From the Librarian

As you read this newsletter, we are in the final preparations to vacate Magill Library. When students and faculty return to campus for the spring 2018 semester, the library staff and its functionality will be dispersed throughout campus, including the redeployment of Founders Great Hall and its Common Room as student study spaces. As the shovels hit the dirt sometime in January or February, the campus will already be in the throes of curricular engagement and academic inquiry. Librarians are fully prepared to continue our research and instruction support; the work of collection development, management, and access will proceed apace.

In addition to our work in various satellite spaces during the construction period, staff will work on introducing new technologies and developing new processes. We recently created a new group within the Libraries focused on the user experience, and this group will lead the initiative to bring RFID technology to the collections. They will also plan and introduce new ways of providing access to collections and in supporting scholarship in the new library. The user experience group will work closely with research and instruction librarians to develop new student training programs to enhance the student research experience.

During the interim period our digital scholarship group will trial some of the technologies identified for the new library, and Quaker & Special Collections colleagues will be working to bring richer levels of description to our rare holdings to increase access to these highly-regarded and important primary resources.

In the meantime, planning for the new building continues. We are delighted by the work of Perry Dean Rogers Partners Architects and their excellent team of consultants; we have no doubt that the outcome will be an extraordinarily beautiful space dedicated to student success and academic excellence.

-Terry Snyder is librarian of the College

Dispatches from Oaxaca City: Update on the Ticha Project

BY MIKE ZARAFONETIS

The Ticha project, a digital explorer for colonial texts written in the Zapotec language of southern Mexico, is an ongoing collaboration among Brook Lillehaugen of the linguistics department, librarians, and team members from other institutions in the United States and Mexico. During the spring semester of 2017, students in Professor Lillehaugen’s Colonial Valley Zapotec class transcribed and encoded the Cathecismo de la Lengua Zapoteca, a text written by Fray Leonardo Levanto in 1766, so that it could be displayed on the Ticha website. The class also corresponded with high school students at the CETis 124 school in Tlacolula, Mexico via Twitter in English, Spanish, and Zapotec. After the semester, some members of the class, Professor Lillehaugen, and I traveled to Tlacolula and Oaxaca City for a week of exchange with the CETis students. The trip, funded through the Center for Peace and Global Citizenship (CPGC), included travel to archeological sites, guided tours of religious sites, and daily exchange sessions at the high school. It was a remarkable opportunity to work with students in the area as they learned their history and language.

Lessons at CETis incorporated documents from the Ticha project, including analyses by colonial Spanish writers of the Zapotec

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counting system. The Zapotec system operates in base-20, unlike our base-10 counting, and the students deduced this from documents that include some of the first appearances of their language in the Roman alphabet. It was fascinating to watch them sound out the words in their modern dialects of the languages, and to hear them compare the same words in different regional dialects with each other.

We were hoping to observe the students’ use of the Ticha web site, particularly the manuscripts section of the project, to gain an understanding of how this specific user group would engage with the documents. What kinds of documents would they find interesting? Would they be more interested in the transcription of the documents or the scans of the originals, 17th-century handwriting and all? We were particularly excited about this aspect of the trip, but technology had other ideas. One of the most disappointing aspects of the visit was the struggle to connect to Wi-Fi in the school’s library. This precluded the use of the Ticha site in most of the lessons at CETis. However, this mishap shed important light on issues related to accessibility. In many parts of the region, Internet access is unreliable and slow. How, then, can we provide access to these important documents in a way that is not reliant upon a consistent Internet connection? We are working on potential solutions for this problem ahead of the fall class trip to Oaxaca. Options such as loading static versions of the website onto flash drives or developing some kind of desktop app with a mixture of static and web-based content are currently being considered.

Despite the technical difficulties, the trip was fulfilling and energizing. Seeing students from Zapotec-speaking communities learn their history and language was an incredible experience that was extremely rewarding on a personal level, and it taught us so much about issues regarding accessibility as it relates to the project. We look forward to applying these lessons as the project continues to grow.

