Western Michigan University Archives and Regional History Collections has been building a historical collection of manuscripts, printed works, photographs, oral histories and other materials on the history of the University and southwestern Michigan for nearly fifty years. These support WMU’s research and teaching mission. Last year, nearly 1000 students attended classes here and since 1990, over 30 books have been published based on this material. The community enjoys this wealth of historical and genealogical material.

The collections have been in several locations. When Waldo Library expanded in the 1960s, the Archives and Regional History Collections moved to the lower level. By the late 1980s, Waldo Library was filled and ready to expand and reconstruct. The Archives and Regional History Collections moved to a temporary location in East Hall in early 1990.

The East Campus location provided space for growth, but this facility has a poor environment for materials and lacks adequate work space and amenities for researchers and employees. A new building is urgently needed.

In March, a public “Town Hall” meeting attracted nearly 100 people to see and discuss the preliminary designs for a building. The building will address the needs of the Archives and Regional History Collections, as well as overflow storage and crowding in Waldo Library. Plans include an atrium with display cases, a dedicated classroom, a group study room, and a reading room. “Behind the scenes,” 30-foot high mobile shelving will safely store material. Several existing buildings were explored but proved inadequate due to the cost of retrofitting for weight and/or environmental control, which was much greater than that of new construction. This project is vital to WMU Libraries, and a priority for support from the Friends. Please help us with this important goal.

Friendly Notes

Friends of the Western Michigan University Libraries Upcoming Events

Legacy Collections Building

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Shawn Sheehy
Visiting Pop-up Artist

“Pop-up Books: From Concept to Action” will be presented by Shawn Sheehy, a Chicago-based paper engineer, on October 7 from 4-6 pm in the Edwin and Mary Meader Room in Waldo Library. Mr. Sheehy’s talk will be part of a visit to the area which includes a gallery show at the Kalamazoo Book Arts Center during the Art Hop on October 7. He will also offer workshops at KBAC (www.kalbookarts.org for registration). For more information about Mr. Sheehy and his work, visit his website, http://www.shawnsheehy.com/Shawn_Sheehy/.
Behind the Scenes: Harper C. Maybee Music Library

Greg Fitzgerald, Music and Dance Librarian, and Matthew Steele, music faculty member, consult materials.

You are invited to go “behind the scenes”—yes, even into the closed stacks—at the Harper Maybee Music and Dance Library. Named for the first head of the music program at Western, the library primarily serves faculty and students in music and dance, with whom it has shared Dalton Center since 1982. See the library’s various (and often unusual) formats of materials, including the “heart” of the collection, authoritative editions of composers’ works. Learn why a score is a score (and not sheet music) and how widely they vary in size and function. You’ll also be invited to experience some of the many online resources we offer, including audio and video streaming databases, as part of your tour, along with a fascinating collection of instruments from around the world.

Highlighted Programs: Friends Facilitate Book Clubs

Kicking off with Bronco Bash, we will be offering a new program to develop book clubs on campus. Students, faculty and staff can sign up either at the event or online at lib-friends@wmich.edu. Participants will provide us with a name, email address, genre preference and whether or not they would like to be a contact person. We will put groups of 3-7 people in email contact and let them form their book club, decide how many and what kind of books they want to read and how often they want to meet. We can envision groups who read cookbooks and try recipes together, Harry Potter fans or history buffs who meet new friends and many other ways to enjoy reading and talking about books together.

We’ll contact the group leaders once or twice during the year to see how things are going. All Friends are also welcome to get involved!

Volunteer Opportunities: Bronco Bash and Finals Week

One of the goals of the Friends of WMU Libraries is to get students to appreciate the WMU Libraries and contribute ideas to help us better serve the students, faculty, staff and community. Two events this fall will help us introduce the Friends to our students.

Bronco Bash 2011, the welcome festival for WMU students, will include the Friends of the Libraries. On Friday, Sept. 9 from 3-7 pm at Fountain Plaza, we invite Friends members to volunteer at the booth to talk to students about the Libraries and the Friends.

As usual, the Friends will also help with refreshments provided for students working hard to finish papers and prepare for exams in Waldo Library during finals week. Finals week is December 12-16, 2011 and coffee and light snacks are available from 10 pm to 2 am.

Please contact us at lib-friends@wmich.edu if you are interested in getting involved with either of these opportunities. We’d love to see you there!

Forthcoming Spring Events:

Jen Bervin, Visiting Poet
Faculty Speaker: Michael S. Nassaney, Anthropology
Annual Meeting

Let’s Keep in Touch! In order to save money (and trees), please send an email address to get our new Friendly Notes flyer electronically. We plan to issue two a year and post updates of events on our website at www.wmich.edu/library/friends/. We can also send you a notification of when the Gatherings newsletter is available electronically. If you would prefer a hard copy please let us know by email at lib-friends@wmich.edu!