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visit our online edition:
library.duke.edu/magazine/
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OLE Project

Mellon Funds Design of Next-Generation Library System

A $475,700 grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to the Duke University Libraries will lead to the design of a next-generation, open-source library system that is flexible, customizable and nimble enough to meet the changing and complex needs of 21st-century libraries and library users. The goal of the Open Library Environment (OLE) Project is to develop a design document for library automation technology that fits modern library workflows, is built on Service Oriented Architecture, and offers an alternative to commercial Integrated Library System products.

Leaders of the OLE Project, representing libraries in the U.S., Canada, and Australia, will involve the library community in the design process through workshops, meetings, webcasts and online discussions. Through those activities, they will develop a plan for a library technology system that breaks away from an emphasis on print-based workflows, reflects the changing nature of library materials and new approaches to scholarly work, meshes well with other enterprise systems, and can be modified easily to suit the needs of different institutions. The project website at http://oleproject.org gives detailed information about the project and includes FAQs, recommended reading, and a comment section.

“The information environment is changing rapidly, but the technology of library management systems has not kept pace,” said Lynne O’Brien, principal investigator on the project and director of Academic Technology and Instructional Services for the Duke University Libraries. “This project is a wonderful opportunity to design a system that supports library innovation and better meets the needs of today’s researchers.”

O’Brien is joined on the OLE Project team by colleagues from Duke as well individuals from the University of Kansas, Lehigh University, the University of Pennsylvania, the National Library of Australia, Library and Archives Canada, Vanderbilt University, the Orbis Cascade Alliance, Rutgers University, the University of Florida, the University of Chicago, Columbia University, the University of Maryland and Whittier College.

Because the OLE Project is a collaborative, community-based venture, there will be many opportunities for individuals from other libraries to participate in the project through regional and virtual meetings, discussion of plans and documents, comments via the project website and listserv and discussions at professional meetings.

In addition to its development of a design document, the OLE Project is intended to create a community of interest that could be tapped to build the planned system in a follow-on project.

See www.library.duke.edu for more library news.

Exhibits

Perkins Gallery
October/December
Seven Elections That Changed U.S. History
Long before the “hanging chads” of the 2000 election, presidential contests offered drama, intrigue, and narrow victories. The seven elections featured in this exhibit were selected for the pivotal role they played in shaping U.S. history and our electoral process. All materials displayed are from the Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library.

December/March
“How full of life those days seemed”: New Approaches to Art, Literature, Sexuality, and Society in Bloomsbury
The members of the Bloomsbury group explored alternative ways of living and advanced fresh ideas in the arts and social sciences. Their shared spirit of collaboration, community, and inquiry spurred the creation of works as diverse as Virginia Woolf’s Mrs. Dalloway, J.M. Keynes’s General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money, and Roger Fry’s study of Cezanne. This exhibit features books and manuscripts from the Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library documenting the activities of the group’s members, including Woolf, Keynes, Fry, Vanessa Bell, Lytton Strachey, and Duncan Grant, and of the Hogarth Press, created and operated by Woolf with her husband Leonard.
The exhibit at Perkins is one of the elements in the campus-wide celebration of the Bloomsbury Group. Learn more about “Vision and Design: A Year of Bloomsbury” at http://news.duke.edu/2008/09/bloomsbury.html.

**March/May**

**Sarah P. Duke Gardens—Hanes’ Dream, Sarah’s Gift, Our Treasure**

Planned to coincide with the 70th anniversary of the dedication of the Gardens’ terraces, the exhibit will explore topics such as the geological importance of the stone used to create the terraces, the work to save endangered plants, the significance of the Metasequoia trees, and the more recent work on the gardens for peace.

**Special Collections Gallery**

**August/December**

**Olive Pierce—Forty Years of Photographs (1963-2003)**

Olive Pierce’s photographs reflect a spirit of community. This retrospective of black and white gelatin silver prints documents life in Cambridge, Massachusetts, as well as in Maine fishing communities. A lifelong political activist, Pierce’s photographs of Iraqis under U.S. economic sanctions in 1999 and Maine citizens demonstrating in 2003 for and against involvement in Iraq make the connection between the local and global communities.