-Mike Zarafonitis is coordinator of digital scholarship and research services
By Madison Arnold-Scerbo ’18 and James Truitt ’17

During the summer of 2016, we worked in Quaker & Special Collections at Magill Library, conducting research for an exhibition about the Friends’ Asylum, the first private institution in the United States devoted entirely to the care of “people deprived of the use of their reason.” We spent weeks pouring over one-of-a-kind archival materials relating to Friends’ Asylum. These materials included records created by physicians and administrators at the institution, as well as some items created by patients within Friends’ Asylum. One of the best parts of the entire experience was being able to find an object, such as a plan for a new asylum, written by William Rickman, a patient at Friends’ Asylum. His pamphlet, published in 1829, suggested a new type of institution combining a mental asylum, boarding house, and schools. Patients’ personal accounts of their time in the asylum also added a human touch. For example, a letter written circa 1820 by a woman named Phoebe Hobson discussed how her desire to return home was tempered by a recognition that being at the asylum had relieved some of the “confusion” she often felt.

After reading through the materials (and deciphering the 19th century script), we began work curating our exhibition, which meant choosing materials to be displayed, as well as writing an essay and object labels. We also extracted some data from patient records and created data visualizations about topics such as the causes and types of insanity. When the exhibition opened, we gave a curators’ talk and tours of the exhibit. We even appeared on a podcast called OC87 Recovery Diaries to discuss the Asylum.

Our work was only a portion of the larger project conducted at the Haverford Libraries and supported by the Thomas Scattergood Behavioral Health Foundation. In the summer of 2015, Abigail Corcoran ’17 and Lindsay Silver ’15 created a framing essay and web portal that served as the cornerstone for the Friends’ Asylum project. The next summer we took over, doing archival research and writing exhibition text. Then during the summer of 2017, digital scholarship students Alison Rosenman ’20 and Claire Michel ’18 contributed more research, and Victor Medina Del Toro ’17 designed the catalog and installed the exhibition.

The project is not over; the internship opportunities that support this work are set to continue, and there is much more archival material to explore. Our exhibition stopped in the 1860s, but there are many fascinating documents in Quaker & Special Collections from the 20th century of Friends’ Asylum that are available for research.

This was a great opportunity for us to combine our academic and professional interests and contribute original archival research right here in Haverford’s Magill Library.

-Madison Arnold-Scerbo ’18 is a history major

-James Truitt ’17 graduated with degrees in history and linguistics
What do hand-colored, 18th-century political cartoons, the world’s largest illustrated version of Dante’s Divine Comedy, and works by American abstract expressionist painter Lee Krasner share in common? All are found in the Haverford College Art Collection (HCAC). Begun in 1943 to “cultivate aesthetic perception” in the student body, the HCAC rented reproductions of famous paintings to students for 25 cents a semester to hang in their rooms. Today, the Collection looks dramatically different, but the goals for its existence are the same: enlivening student experiences through art.

Expanding access to the art collection—through accurate recordkeeping, good stewardship practices, and deep biographies—is the central task of my role as art registrar, a two-year appointment concurrent with the library renovation project. Why is an art registrar necessary? Because a well-researched collection kept secure and environmentally protected ensures it will be as accessible and intact in 50 years as it is today. In my work to date, I’ve explored all of Magill’s nooks and crannies to locate and inventory every piece of artwork in the library, and am in the process of preparing these items for our temporary relocation.

While Magill Library is closed for its transformation, my tasks will be threefold. To begin, I will conduct thorough research on lesser known works in the collection to deepen their curricular usability. Additionally, I will work with faculty and staff across campus to record and verify the environmental suitability of art in workspaces and common areas. Finally, I will continue the ongoing process of digitizing records and images to increase the number of works available in the Tri-Co online art and artifacts database, TriArte (http://triarte.brynmawr.edu/). The resulting digital access to the collection will be abundant for students and faculty. The physical objects will permit professors to offer a more material approach to their teaching, provide contemplative artworks across campus, and improve...
workplace aesthetics for faculty and staff. These items enter into new discourse when incorporated into exhibits, and through digital surrogates, provide access to the wider scholarly community.

Engaging with art creates exciting opportunities for community and scholarship; these conversations begin with clear, steadfast channels of access. My job is simply to shore up those routes and make them more useable for students, faculty, staff, and the broader Haverford community. What does this mean exactly? Well, if we return to the opening question—that of political illustrations, oversized manuscripts, and modern art—the answer is transformed from a simple accounting of the collection into a world of exploration and discovery of light, line, color, and process; political expression, intersectionality, and faith; industrialization, time, and modernity. Questions and revelations begin with access and thus it is a privilege (and quite a bit of fun) to work on strengthening the art collection for current and future members of the Haverford community.

