shelfmarks B 7 and B 7a, match those held by the Houghton Library at Harvard (as MSS Typ 704 (13) and Typ 953), all originally from a Gospel lectionary created in northern Italy in the mid-twelfth century. According to Emerson Morgan, Librarian for Conservatory Special Collections, this book was still intact as recently as 1937.

Ohio is unusually rich in holdings of medieval manuscripts, literally writing by hand, as opposed to printing. One controversial part of Ohio book history is the book-breaking

(or ‘biblioclasm’) done by Otto Ege and his spouse Louise at their home in Cleveland in the years after World War II. Arguing that more people might gain appreciation for manuscript culture from dismembered leaves circulated widely, rather than whole books held by a privileged few, Ege purchased medieval manuscript books, cut out their leaves, and distributed the contents for sale in packets.

Fragmentarium, hosted at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland, offers an online space where librarians, archivists, and researchers today can digitally “rebind” book fragments that have been broken over the course of their lives.



## Looking and listening

“What do you see?” asks Emerson Morgan, Librarian for Special Collections. For some students, this question mirrors its deceptively simple counterpart: “what do you hear?” Students enrolled in English for Speakers of Other Languages visit the Conservatory Library each semester to develop descriptive skills, particularly through the visual analysis of music materials.

A dazzling array of visual and sonic media are held in Conservatory Special Collections, from the red-and-black title page of Martin Agricola, *Musica instrumentalis deudsch* (1529) to the album covers designed for Blue Note records (1956); from the Edison Model D phonograph (1908) to a low-fi symphony on a microchip (2015); from British broadsides for the early stage to American lobby cards for the silver screen; from Russian *balalaika* to Andean *charango* strung upon an armadillo, all evidence of people making music in various circumstances. The Libraries invite students and classes to consider using special collections across the many senses.



Roland Wiltse Hayes (American tenor, 1887–1977), 1953. Gelatin silver print, 8 × 10 inches, inscribed: “For Paul - From - Roland - 10.25.53”. Collection of Musicians’ Autographs and Photographs, Oberlin Conservatory Library. Gift of Paul Strouse-Schulthess.



Tim Groulx



Alex Harmon

## Frederick B. Artz Summer Scholars Program

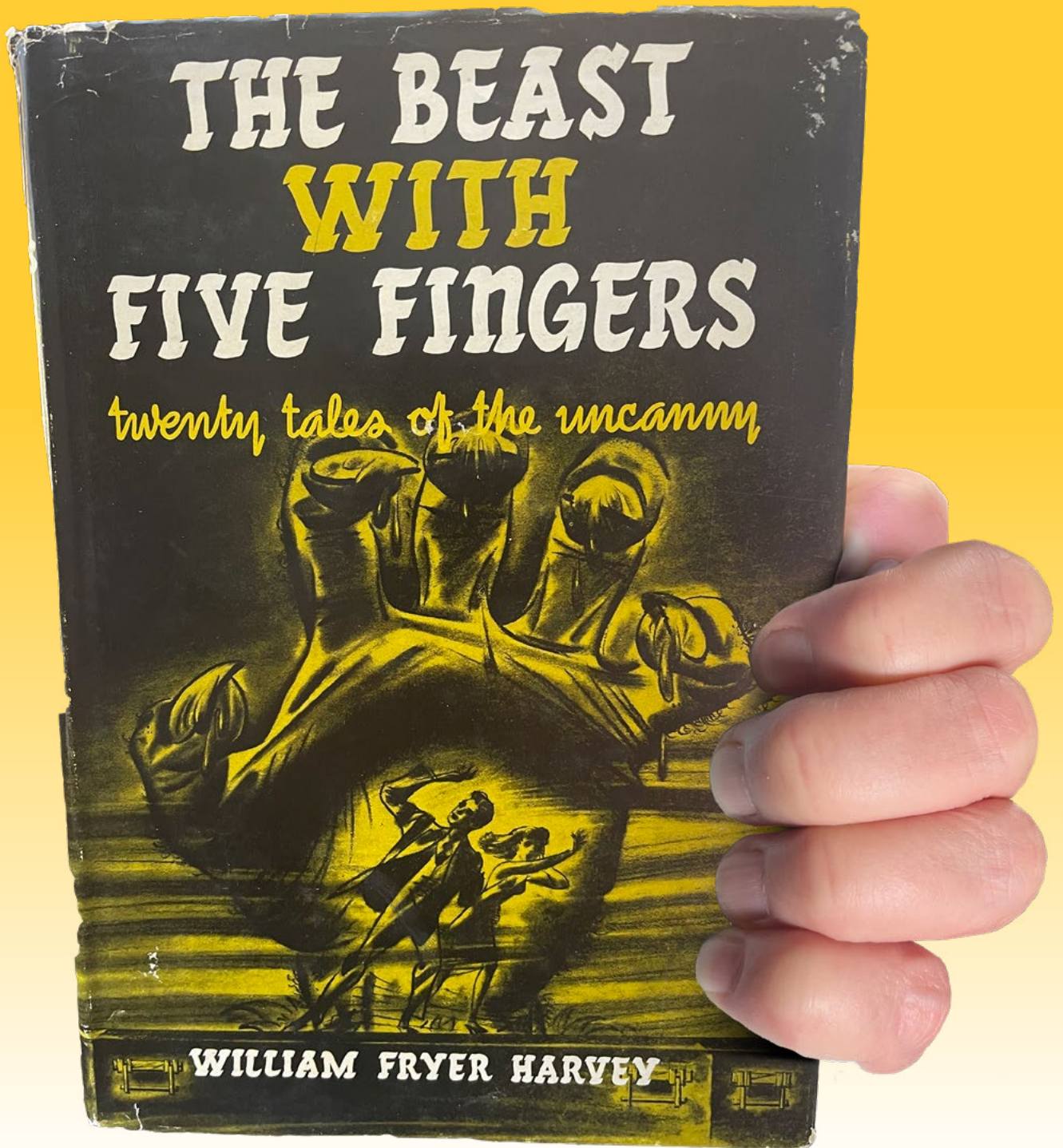
During 2024, the thirty-fourth year of the Frederick B. Artz Summer Scholars Program, the College Archives awarded grants to two scholars.