**January/March**

**The New Road: I-26 and the Footprints of Progress**

A long-term resident of Madison County, North Carolina, Rob Amberg has been photographing the region since 1973. The pictures in this exhibit document the social, cultural, and environmental impact of the construction of an interstate highway in his rural mountain community.

**Special Collections Biddle Rare Book Room Cases**

**October/January**

**Not Just Mad Men: Real Advertising Careers in the 1960s**

An exhibit inspired by the popularity of the AMC television series *Mad Men*, which centers on the lives of executives at a fictional advertising agency in the early 1960s. The series has generated much discussion among viewers, as well as among present-day advertising industry professionals and media outlets. Drawing from materials in the collections of the Special Collections Library’s Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising & Marketing History, the exhibit highlights the real-life careers of 1960s advertising professionals who held positions in four of the types of agency occupations depicted on the television series: copywriters; creative directors; art directors; and account executives.

Generally, the Special Collections and Perkins galleries are open Monday-Saturday, 9am-9pm, and 10am-9pm on Sunday. Visit http://library.duke.edu/exhibits/ for more information or call 919.684.3009 to confirm hours.

Catch a glimpse of the Libraries’ exhibits online at http://library.duke.edu/exhibits/.

An exhibit inspired by the popularity of the AMC television series *Mad Men*, which centers on the lives of executives at a fictional advertising agency in the early 1960s.

The Duke University Libraries recently launched its own channel on YouTube, the leading online video community. The channel is part of a greater Duke-Youtube partnership, announced May 2008. Visit the Libraries’ YouTube channel at youtube.com/dukeunivlibraries.
Notes

Events

October 24
Opening reception for Olive Pierce—Forty Years of Photographs (1963-2003), with remarks by photographer Olive Pierce. Friday, 24 October, 5:30-7:30pm, Perkins Library, Biddle Rare Book Room

October 25
The Libraries Present Duke Moms and Dads!
The Libraries’ annual Parents’ and Family Weekend program featuring a Duke first-year parent who is also a writer or journalist. This year’s guest is Bob Bendetson, whose talk is titled, “Puppets Can Be Jerks and Other Things I Learned Writing Sitcoms.” For more than 20 years, Bob Bendetson has written and produced some of America’s most popular television programs, for which he has earned seven Emmy nominations, four Golden Globe nominations, a Writer’s Guild nomination, and two People’s Choice Awards. His credits include Home Improvement, The Simpsons, and Newhart. Saturday, 25 October, 11:00am, Perkins Library, Biddle Rare Book Room

November 12
The Weaver Lecture
Oliver Sacks, M.D. will present the 2008 Weaver Lecture, which the Libraries host biennially in memory of William Weaver T’72, a former member of the Library Advisory Board. This year the Weaver Lecture is co-sponsored by the Duke Institute for Brain Sciences.

Sacks, professor of clinical neurology and clinical psychiatry at Columbia University and the author of Musicophilia: Tales of Music and the Brain, will speak on the subject of “Music, Healing and the Brain.” In addition to Musicophilia, Sacks is also author of nine other books, including Awakenings and The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat. Wednesday, 12 November, 6:00pm, Page Auditorium. No ticket or registration required

November 14
Rare Music in the Rare Book Room
Reproduction—Some Thoughts on Recreating the Music of Bygone Ages, featuring luthier John Pringle
Pringle will discuss the knotty question of “authenticity” in the performance of what has come to be called Early Music, with special reference to the instruments as tools. Pringle has spent the last thirty years helping to recreate the sounds of music from past times by building stringed instruments based on historical models from the 12th to the 18th centuries. Friday, 14 November, 4:00pm, Perkins Library, Biddle Rare Book Room

November 18
Francisco Goldman, author of The Art of Political Murder and winner of the first WOLA-Duke Book Award (see related news note)
The Art of Political Murder, an exhaustively researched story of assassination, impunity and justice in Guatemala, recounts the 1998 killing of Bishop Juan Gerardi. Tuesday, 18 November, 7:00-8:00pm, followed by a reception and book signing. Perkins Library, Biddle Rare Book Room