-Rachael A. Beyer is art registrar

If you are interested in enriching our collections through gift or bequest, please contact the Office of Institutional Advancement at (866) 443-8442.

Lee Krasner. Primary Series: Rose Stone, 1969, lithograph, 22 x 29 in. Haverford College Art Collection.

Promoting Research Integrity with Project TIER

BY NORM MEDEIROS

Richard Ball, professor of economics, and I established Project TIER (Teaching Integrity in Empirical Research) in 2013 after receiving a one-year challenge grant from ICPSR. Through Project TIER we promote the integration of principles and practices related to transparency and reproducibility in the research training of social scientists. To these ends, and through generous funding from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, we provide semiannual faculty development workshops at Haverford for instructors who wish to incorporate these methods into their teaching. The Sloan Foundation’s sponsorship has also allowed us to establish a competitive fellows program, expand our web site, and deliver presentations on the pedagogy of reproducible science at venues around the country.

Project TIER is the outgrowth of a decade’s worth of discussions Richard and I shared regarding the documentation and structure of students’ empirical research projects. The goal of these exchanges was simple: to help students understand the data transformations and analyses they were conducting in their empirical research assignments. Ultimately we developed a protocol that supports organization of digital objects (data, statistical code, metadata, etc.) and prescribes methods that enable exact reproducibility of empirical work. The growing popularity of the protocol lies in its simplicity, flexibility, and platform neutrality.
Mary Crauderueff, curator of Quaker collections, presented a paper called “Quaker Archives and Marginalized Groups: Representing the Whole of Quakerism” at the Quaker History Roundtable conference, later collected in the proceedings, An Early Assessment: U.S. Quakerism in the 20th Century, papers from the Quaker History Roundtable, June 8-11, 2017.

Anna-Alexandra Fodde-Reguer, research & instruction librarian, co-authored with Miranda Brown a chapter called “Rituals without Rules: Han Dynasty Mourning” that was published in Behaving Badly in Early and Medieval China, published this year by the University of Hawaii Press.

Sarah Horowitz, curator of rare books & manuscripts and head of Quaker & Special Collections, moderated the panel “Radical Collaboration: Outreach, In-Reach, and Moving Past the Notion of ‘The Crown Jewel’” at the Rare Books and Manuscripts Section of the Association of College and Research Libraries conference in June. She also spoke to the Eastern PA region of the Jane Austen Society of North America about Haverford’s Jane Austen letter in “From Hampshire to Haverford: Jane Austen, Autograph Collection, and One Letter’s Journey.” Sarah also published a short article, “Putting the Draft Guidelines on Primary Source Literacy into Practice,” in Archive Journal; this article discusses her classroom use of guidelines for which she is also on the project team.

Norm Medeiros, associate librarian of the College, was the keynote speaker at the 2017 ExLibris Bluegrass Users Group Annual Meeting held June 16 in Bowling Green, KY. Norm’s talk, entitled “Promoting Open Science throughout the Research Lifecycle: The Integrative Role of Libraries,” highlighted the ways in which academic librarians can foster open science activities in support of faculty and student research.

NEW STAFF:

Rachael A. Beyer joined the staff in May in a two-year appointment as art registrar. Rachael is a Ph.D. candidate in American history and Hagley Scholar at the University of Delaware, where she is completing her dissertation on the role of youth and the family farm in 1950s national ideologies. She holds an M.A. in history and a Certificate of Museum Studies from Delaware and an M.A. in history from Iowa State University, where she wrote her thesis on the competing producer-consumer ideologies of the American arts and crafts movement. Before returning to school, Rachael worked at a USDA seed gene bank, managed a test lab for a start-up hydroponics company, and lived in Japan while serving in the U.S. Air Force. In her free time, Rachael enjoys being a local tourist with her hubby Bob, gardening and canning way too many heirloom tomatoes, working on her fiber art, and carving bars of Ivory soap.

Alex Galarza is the new CLIR postdoctoral fellow in data curation for Latin American & Caribbean studies. He will be working with the digital scholarship team on a digital archive with the Guatemalan human rights group, Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo. Alex received his Ph.D. in Latin American History from Michigan State University this past August. Prior to his position at Haverford, he worked as the digital liberal arts fellow for the Mellon Scholars Program at Hope College. Alex’s dissertation examined soccer and politics in 20th century Buenos Aires, and his research interests include sport, consumption, and politics in Latin America.