**Tim Groulx**, Oberlin College Class of 1999 and Associate Professor of Music Education at the University of North Florida, conducted research for his book project related to the history of music education at the Oberlin College and Conservatory.

**Alex Harmon**, Assistant Professor of English at Montana State University, reviewed the Jack Schaefer Collection in Special Collections for her book project *The Boy with the Tin Star: Law and Masculinity in the American Western*.

Established in 1990, through an endowment administered by the College Archives, The Artz Summer Scholar Program provides funding for researchers to use archival and special collections materials at Oberlin College and Conservatory for their scholarly research and publications. Research projects related to an Oberlin theme are encouraged.

# Collections



This handsome item comes from the most recent donation of books from the collection of Joseph L. Sanders. Professor Sanders taught English at Lakeland Community College, and has been donating graphic novels and sci-fi, fantasy, mystery, and horror books since 2006.

## A Coda to the Neumann Jazz Collection

Over fall break 2023, a semi-trailer from Chicago sidled up to the Kohl building, laden with 19,000 lbs. of carefully-packed photographs, papers, sound recordings, and books documenting the history of jazz. This second set gift (archivists call it an ‘accretion’) completes The James R. ’58 and Susan Neumann Jazz Collection, the first of which arrived in Oberlin in the fall of 2011.

When Dan Morgenstern appraised the Neumann Collection in 2008 by declaring that such a collection will never happen again,” he had not yet seen the half of it! Thanks to Jim and Susan Neumann, Oberlin’s world-class holdings in jazz are now augmented by roughly 40,000 compact discs; 6,000 vinyl LPs and EPs; 2,000 books; and 40 cubic feet of papers, sheet music, and video media.

Some 4,000 new items—photographs, concert programs, posters, and letters—form a kernel of high research value, including 60 photographs taken by amateur photographer Jimmy H. Baynes in Cleveland jazz nightclubs in the 1950s. Depicting musicians, audiences, and venues, these images complement the Frank Kuchirchuk Collection of jazz photographs of Cleveland in the same years, also held by the Conservatory Library.



Jimmy H. Baynes (1922–2010). Count Basie and Joe Williams performing at Bandbox, Cleveland, 1957. Gelatin silver print, 8 × 10 inches. New accession, series 7: visual materials, subseries 1: photographs, The James R. and Susan Neumann Jazz Collection, Oberlin Conservatory Library.



Recent Oberlin grad Anni Yang '24 spent a productive summer cataloging Chinese language books for the collection.

# Collections

## Friends of the Libraries Purchases

Thanks to the ongoing generosity of the Friends of Oberlin College Libraries, we were able to add another batch of new acquisitions that will greatly help us to provide new, continuing, and expanded access to resources that meet needs in the curriculum and inspire students.



### Streaming Video: Klassiki Online

Klassiki Online has a library of over one hundred permanently available classic Eastern European films in addition to new contemporary films added every week from recent festivals or that have had commercial success. Thus, this resource gives faculty and students, especially in Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies, a grasp of the history of Eastern European film as well as a chance to watch current films as they are released.



### E-Resources: Oxford Bibliographies

With Friends' help, we purchased perpetual access to our current Oxford Bibliography Online subscriptions—including Buddhism, Medieval Studies, Latin American Studies, African Studies, Linguistics, and Political Science—to reduce annual costs. All six subjects are well-used by the campus community in classes and for independent learning. By changing these resources from an annual subscription model to owned content, we cut our ever increasing annual subscription cost commitment significantly.