December 12
Rare Music in the Rare Book Room
Sound the Bright Flutes!—Seasonal Music for Early Woodwinds, featuring Trio Rossignol (Patricia Petersen, Karen Cook, and Douglas Young)
Members of the Trio will discuss the recorder from its earliest appearance on the musical scene through the contemporary period. Come hear a bit about the instrument’s history and repertory and listen to some delightful seasonal music for the recorder! Pieces for other early winds, such as cornett, shawm, and curtal, will also be included. Co-sponsored by the Libraries and the Duke University Musical Instrument Collections. Friday, 12 December, 4:00pm, Perkins Library, Biddle Rare Book Room
Duke Libraries Co-Sponsor of Human Rights Book Award

The Art of Political Murder, an exhaustively researched story of assassination, impunity and justice in Guatemala, has won the first annual WOLA-Duke Book Award for Human Rights in Latin America. Francisco Goldman’s book, published by Grove Press, recounts the 1998 killing of Bishop Juan Gerardi, four days after he and a group of lawyers presented a devastating report on human rights abuses committed by the Guatemalan military against civilians. Goldman received the award at a 17 September gala in Washington, D.C. that was attended by some 250 WOLA supporters, including human rights advocates, scholars, Latin American diplomats, and representatives from Duke. Goldman will speak at Duke on 18 November.

WOLA (the Washington Office on Latin America) and Duke University created the prize to honor the best current, non-fiction book published in English on human rights, democracy and social justice in contemporary Latin America. In addition to the Libraries, the Duke Human Rights Center is also a co-sponsor of the award.

The book award is the second cooperative venture between WOLA and Duke University. Under an agreement signed in January 2008, WOLA has donated its historical archives, dating to the organization’s founding in 1974, to the Archive for Human Rights at the Duke University Libraries. The materials in the archives document WOLA’s influential role in keeping human rights and justice central in U.S. policy toward Latin America. In presenting the book award at the gala, University Librarian Deborah Jakubs said, “We are honored that WOLA selected Duke to be the repository for the organization’s archives and entrusted us with their history. This book award is another element of our partnership, and we look forward to further collaboration with WOLA.”

Guy Need Tie? Wear this elegant neckwear and proclaim your loyalty to the Duke University Libraries. The four-in-hand ties (available in yellow and watermelon) and the bowties (in ultramarine) are decorated with an image of the Reading Blue Devil weathervane that sits atop the Libraries’ von der Heyden Pavilion. The ties are available from the Duke University Stores or online at http://www.dukestores.duke.edu/.

Duke Wins a Bronze in “Best College Library” Rankings

This summer the Princeton Review released a report that ranks Duke #3 in the category of “Best College Library” based on an extensive student survey. Duke also achieved high rankings in several other categories, but #3 for the Libraries is the highest. In case you’re curious to know which libraries rank #1 and #2: Harvard and Princeton.....
Going to the Source: Librarians Travel to Build Collections

When you can get anything from apricots to zithers delivered to your front door (often with the option of overnight shipping) by shopping online, it may be difficult to believe that librarians sometimes have to leave their computers, their desks, home and country to buy books and other materials for the Libraries’ collections.

Yes, it is true that most of what the Libraries’ acquire, including foreign-language materials, comes to Duke through approval plans and orders placed with domestic and overseas vendors. However, the librarians building our international and area studies collections still need to make periodic trips abroad to buy materials and build relationships in their country (or countries) of interest. This year, Christof Galli, Miree Ku, and Luo Zhou have all been on the road.

In late January, Galli, librarian for Middle East and Islamic Studies, traveled to Egypt to attend the International Cairo Book Fair where he purchased approximately 1,200 titles directly from vendors from various Arabic-speaking countries. He also visited other countries in the region (Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, and Morocco) and met with prospective vendors. Galli said:

The book buying trip did not just allow me to acquire materials ‘in the field,’ but provided me with an invaluable opportunity to engage anew with Middle Eastern culture in a very direct and unmediated way after an absence of several years. Experiencing daily life on the ground firsthand has helped me immensely in gaining insights into the current complex and complicated political, societal, and cultural issues affecting the region. These insights will in turn enhance my ability to build useful and effective collections…

During Korean Studies librarian Miree Ku’s trip to South Korea, she met with officials of the National Institute of Korean History and the Korea Foundation, as well as publishers and vendors. One publisher specializing in literature and history offered Ku his entire catalogue at about half the retail price. Her visit to the National Institute of Korean History was also fruitful. After meetings with researchers and the Institute’s director, Ku received their promise of a gift of copies of all their current publications, if the Duke Libraries would pay the shipping costs. Ku expects to receive books from the Institute this year and next year. She said, “…I am so excited…” and then added, “It was so helpful to me to have established good relationships with them through my previous trips to Korea and attending the annual meetings of the Council on East Asian Libraries.”

