Grant Funds “Soul of a People” Events

Innovative Library Outreach Program Introduces History of Federal Writers’ Project

WSU Libraries faculty members Nan Myers and Dr. Lorraine Madway have received a grant of $2,500 from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the American Library Association for “Soul of a People: Writing America’s Story.” The NEH launched “Soul of a People” to acquaint the public with the Works Progress Administration’s Federal Writers’ Project (FWP).

During the Great Depression, out-of-work writers were paid by the WPA to write state and regional travel guides, regional cultural studies, and oral history interviews, etc. The goal of “Soul of a People” is to inform the public about the FWP and the start that it gave many aspiring authors. Among the noted authors who got their start from the FWP are Ralph Ellison, John Cheever, Zora Neale Hurston, Saul Bellow, Studs Terkel, and John Steinbeck.

“We are so excited that we were one of only 30 libraries nationwide chosen to participate,” Myers said. Madway stated that “Special Collections and Archives has one of the largest collections of materials on the Writers’ Project in Kansas and the grant will enable the library to showcase this collection.”

The Federal Writers’ Project is now a virtually forgotten story of the largest cultural experiment in U.S. history. The “Soul of a People” programs will acquaint audiences with it through film documentary excerpts, readings, oral histories, photographs, music, and other activities.

The grant will fund five programs in May and June of this year. Three will be held in Ablah Library. WSU Libraries will partner with the Wichita Public Library and the Wichita Sedgwick County Historical Museum for the other two. Dates and program details will be announced in the next issue of Info-Connect.

Library Associates February Lecture Features Gerald Norwood

Please join us on Sunday, February 22, 2-4 p.m., for a fascinating presentation on The Face Value of U.S. Slavery: Reflecting Its Economic Impact in Paper Currency by Gerald Norwood, a WSU alumnus and recognized expert on African American history. He will lecture on the economic impact of slavery during America’s antebellum period using historic currency featuring slave images from his personal collections.

The talk will take place in Ablah Library, lower level. Light refreshments will be served. The event is free and open to the public. For more information, contact University Libraries at 978-3586. For more information on joining Library Associates, the support group for University Libraries, contact 978-3586.

(Courtesy of Gerald Norwood)
Wichita State University Libraries’ vision statement is **Explore, Enlighten, Empower**. This statement was developed by the University Libraries’ faculty and staff after considerable discussion and debate on the changing role of academic libraries in this age of internet and electronic information revolution.

This vision statement conveys how the academic library continues to serve as the heart of the university by acquiring, organizing, and providing easy access to the recorded scholarly information relevant to our academic programs, faculty, students, and staff.

**Explore:** Library faculty each year must identify about 30,000 new scholarly works for the collections from more than a quarter of million new titles published in the English language alone. In selecting these titles, librarians need to keep our curricular and research needs in mind, look into availability of titles in the regional academic libraries, determine the availability of technology to access certain resources, and decide which titles we need to own to meet high demand use and which titles we can lease to satisfy an occasional use. Once the new material is received, it needs to be processed, paid, and cataloged or indexed for easy retrieval by our students, faculty, staff, and community members. Providing access to organized high quality scholarly information is how the Libraries supports the exploration phase of our vision.

**Enlighten:** From the time writing was invented to today, information was recorded on a variety of media ranging from ancient clay tablets to modern day compact discs. Academic libraries do a remarkable job of incorporating all these media into library collections that are relevant to the academic programs of the parent institution.

A goal of librarianship is to provide library clientele with the tools needed for independent research and discovery. To support this goal, librarians develop instructional programs to teach users how to find and make use of information resources they need. These user education programs, which must take into consideration the intellectual diversity of library users, include traditional bibliographic instruction sessions, as well as electronic on-demand instruction using a wide-variety of current communication tools. User education and assistance programs enhance the productivity of faculty and students by allowing them to use information resources effectively and efficiently. Library instruction and information services are the enlightenment phase of our vision.

**Empower:** The quality of our life depends on the quality of decisions we make. The quality of our decisions depends on the quality of our ability to find the right information at the right time. More than any other profession, librarians understand the structure and the power of scholarly information.

In designing information systems that guide the users to the right information resource at the right time, librarians enhance the ability of users to make decisions that support their goals. Library clientele using information to enhance the quality of their lives - this is the empowerment phase of our vision.

By adopting this vision statement, WSU Libraries’ faculty and staff are stating that we are here to provide you access to a vast wealth of information resources (Explore), to assist and enable you to find what you need (Enlighten), and to create an information environment where you use information resources to achieve your goals (Empower). This vision statement, developed on past experiences and accomplishments, sets exciting directions for future achievements.