### Special Collections: Infant's Library

Children's books as a category separate from adult books did not really emerge until the end of the 18th century. John Marshall, the publisher/book seller of *Infant's Library* (1780) is a well-attested early figure in this publishing genre. Most surviving examples from this time period are highly sought after. Individual volumes help a child progress from letters to full sentences, learning vocabulary and discovering the wider world. Children's books are a specialty at Oberlin and very popular as a research topic for Book Studies students, with a potentially broader appeal, reaching into English, Art History, and Sociology.

### Conservatory Library: Henle Library App



The Friends provided another year of access to Henle, one of the premier publishers of scores that provides highly used circulating editions for the Con Library. Henle's entire catalog is available electronically through this app, making it easy for faculty to assign parts to students while preventing wear and tear on the print collections since it is all digital. Students and faculty can create accounts to access and use the parts they need directly from their tablets or laptops.

# Slightly Foxed

## Slightly Foxed editions

Slightly Foxed editions bring back forgotten voices in a series of beautifully produced pocket hardback reissues of classic memoirs, historical novels, essays, and other non-fiction -- all absorbing and highly individual. The carefully-curated publisher's list of reissues includes such authors as Radclyffe Hall, Claire Leighton, Ford Madox Ford, Mary Webb, and Richard Brautigan. These are well-made books that tempt a student to pull a volume off the shelf.



## Visual Resources: Antique glass "magic" lantern slide projectors

The Visuals Resources collection added three beautiful examples of British Victorian magic lanterns to its Pre-Cinematic Performing Arts Collection. These early image projectors complement the extensive collection of glass lantern slides in the collection and will be used to educate students on this early technology.

## Special Collections: Sans Serif Font with Diacritics

The Letterpress acquired new fonts with diacritics to allow for foreign language printing in German, French, and Spanish. These fonts will be well-used in Winter Term Letterpress classes and by the growing Book Studies students who make heavy use of the Letterpress Studio.



## Conservatory Library: Babel Scores

This electronic collection contains over 210,000 music pages and features the most important contemporary music online library. BabelScores® selects the works of the most creative, original, and innovative composers of the past few decades, offering a wide catalog and setting up a powerful circulation platform addressed to instrumentalists, ensembles, orchestras, composers, musicologists, conservatories, universities, and festivals throughout the world.

## Conservatory Library: Music Online: Classical Scores Library, Volume IV



This collection of 300,000 pages of scores focuses on works of the 20th and 21st centuries, and provides digital access to some of the most-studied works in classical repertoire and exposure to lesser-known composers from around the world including Latin America, Asia, Eastern

Europe, and the Middle East. Highlights of Volume IV include: *New Edition of the Complete Works*, composed by Hector Berlioz (1803-1869); *Terra Memoria, for those departed, parts for string quartet*, composed in 2006 by Kaija Saariaho (1952-); and *Notations 21*, written by Theresa Sauer, drawing inspiration by John Cage's 1968 *Notations* and featuring illustrated musical scores from more than 100 composers from every continent.





# GOOD VIBES

FROM THE  
LIBRARIES  
1974 - 2024

1974



2024

24,798

DOOR COUNT

1,114,904

55,642

ITEMS CIRCULATED

COLLECTION USE



64,353  
ITEMS CIRCULATED  
250,365  
E-RESOURCES USED

750,967

BOOKS & E-RESOURCES



1,431,425  
plus  
44,000,000+ via OhioLink

12

+ 1 CREDIT-BEARING LIBRARY SKILLS  
COURSE WITH 36 STUDENTS

INSTRUCTION SESSIONS



229

1,500 linear feet

ARCHIVES HOLDINGS



9,625 linear feet

QUESTIONS ANSWERED

7,632



RESEARCHERS RESCUED

5,770

56

LIBRARY STAFF SIZE



47

N/A

PROGRAMS, EXHIBITS, OUTREACH EVENTS



101

1890 BORROWED  
3723 LOANED

ILL ACTIVITY



3218 BORROWED  
4236 LOANED

# Research and Learning

## Collaboration Between Community Music School and the Conservatory Library

The Community Music School (CMS) of the Oberlin Conservatory seeks to provide students with an exceptional educational and artistic experience while fostering a lifelong appreciation and commitment to excellence in music. Many of the students who study at CMS of the Oberlin Conservatory borrow music from the school, and the school receives many donations of scores. The CMS has acquired a 1,500-item collection through donations, and the collection needs organization. Louise Zeitlin, Associate Professor of Community Engagement, and Gwendolyn Oeseburg, Circulation Coordinator at Conservatory Library, worked together to find a system to accommodate the collection. Oeseburg suggested TinyCat (<https://www.librarycat.org/>) as a potential tool. While Oeseburg is a cat lover, this resource refers to online library catalog for small libraries for its title. TinyCat turns any public LibraryThing

account into a full-featured library online catalog and library system that manages circulation and patron data. Oeseburg is a consultant as Zeitlin and her tiny staff put their tiny collection into a TinyCat! Meow.