Chinese Studies librarian Luo Zhou visited four libraries in June when she was in China. At the National Library of China she met with the director of the Legislative Service Department and the librarians in charge of the Law Documents Section and the Chinese Studies Documents Section. Zhou came away from the meeting confident that the staff will assist her in getting legal and government information for Duke’s faculty and researchers. While at the NLC, she also met with the librarian in the Gift & Exchange Department to discuss the Window of China program. The program, in effect from 2006 to 2010, distributes books to foreign colleges and universities. In other years the Duke Libraries received materials through the program, each time with a value of $800. This year, as a result of Zhou’s visit, Duke was selected to receive materials with a total value of $13,000.

Chinese Studies librarians have since traveled to Egypt, Jordan, China, and the United Kingdom, and their travels will result in a larger and more effective collection. The librarians building our international and area studies collections still need to make periodic trips abroad to buy materials and build relationships in their country (or countries) of interest.

Other stops on Zhou’s itinerary included the National Science Library, Peking University Library, and the library at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS). At CASS she also received offers of future reference assistance for Duke students and faculty. Zhou said, “The library is rich in statistics on the social conditions in China, which our faculty is very interested in.” She also had a cordial conversation with CASS’s director of international cooperation. “[I learned] that CASS is eager to establish more cooperation with scholars at Duke, and I brought the message back to the director of Duke’s Asian and Pacific Studies Institute.”

In addition to spending time at the four libraries, Zhou met with Beijing vendors of books and databases, as well as film director Wu Wenguang, one of China’s preeminent producers of independent documentary films. Zhou said, “Getting independent films (or underground films) from China is not easy.” Wu talked to her about the history and current state of independent documentary filmmaking in China and suggested titles for the Duke Libraries’ collection.

Luo Zhou, Miree Ku, and Christof Galli, back in their offices at Duke, are still doing follow-up from their travel earlier this year—receiving and managing the processing of materials acquired, ordering items they identified for purchase, and nurturing their relationships with the librarians, booksellers, and others they met with while they were abroad. This fall two of their colleagues will be making their own book-buying trips. Heidi Madden, Western European Studies librarian, will attend the Frankfurt Book Fair, and Holly Ackerman, librarian for Latin America and Iberia, is headed to Guadalajara, Mexico. Ackerman and Madden anticipate that their trips, like those of Galli, Zhou and Ku, will result in richer collections for the Duke University Libraries and better support for the work of students, faculty, and other researchers.
Knowledge Bytes

Politics

Internet Sites Selected for the Readers of Duke University Libraries

24-Nation Pew Global Attitudes Survey
The Pew Global Attitudes Project, conducted by the Pew Research Center, “is a series of worldwide public opinion surveys that encompasses a broad array of subjects ranging from people’s assessments of their own lives to their views about the current state of the world and important issues of the day. More than 175,000 interviews in 54 countries have been conducted as part of the project’s work.”

This report from June 2008 examines perceptions of the United States abroad. According to its findings, favorable views of the United States have increased modestly since 2007 in 10 of 21 countries where comparative data are available, although many people also feel that the recent economic slump is in no small part due to the United States. The survey also found a widespread belief that United States’ foreign policy will change for the better after the inauguration of a new American president next year.

The 150-page report is available in its entirety. In addition to the topics noted above, it covers perceptions of Iran, China, and Asian powers; environmental issues; and governments’ respect for the rights of their people. Finally, visitors can learn about the survey methods used in the creation of this report and view the results in tabular form.

PollingReport.com
http://www.pollingreport.com/

Drilling into the site produces the results of recent polls, plus the questions asked of participants, the polling methodology and sample size. The site also offers visitors a directory, contents page, and search tool, as well as a number of subscription services that are available for an annual fee.