Collin Takita joined the Magill team as access services specialist after spending the past year as a member of the Access and Disability Services department in the building next door. Hailing from a family of pretend academics, he is excited to surround himself with books and scholarly folk. Collin graduated with a B.S. in mathematics from Ursinus College and independently pursues research in number theory. When he is not playing with numbers, Collin enjoys baseball, reading, and fun in the sun (in other words, sitting on his porch pretending he can hear the ocean). He is excited to be part of a great team and is looking forward to helping Haverford students and faculty.

-Mike Persick is head of acquisitions & serials
In the last five years, remarkable advances have taken place in a subfield of artificial intelligence called deep learning. Benefitting from advances in parallel computing and big data, deep learning uses artificial neural networks to accomplish a growing variety of tasks, such as accurately identifying objects, text, or relationships in an image. For instance, a recent Stanford study claims to predict sexual orientation from an image. Vision makes it possible for self-driving cars to avoid pedestrians and for an app to distinguish between skin cancer and a benign freckle. With the Google Translate app, you can use your phone to change a text into any of the supported languages with remarkable accuracy. (nytimes.com/2016/12/14/magazine/the-great-ai-awakening.html.) Deep learning also makes it possible to generate real-looking images and video. Scientists at Rutgers can create new works of art by deviating from existing styles (arxiv.org/abs/1706.07068). Researchers at the University of Washington can generate ‘lip-synced’ videos of President Barack Obama reading from any audio file (grail.cs.washington.edu/projects/AudioToObama/).

Deep learning projects consistently challenge our ideas about what machines are capable of doing, and open new possibilities for analysis and research. In that spirit, the Libraries took steps this summer to add support for deep learning in our digital scholarship projects. Over the summer, Dylan Emory, a senior computer science major and key digital scholarship colleague, researched recent developments to assess potential applications of deep learning for current and future projects. Dylan and I tested different methods and approaches to deep learning. Should we build our own neural networks, for example, or should we use industry-scale models from Google or Facebook? What various types of networks exist and how can we train them to work with our own data and applications? How might deep learning methods be utilized in humanities and social science research? This work included the identification of relevant training data, testing of various model architectures, and building full web applications and tools. Dylan designed and assembled a new computer for deep learning that will be deployed in the Digital Scholarship Commons upon the opening of the Lutnick Library. He also developed an Intelligent Character Recognition (ICR) tool that transcribes images of handwritten text for a limited number of words.

Dylan’s experiments this summer tackled a real-world problem that continues to elude both industry and academia. While it proved impossible to identify text at the word-level, Google Vision can very accurately identify rows of handwritten text. In the coming year, we will build on this experience and use a program that can transcribe rows of handwritten text based on strokes of Intelligent Ink.

Over the summer, we learned a great deal, and we now have the capacity to build on that experience to utilize deep learning in digital scholarship projects going forward.

-Andy Janco is digital scholarship librarian
Promoting Research Integrity with Project TIER

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(though we use and endorse the Open Science Framework). The TIER Protocol is in its third version, thanks in large part to the great suggestions we have received and incorporated from fellows, workshop attendees, and other interested individuals over the years.

The timing of Project TIER's establishment coincided with the launch of several other endeavors related to promoting reproducible science. Many of these initiatives, such as the Center for Open Science and the Berkeley Initiative for Transparency in the Social Sciences, have since become partners in our shared mission to improve the quality and credibility of science. Project TIER approaches this goal by training students—the next generation of professionals—to conduct their research transparently, in an effort to make it readily reproducible. Our “bottom up” approach is rare among the groups invested in reproducibility. More often, efforts to promote reproducible science emanate from journal or grant requirements targeted at professional researchers in an attempt to change professional norms from the top down.

Among the long-term goals of Project TIER is to provide a searchable repository of projects and exercises across the spectra of social sciences disciplines and statistical packages that can be easily adapted for instructional use. Such ready-made curricula can lessen the challenge we often hear regarding the desire to incorporate reproducibility into courses, but not knowing how to get started. It's heartening to us that Project TIER has helped provide that necessary nudge to some dozens of instructors in a relatively short period.

For additional information about Project TIER, please visit our web site at projecttier.org.

-Norm Medeiros is associate librarian of the College & co-director of Project TIER