### Kendal Spotlight: Ann Fuller

“As a long-term Oberlin resident now living at Kendal, and an Affiliate Scholar for 30 years, I have used the Oberlin College Libraries. I have accessed books, journals, music scores, Interlibrary Loan, digital resources, and a New York Times subscription. In addition, I have enjoyed library exhibitions and researched Oberlin history in the College Archives. I appreciate the friendly help available from staff, in person, by telephone, and online, for research questions and website instructions.”

If you'd like to learn more about Ann's many contributions to our community, you may find the full interview interesting. Please visit <https://bit.ly/AnnF>



Free entry fee

3<sup>rd</sup> EDITION

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2024

# LONG STORY SHORT AWARD

Short Edition's Annual Inter-University Writing Contest

Imagine if **you** were the **next writer published** in over 500 Short Story Dispensers worldwide?

Starting **October 8, 2024**

Submit your work to  
[lssa-2024.short-edition.com](https://lssa-2024.short-edition.com)



## Cash prizes

**\$550** For the public and jury chosen winners

**\$400** For the jury's coup de cœur (jury's favorite)

shortéditio**n**

## Long Story Short Contest

Oberlin students competed in the **Long Story Short Award** (LSSA), sponsored by ShortÉdition, an international publishing house that uses innovative mediums and open access to spread literature across the globe.

Oberlin Libraries installed their Short Story dispenser last year. Library patrons and visitors can push a button to print a 1-minute or a 3-minute short story—or try the special “Oberlin Shorts” button to get a story by a student or community member.

Now, we are bringing the Third Annual Inter-university “Long Story Short Award” contest to Oberlin, asking for poems, fiction, and creative nonfiction stories.

The more students who compete, the better our chances of winning a free short story dispenser! Individual students can also win cash prizes and publishing contracts from ShortÉditions.

Starting **October 8, 2024**, Short Édition invited students from all participating universities to submit their short stories, poems and creative nonfiction stories of *7,500 characters* or less.

Through this creative writing contest, we hope to offer a place — online and eventually in our Short Story Dispensers — to share our stories, publishing them alongside those of fellow students both at home and across various campuses, creating a bridge between thousands of students around the world.



# Outreach and Engagement



## MELVILLE'S **BILLY BUDD** AT 100

OBERLIN COLLEGE LIBRARIES ~ 17 NOVEMBER - 20 DECEMBER 2024

### On Board With An American Classic This Fall In Oberlin's Libraries

#### Melville's *Billy Budd* at 100

**On View November 17 - December 20, 2024**

Oberlin Libraries presents an exhibition commemorating the centenary of an American literary classic: Herman Melville's novella *Billy Budd* (1924). On view in Terrell Library's fourth-floor Special Collection and Archives from November 17, 2024, *Melville's Billy Budd at 100* highlights the "prose and poem concoction" left unfinished on Melville's desk at his death in 1891. Posthumously published in 1924, *Billy Budd* is the story of a young "Handsome Sailor" impressed into the British Navy during the Napoleonic Wars in the late 18th century, and later falsely accused of mutiny. The novella questions the morality of following the letter of the law and explores the fragility of human goodness.

#### Exhibition Highlights

On view are extremely rare editions of Melville's poetry, along with scholarly editions of the manuscript, as well as artistic adaptations for illustrated editions, theater, opera, and film. The works come from the collection of curator William Palmer Johnston, who summed up his approach, observing that "the challenging nature of Melville's unfinished narrative compels us to join in the ongoing struggle to make sense out of the ambiguities and to find meaning in a world of fog and paradox."

Poetry was Melville's primary literary focus in the last decades of his life and the novella concludes with the classic poem "Billy in the Darbies," which Robert Penn Warren declares as "certainly Melville's most nearly perfect poem." On view in the exhibition are the signed typescript of W. H. Auden's 1939 poem "Herman Melville," which includes the lines "And we are introduced to Goodness every day ... He has a name like Billy and is almost perfect."



**Previous page:** Barry Moser. Billy in the Darbies, 2023. Graphite pencil drawing with chalk highlights on Canson Mi Teintes archival paper. Copyright Barry Moser, 2023.

**Left:** Allied Artists. Studio Publicity Poster for Movie Billy Budd. Peter Ustinov and Dewitt Bodeen, screenwriters, and starring Robert Ryan, Ustinov, Melvyn Douglas, and Terence Stamp. Allied-Anglo Pictures Ltd., 1962.