Open Secrets
http://www.opensecrets.org
Open Secrets is a free “nonpartisan guide to money’s influence on U.S. elections and public policy,” whose motto is “Count cash and make change.” This is a deep site that provides a great deal of information about contributions to politicians at the federal, state, and local level.

From the homepage, visitors can quickly navigate to details of the financial contributions to presidential candidates, including those who dropped out of the race before the conventions. Also on the homepage are links to congressional and local races and contributions by industry, PACs, lobbyists, and advocacy groups.

Did you know that the average net worth of senators is twice that of members of the House of Representatives? A link to personal financial information allows visitors to search for politicians or the companies in which they have financial interests. Links to “Industries” provides a summary of political giving dating back to 1990, including breakdowns by type of contribution and political party; a list of organizations (usually U.S. companies) that have given the most from that industry; and a list of candidates that have received the most from the industry.

There are many fascinating lines of information to explore on this site. One of the most innovative is the “Money Web,” a social networking tool found under the Politicians & Elections tab/Presidential that graphically shows connections between candidates and contributors. Click on a bubble and see how the money flows. Use caution, however; as of this writing, the “Money Web” page had not been updated since April.

Thanks to the Internet Scout Project (Copyright Internet Scout Project, 1994-2008. http://scout.cs.wisc.edu/) for identifying these sites. If you would like to recommend a Web site for inclusion in a future issue of Duke University Libraries, contact Joline Ezzell at joline.ezzell@duke.edu.
The Perkins Project—New Library Spaces in 2008

The Duke community has been enjoying the fruits of the Perkins Project since the 2005 dedication of the new Bostock Library and von der Heyden Pavilion. In 2006 a transformed first floor of Perkins opened, followed a year later by Perkins lower floor 2 and the Deryl Hart administrative suite. Now, in 2008, we have re-opened Perkins’ floors 2-4, and a state-of-the-art teaching and learning center fills what was the Perkins basement. Perkins lower floor 1 is also the new home of the Libraries’ Preservation and Shipping and Receiving departments. Also in 2008, the Libraries’ technical services operations moved from Perkins to the Smith Warehouse. Below are brief introductions to the new library spaces and a description of the upcoming work that will complete the Perkins Project.

Students using one of the 8 study rooms that are available on Perkins floors 2-4. The new spaces also include a total of 131 individual closed carrels that can be reserved by faculty, graduate students, and (beginning in 2009) undergraduates who are writing honors theses.

The informal groupings of comfortable, upholstered chairs have been popular in the new Libraries’ spaces that have already opened. The early indications are that the trend will hold on Perkins floors 2-4 where there are 286 seats, including those at study tables.
The Duke community has been enjoying the fruits of the Perkins Project since the 2005 dedication of the new Bostock Library and von der Heyden Pavilion. In 2006 a transformed first floor of Perkins opened, followed a year later by Perkins lower floor 2 and the Deryl Hart administrative suite. Now, in 2008, we have re-opened Perkins’ floors 2-4, and a state-of-the-art teaching and learning center fills what was the Perkins basement. Perkins lower floor 1 is also the new home of the Libraries’ Preservation and Shipping and Receiving departments. Also in 2008, the Libraries’ technical services operations moved from Perkins to the Smith Warehouse. Below are brief introductions to the new library spaces and a description of the upcoming work that will complete the Perkins Project.
The Link immediately dazzles everyone who walks into the new 24,000 sq.ft. teaching and learning center on lower floor 1 of Perkins Library. Floor to ceiling windows, brightly colored accent walls, and sleek contemporary furnishing are the backdrop for the flexible teaching spaces, technology services, and learning tools that the Link offers students and faculty.

Ed Gomes, associate dean for arts and sciences information technology said, “We think this will be a place where faculty can experiment and learn how to integrate new technologies into teaching. It’s also a place where the University will learn how to introduce new technologies into classrooms and create models to use elsewhere on campus.”

The Link features six classrooms, four seminar rooms and eleven group study rooms, as well as kiosk-style computing and informal space for collaboration or individual work. This fall forty-six courses, offered by more than twenty departments, are meeting in Link classrooms.

Instructor Janet Maceda is using the Link’s built-in video capture tools to teach international graduate students how to give better academic presentations in English.