**Student Appreciation Days Celebrated**

In December, the Libraries celebrated the fourth anniversary of its Student Appreciation Days by giving away free donuts, cookies, and hot drinks to students (and a few faculty) during finals week. Over 450 donuts along with 1,600 cookies baked and donated by the Libraries’ faculty and staff members were given away during the event. Coffee, tea and hot chocolate warmed cold hands. Approximately 700 drinks were served. We love supporting our WSU students!
Special Collections and University Archives recently launched its newest digital collection, Early Township Maps of Sedgwick County, Kansas. This is the first digital collection to offer access to historical maps of Sedgwick County. The website provides researchers anywhere in the world a way to explore the early development of Sedgwick County while preserving the original fragile materials. The project was funded by a grant from the Wichita Community Foundation.

The site includes the first official government surveys commissioned by the United States General Land Office, chiefly dating from the 1860s, and excerpts from the first published atlas of the county done by noted Philadelphia map maker John P. Edwards in 1882. Through web programming and viewing software, users can browse and search overviews and enlarged detailed views of each township as well as browse and search the introduction to Edwards’ Historical Atlas of Sedgwick County, Kansas. The website also enables viewers to download and print copies of all of the maps and text on the web site. The site contains six Lesson Plans designed for use by high school and middle school students. These plans were developed by two local teachers from USD 259, Jonathan Goering and Paul Kitchen.

The project was under the overall direction of Dr. Lorraine Madway, Curator of Special Collections, and Mary Nelson, library assistant, with technical assistance from web designers Sai Deng, Jason Kruse and Tse-Min Wang and Systems Manager Muhammad Usmani. The project team included a dozen graduate students and volunteers, whose credits appear at the website. The University Libraries and Special Collections greatly appreciate the support of the Wichita Community Foundation and the Wichita State University Foundation for facilitating the grant application.

Libraries and Anthropology Team To Publish Electronic Journal

The University Libraries and the Department of Anthropology are proud to announce that the Lambda Alpha Journal is available now electronically through SOAR (Shocker Open Access Repository). The Lambda Alpha Journal is a yearly publication of student papers by members of the Lambda Alpha National Collegiate Honors Society for Anthropology. The Department of Anthropology has been publishing this journal for 39 years.

In 2008, the editor-in chief, Dr. Peer Moore-Jansen, Anthropology Department Chair, approached the University Libraries to determine if SOAR could handle the electronic publishing of the title. This is where Dr. Susan Matveyeva, Coordinator of SOAR, entered the picture. Over the last year, she has been working with Dr. Moore-Jansen on the digitization of the journal.

By having the title on SOAR, scholars world-wide can discover the journal’s articles through major internet search engines such as Google Scholar.

Dr. Moore-Jansen said that the digitization of the journal provided “additional exposure and a timelier and broader dissemination. It also reduces the cost of publishing that journal. Considering that this is a student journal with little income, this is a dramatically significant achievement.”

Currently, SOAR hosts nearly 2,000 titles. For more information, contact Dr. Matveyeva at 316-978-5139 or susan.matveyeva@wichita.edu.

You can see all 39 years of Lambda Alpha Journal at: http://soar.wichita.edu/dspace/handle/10057/782
Lower Level Learning Space Enhanced

Ablah Library’s lower level learning space received a new look. Today’s learning styles call for flexible learning spaces. To meet this need, mobile tables and chairs were purchased to replace the original heavy wooden tables from the 1960s.

The new tables easily roll together for large study groups or pull apart for individual use. Enlarged computer workstations allow two or three students to work together. The old chairs, also from the 1960s, were described as “killer” by one student. New, more comfortable chairs were selected based on a student survey that allowed students to try out five sample chairs. The area’s 20-year old carpeting also was replaced and additional electrical outlets for laptops are being installed.

Poetry Reading Scheduled for February 26th

Joan Larkin, the 2009 Distinguished Visiting Poet, will read from her work on Thursday, February 26 from 3:00-4:00 on the lower level of the library. Larkin received the Publishing Triangle’s 2008 Audre Lorde Award for her latest collection, My Body: New and Selected Poems (Hanging Loose Press). Larkin co-founded the independent press Out & Out Books and co-edited the groundbreaking anthologies Amazon Poetry and Lesbian Poetry with Elly Bulkin and Gay and Lesbian Poetry in Our Time with Carl Morse. Her anthology, A Woman Like That, was nominated for Publishing Triangle and Lambda prizes for nonfiction in 2000. Larkin has received several fellowships including the National Endowment for the Arts. She will be signing copies of My Body. Refreshments will be served. Free and open to the public.