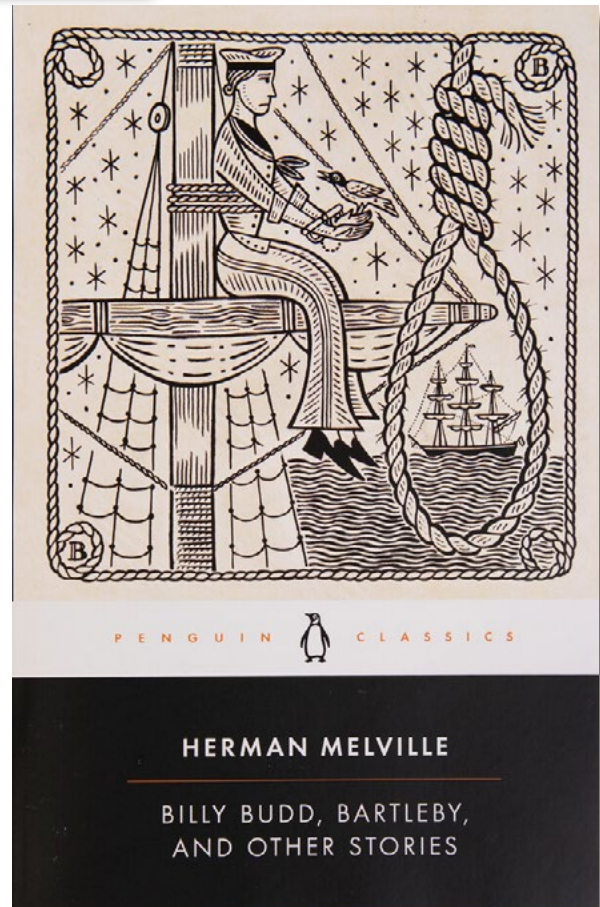
**Below:** Duke Riley, original drawing for cover illustration of Herman Melville's Billy Budd, Bartleby, and Other Stories (Penguin Classics Edition). London: Penguin Press, 2016.

## Publication & Programming

Accompanying the exhibition is a catalog by Johnston, with a frontispiece portrait of Melville by Barry Moser and color photographs of select items in a signed limited edition of 25 and 350 additional copies. Oberlin's Director Valerie Hotchkiss collaborated with the curator and artist to produce the exhibition, the catalog, and a new broadside featuring the poem "Billy in the Darbies" and two drawings by artist Barry Moser. A new centennial edition of Billy Budd will also result from this fruitful collaboration (Pennyroyal Press, 2024).

Oberlin will host related free public programs, including a symposium and lunchtime workshops on knot tying and sustainable scrimshaw art, as well as a screening of the 1962 film on December 12 at 7:00pm. The Conservatory's Opera Department will participate by performing arias from Benjamin Britten's *Billy Budd*.

The exhibition will also travel to The Grolier Club of New York City. Founded in 1884, the Grolier Club is America's oldest and largest society for bibliophiles and enthusiasts in the graphic arts.



# Staff News

**Kathleen Abromeit, Head of the Conservatory Library**, edits and writes the “Music Received Column” in *Notes: The Quarterly Journal of the Music Library Association*. Recent columns include such topics as solo guitar by women composers, musical settings of Black poetry, Ukrainian music publishing, and much more! She is also Chair of the Music Library Association’s (MLA) Publications Committee, Coordinator of the MLA Black Music Collections Interest Group, and member of the MLA Future of Publications Work Group.

**Clinton Baugess** joined Terrell Library’s research and instruction team as the Information Literacy and Assessment Librarian in June 2024. He provides reference services and coordinates the library’s information literacy program, supporting librarians and archivists as collaborators with faculty to develop students’ research and information literacy skills.

**Kyler Decker** is the Collection Manager and Evening Supervisor for the Conservatory Library. Currently enrolled in the MLIS program through Kent State University, he holds a Master’s in Music History from Bowling Green State University and a Bachelor of Music in Music Education from Ohio University. His primary academic interests are ludomusicology and music copyright.

**Eugénie Fortier** is the new Art Librarian for Oberlin College. Eugénie has a BA/BFA from New College of Florida, and an MA in Art History from Hunter College, as well as a Masters of Library Science from San José State University. She wrote her MA thesis on James McNeill Whistler. Eugénie comes to Oberlin from the Frick Collection in New York where she worked in their Art Reference Library. She has been working in art libraries since 2012. Eugénie is a member of the Art Libraries Society of North America (ARLIS/NA) and is particularly interested in information and visual literacy. She started a library book club, volunteers with the Prison Library Support Network, and maintained a regular blog for the Frick Art Library.

**Natalie Gutiérrez-Negrón** joined the Clarence Ward Art Library as the new Art Library Administrative Assistant III in May 2024. Natalie previously worked in the Conservatory Library as the Collection/Stacks Manager and Evening Circulation Supervisor. Gutiérrez-Negrón leads the Art Library’s student worker team in providing excellent direct service, building healthy workplace habits, improving browsability of the Art Collections, and supporting the student worker team in the Art Library’s outreach efforts.