During the first week of classes, Nicholas School of the Environment professor Prasad Kasibhatla used the Link’s videoconference feature to teach his Duke course from Abu Dhabi. He is still planning exactly how he’ll take advantage of the Link capabilities once he’s back on campus.

Scott Huettel will project functional magnetic resonance imaging files in his neurobiology course.

Christina Askounis, who is teaching an advanced composition course in the Link said, “…I love my classroom in the Link! The transformation of the entire space down there is astonishing…” She continued: I’m teaching “Writing Humor” in 059, and so far we have used the wireless connection and the big screen at the front of the room for a Powerpoint presentation of theories of humor which included a lot of visuals (cartoons, etc.) and hyperlinks to short clips of comic material (Monty Python, “I Love Lucy,” etc.) as examples to illustrate various devices and/or theories… Students have also used the set-up to access material on their own laptops to show to the class as part of assignments. I hope to explore more of the room’s potential uses as the semester goes on, including that amazing white board surface that covers the entire back wall!

While the technological resources of the Link are being put to good use by the faculty whose courses meet there, history professor Ed Balleisen sees additional advantages to teaching in the Link:

1) the wall-sized whiteboards, which I fill with conceptual maps and schematics;
2) the proximity to librarians, who can help with research projects; and
3) the break-out rooms that facilitate small group discussions.

In addition to offering a dynamic environment for teaching and study, the Link serves as the primary distribution point on campus for digital video kits, Web cameras, tablet PCs, iPods with microphones, and other equipment available through the Duke Digital Initiative. The Link is also the new home of the University’s walk-up information and technology service desk, which was located in the student center. The service desk, coordinated by the Office of Information Technology and Arts & Sciences staff, will be open seven days a week, with reference librarians and subject specialists nearby and ready to help students and faculty; consultants from the Libraries’ Center for Instructional Technology are available to assist faculty/instructors.

To learn more about the Link, visit http://link.duke.edu/.

The Link features six classrooms, four seminar rooms and eleven group study rooms, plus kiosk-style computing, informal space, and a walk-up information and technology service desk.
The Link—

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I’m teaching “Writing Humor” in 059, and so far we have used the wireless connection and the big screen at the front of the room for a Powerpoint presentation of theories of humor which included a lot of visuals (cartoons, etc.) and hyperlinks to short clips of comic material (Monty Python, “I Love Lucy,” etc.) as examples to illustrate various devices and/or theories…Students have also used the set-up to access material on their own laptops to show to the class as part of assignments. I hope to explore more of the room’s potential uses as the semester goes on, including that amazing white board surface that covers the entire back wall!

While the technological resources of the Link are being put to good use by the faculty whose courses meet there, history professor Ed Balleisen sees additional advantages to teaching in the Link:

The biggest draws of the new classrooms are less the technology (what I will be using would be just fine in many other Duke classrooms) and more the characteristics of the new teaching spaces:
1) the wall-sized whiteboards, which I fill with conceptual maps and schematics;
2) the proximity to librarians, who can help with research projects; and
3) the break-out rooms that facilitate small group discussions.

In addition to offering a dynamic environment for teaching and study, the Link serves as the primary distribution point on campus for digital video kits, Web cameras, tablet PCs, iPods with microphones, and other equipment available through the Duke Digital Initiative. The Link is also the new home of the University’s walk-up information and technology service desk, which was located in the student center. The service desk, coordinated by the Office of Information Technology and Arts & Sciences staff, will be open seven days a week, with reference librarians and subject specialists nearby and ready to help students and faculty; consultants from the Libraries’ Center for Instructional Technology are available to assist faculty/instructors.

To learn more about the Link, visit http://link.duke.edu/.
The Libraries Go Urban Chic: Moving to the Smith Warehouse

The opening of the Bostock Library and the von der Heyden Pavilion in October 2005 transformed the University Libraries and Duke’s West Campus. The new gateway between Bostock and the Perkins Library joined the social sciences and humanities departments on the quad and the science and engineering buildings on Science and Research drives, unifying the campus and fostering connections among members of the Duke community who had been separated by campus topography.