**Valerie Hotchkiss** hosted the Oberlin-in-London students at the Reform Club in December, arranging for Lord Nigel Crisp, former head of the National Health System, UK, to speak with our students about careers in healthcare and global health. Oberlin alums in London also attended and enjoyed meeting current students.

**Eboni A. Johnson** was appointed STEM Librarian and Head of the Science Library in November 2023. Johnson has worked at Oberlin since 2009, as a Reference & Instruction Librarian and as the Outreach & Programming Librarian. She’s excited to focus on this new role while continuing to coach students and faculty on making the best use of library resources and services. Johnson also contributed a chapter, “Show Them Who You Are: Code-Switching and Code-Meshing in the Academy,” to the forthcoming *Music Information Literacy: Inclusion and Advocacy* (Library Juice Press), edited by Kathleen A. Abromeit and Dyani Sabin.

**Yilin La** joined OCL in May 2023, as the East Asian Studies Librarian. During her first three months at OCL, she concentrated on assessing the serials collection, cataloged some monographs, and learned about the Ainsworth collection. She also found a great apartment in Oberlin and is settling in, feeling that she is ready for the fall semester.

Kevin McLaughlin joined the Conservatory Library in August 2023, to help out on an interim basis. He has served as Library Director at Cleveland Institute of Music and the San Francisco Conservatory. His music criticism has appeared in *Clevelandclassical.com* and *Cleveland.com* and he produces a podcast on early jazz called *At the Jazz Band Ball*.

**Megan Mitchell**, formerly the Academic Engagement and Digital Initiatives Coordinator, graciously joined us as Interim Head of the Clarence Ward Art Library in June. In addition to working part-time in the art library, she works for the Five Colleges of Ohio on a program advancing open educational resources and open pedagogical practices among the 5 Colleges of Ohio (OH5).

**Emerson Morgan**, Librarian for Special Collections in the Conservatory Library, was awarded an H.H. Powers 2024 travel grant from Oberlin to visit the vast Bodleian Libraries at Oxford and a mountainous monastery in Switzerland. In October, he will examine scholars' papers for a project about medieval Latin liturgical chant manuscript provenance.

**Dean Nusbaum** joined the Acquisitions, Gifts, and Electronic Resources team as a Serials Cataloger in May. He holds an MLS and a BA in Classical Civilizations from Kent State University. He previously worked as a metadata specialist at Baker and Taylor Publisher Services as well as Reference Librarian at Mansfield/Richland County Public Library.

**Gwen Oeseburg** joined OCL in May 2023, as the Conservatory Library's Circulation Coordinator. Gwen is currently enrolled in the MLIS program through Kent State University. She holds a MA in music history and a Bachelor of Arts. Her academic interests are feminist musicology and the intersection of musicians and music collecting.

**Emily Rebman** joined Oberlin College as the associate archivist in November 2023. She holds an MA in material culture and will complete her MLIS in December 2024. She has primarily worked as a material culture and architectural historian, including processing archival records related to Ohio History Connection restoration projects.

**Stephen Renko** joined the Conservatory Library as the Neumann Archivist in September 2024. Steve received his MLS in archives and preservation from Queen's College. He is also a Jazz musician with a BFA in jazz drum set and an impressive performance history. He worked for Jazz at Lincoln Center from 2015-2020 before moving to Cleveland.

**Jillian Schwab** is a recent graduate of Miami University with a BA in Anthropology. As the new Science Library Associate since July, she supervises the student employees and assists Eboni with daily library operations. Some fun facts about Jillian: she loves historical fashion, sewing, and her baby bearded dragon Stormfly!

**Elizabeth Sullivan** took on the new role of Academic Engagement and Information Literacy Librarian / Head of Reference and Instruction after six years as Assessment and User Experience Librarian. Liz teaches information literacy classes, focusing particularly on source evaluation, locating primary sources, and ensuring that students become intentional and reflective searchers. She also designs user-centered and accessible systems, and coordinates assessment initiatives.

**Marla Thompson** transitioned to a new role as the Library Technician III for Acquisitions and E-Resources in the Main Library beginning in March 2024. This is an exciting opportunity for her to continue her career at Oberlin, which has included her role as Circulation Coordinator in the Conservatory Library, as well as previous positions as Assistant to the Vice President and Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid, and as Secretary to the Director of Libraries.

**Zebulon Wimsatt** joined the Research and Instruction team in April 2023, as Collections and User Experience Librarian. Zebulon serves as the Library liaison to the Cinema Studies, Creative Writing, French and Italian, Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies, and Politics departments. Outside of the Libraries, they attend to a twelve-year-old chiweenie.

# Staff News



## Alison Ricker

A tribute to Alison Ricker by alumna, colleague, and successor Eboni Johnson, as delivered to faculty and staff in June 2024:

The best way I've found to describe Alison is, "the most 'alive' person I know." I've shamelessly stolen this phrase from Jennifer Schreiner, who worked with Alison in the Science Library for more than 20 years. Over the years that I've known her, I've found myself wondering how Alison did all the things she did. Now, I can't even pretend to know everything, but here are a few things that I know about:

In addition to being wife to Ray English, mother to sons John and Michael, grandmother to Noni and Willow, Alison:

- served as the Science Librarian at Oberlin College for 40 years, during which time she shepherded the movement of the Science Library from the old Kettering Hall to the new Science Center facility
- volunteered with Meals on Wheels for over 20 years
- Led various professional boards and committees, including the Academic Library Association of Ohio, where she served as President (as well as Vice President, Past President, Secretary, Membership Chair, Procedures Manual Coordinator) and was the winner of the Jay Ladd

Distinguished Service Award in 2001

- served on the vestry and as senior warden at Christ Episcopal Church here in Oberlin (and also sang in the choir, and served as an acolyte, and as the church sacristan)
- was an active member of the League of Women Voters (serving as president of the Oberlin Area League, and as co-President of the State of Ohio League)
- contributed as co-leader of the Citizens Climate Lobby and advocated tirelessly for climate justice
- served many terms on A&PS Council as Chair, Secretary, and as a member of various A&PS and College-wide committees,
- and so much more.

What struck me most in the days and weeks following her passing, though, was really how far and wide her influence was felt. I've shared tears and hugs with student assistants who worked with Alison before her retirement. I've heard from people from across the country who told me that Alison mentored them as they started their journeys as "baby science librarians" or that they went into science librarianship because of Alison's influence and impact on their lives and careers. I've chatted with science faculty and staff about how helpful she was to their students as they struggled — and succeeded! — with their research. Talk about leaving a legacy!

I, for one, will miss chatting with her at The Feve, or waving to her as she rode her bike around campus and town. As I step into the big shoes Alison left for me in the Science Library, I look around and see evidence of her in every corner, from the cushions she bought to encourage students to relax on the window seats by the library's tall windows, the care with which she tended the big plants that brought life into the space, and the decorations she used to adorn the library for the winter holidays.

Alison brought good humor, dedication, commitment, and kindness to everything she did. She left the world much better than she found it and I think we all are a little better for having known her.

Today (June 13) would have been Alison's 71st birthday. a propitious day to reflect on the life and legacy of our dear friend and colleague, Alison Scott Ricker.



Beginning on February 26, 2024, Collections and Resource Services underwent a much needed overhaul in both its aesthetic and physical layout.



Science Library got a refresh with new signage.



In May 2024 the Library acquired a custom made 2 lb. David Reina beater for the papermaking studio. The beater will allow the students to make their own pulp on site.

# Friends of the Libraries

## Friends Of The Oberlin College Libraries 2024 Speaker



**Nolan Williams, Jr. '90**, producer of arts programming and entertainment, brought his creative force to the Friends of Oberlin College Libraries' annual dinner this year. The award-winning music director, composer/lyricist, playwright, filmmaker, musicologist, and cultural curator was the 2024

Annual Friends Meeting/Dinner speaker, in conversation with our multi-talented director of the Conservatory Library and expert on American spirituals, Kathy Abromeit. Mr. Williams also gave the audience a taste of his media project, "Rise Up & Fight" which he developed to encourage full voter participation in the 2024 election cycle.

Williams's body of work includes choral and orchestral works, music for television, songwriting credits on two Grammy-nominated projects, arts and educational festivals at The Kennedy Center and Philadelphia's Mann Center, and cultural programming developed with such institutions as the Smithsonian and the U.S. State. At the Friends event, we particularly celebrated his bestselling *African American Heritage Hymnal*, ending the evening with beautiful renditions of some hymns from the work, sung by members of the Oberlin Gospel Choir.

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## Friends "Speculate" with Jane Austen

*'What shall I do, Sir Thomas? [asks his wife, Lady Bertram]:  
"Whist or Speculation; which will amuse me most?"*

*Sir Thomas, after a moment's thought, recommended  
Speculation. He was a Whist player himself, and perhaps might  
feel that it would not much amuse him to have her for a partner.*

— Jane Austen, *Mansfield Park*

The Friends of Oberlin College Libraries took Sir Thomas's recommendation to heart and enjoyed a fun-filled, multi-generational evening of card playing in Terrell Library. A dozen card tables filled the Academic Commons and quickly filled with townies and gownies to hear Professor Robin Bates (St. Mary's College, MD) lecture on the role of card games in Jane Austen.

After we clearly understood that what happens at the card table is always consequential in Austen novels, we were taught the rules of the wildly popular 18th-century card game Speculation. The rest of the evening is a blur of laughter, squeals, betting, and winning.





## Graduate Library School Scholarship Winners

**Callum Krueger '24**, **Madisyn Mettenburg '19**, and **Leon Vance '23** were winners of the 2024 Friends of the Oberlin College Libraries Graduate Library School Scholarship. **Anthony Moaton '17** received the 2024 Virginia Proctor Powell Florence Scholarship.



**Callum Krueger** graduated Phi Beta Kappa this spring with a B.A. in Sociology and minors in Linguistics and Cognitive Sciences. At Oberlin, they worked as a student assistant at the Science Library, facilitated small-group discussions for the Barefoot Dialogue program, and served as a peer tutor for statistics and linguistics students. Callum will use this scholarship to support graduate studies at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and to pursue a career in public libraries back home in western Michigan. Their commitment to public libraries and community engagement is deeply influenced by formative experiences in their middle school library and local public libraries.



While at Oberlin, **Madisyn Mettenburg** double-majored in Politics and Creative Writing and worked as a Book Repair Technician in the Terrell Library's Book Preservation Lab. After graduation, she embarked on an English Teaching Fulbright grant in South Korea and later moved to Chicago for work, but never stopped thinking about her time in the Book Lab. This led her to begin a Master's in Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, concentrating in archives and special collections. She currently works as Collections Intern at the Swedish-American Museum of Chicago and will soon begin her second-to-last semester.



**Anthony Moaton** is a multidisciplinary artist and researcher currently pursuing an MLIS with a concentration in archives and cultural heritage at Dominican University. As a proud Bonner Scholar, Anthony aspires to combine a background in tech,

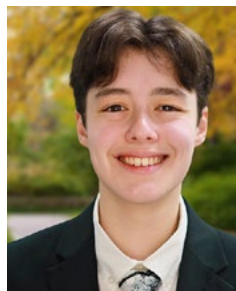
art, and civic-engaged learning to become a conservator of time-based art within a variety of cultural and educational institutions in order to create meaningful dialogue on the relationships between creativity, technological obsolescence, and public memory.



**Leon Vance** graduated from Oberlin College in 2023 with a BA in Anthropology. Passionate about libraries and archives, he worked at the Clarence Ward Art Library as an undergraduate student and interned at the North American Archaeology Department in the American Museum of Natural History in New York City following his graduation. He will be attending Pratt School of Information to pursue a Master's in Library and Information Science in the fall.

Friends President Marilyn McDonald, Director of Libraries Valerie Hotchkiss, and College Archivist Ken Grossi comprised the 2024 Friends of the Libraries Scholarship Committee.

## 2024 Archives Summer Intern

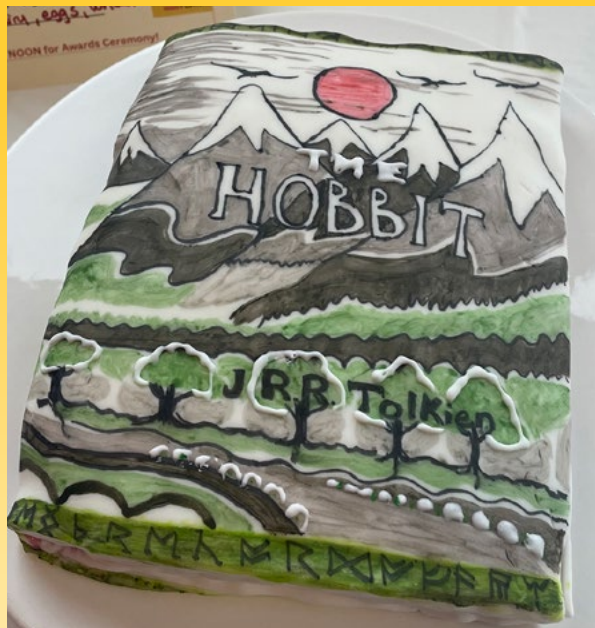


**Lee Must '25** served as the Weidenthal Undergraduate Intern in the College Archives during the summer 2024. Some of Lee's projects included: compiling the finding guide for the Alice Takemoto Papers; processing accretions to the Dominique H. Vasseur Family Papers; filing photographs of Oberlin College students into our existing collection; and photographing objects in the Archives museum collection. In other words, Lee accomplished a great deal! The Archives staff enjoyed working with Lee and we wish them all the best during their fourth year at Oberlin.

# Friends of the Libraries

## Full Plates At Edible Book Festival

No one went away like a Hungry Caterpillar from the first annual **Oberlin Edible Book Festival**. Cooked up and sponsored by The Friends of Oberlin College Libraries and the Oberlin Public Library, the event, which will take place on April 1 each year, mixes the literary and culinary arts in such concoctions as *Alice in Wonderland*, *The Game of Scones*, and a magnificent Sorting Hat cake. Have we whet your appetite? Join us next April 1. All are welcome. Details on the library website.



The Hobbit



Banana Creaminana



Alice in Wonderland



## Recent Gifts

The Libraries gratefully acknowledge the following significant gifts and gifts-in-kind from the past fiscal year:

**Ruth Bent '52**, for the Eleanor Hopkins Bent Memorial Fund  
**Don Blenko**, for the Friends of the Oberlin College Libraries  
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