With students from the sciences, engineering, humanities and social sciences filling the Bostock reading rooms and the Pavilion’s light-filled space almost as soon as the buildings opened, Libraries and campus administrators decided to review the plan in place at the time to renovate space on lower floor 1 of Perkins for the use of the Libraries’ technical services operations (acquisitions, cataloging and metadata services, electronic resources and serials management, gifts processing, and commercial binding). After thoughtful consideration, everyone agreed that the benefits to the entire University of having a teaching and learning center on lower floor 1 outweighed the disadvantages of removing the technical services operations from Perkins.

And so began a chain of events that culminated in the August opening of the Link (see story on p. 13) on lower floor 1 of Perkins, and the move, also in August, of ninety-three library staff members in eight departments to the Smith Warehouse.

The Smith Warehouse, which sits high above Campus Drive between Duke’s east and west campuses, is a 200,000 sq.ft. former Liggett tobacco warehouse. Built 115 years ago, Smith is gradually being reclaimed for use by a variety of University departments. In addition to the Libraries’ technical services functions, Smith now houses Duke’s Facilities Management Department; the administrative offices of Duke Performances; the Department of Information Science + Information Studies; the Arts, Culture, and Technology studios of the Department of Art, Art History & Visual Studies; the Office of Undergraduate Scholars and Fellows; and the Office of University Special Events and University Ceremonies. When the building is fully occupied in 2009, more than 500 University staff will work at Smith.

The University has been applying sustainable design and construction principles to the renewal of the Smith Warehouse: some of the construction materials were recycled from other campus buildings; high-efficiency insulation was added to the roof; and captured storm water became a source for irrigation and make-up water for a nearby University steam plant. The building’s sustainability has earned the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification.

The Libraries developed its space at Smith in the same spirit and went a step further by giving staff an unprecedented role in planning the areas they would occupy. Five staff working groups gathered information and made recommendations concerning every aspect of the refitting of Smith, as well as the transfer of staff and materials to the new facility, and the re-design of workflows and patterns of communication with the rest of the library system to insure maximum effectiveness after the move.

Staff participated in decisions about everything from the configuration of their individual workspaces and how they would be furnished to the selection of floor coverings, amount and kind of storage shelving, number of printers and photocopiers, and lighting, air quality standards, and building security. The groups also looked at the needs of Smith staff for on-site technical and human resources support and made recommendations that were adopted.

The decision to move the Perkins technical services operations to Smith also prompted a review of the Libraries’ workflows for processing materials for archives and special collections. Based on the findings of the review, the Libraries took the innovative step of moving the Technical Services Department for the Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library and University Archives to the Smith Warehouse as well.
This has been an especially fortuitous move for the units that make up the department, which were formerly scattered in several workrooms and a series of small isolated offices on the second floor of the 1928 Perkins Library building. The open design of the Smith Warehouse bays has allowed for the configuration of a workspace that is optimal for the specialized cataloging and processing of manuscript, archival and rare book materials. It has also allowed the full integration of staff from new programs in jazz archives, electronic records, and the archives of the Full Frame Documentary Film Festival.

The special collections space at Smith is set up with modern workstations for the staff arrayed along one wall and several hundred linear feet of shelving along the opposite wall. Between these two areas are a large number of movable tables that provide the essential “flat space” necessary for the sorting and processing large and small archival collections. Added to this are a separate inspection room for the receipt of new collections, an industrial freezer for fragile and volatile film and video materials, and an array of work areas for student assistants and interns.

The layout and amenities at the Smith Warehouse may well give Duke’s Special Collections Technical Services Department one of the more modern and efficient work environments in the country. In addition, the immediate proximity of the Libraries’ other technical services staff is stimulating collaboration and consulting on the many cataloging, metadata, and acquisitions issues the two operations have in common.
Where Do We Go from Here?
The Perkins Project Enters Its Final Phase

Robert Byrd

With about two-thirds of the Duke University Libraries’ Perkins complex newly constructed or transformed by total renovations, the focus of the Perkins Project turns now to the 1928 West Campus library building and its 1948 addition. This portion of the Perkins complex is at the very heart of the campus designed by the Horace Trumbauer architectural firm and is emblematic of the character of the West Quad and Duke University. The cornerstone for the University is visible on the façade of the 1928 library building.

Similarly, the 1928/1948 library building is central to the teaching and research mission of Duke University, since it houses the Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library (RBMSCL). According to a statement of principles adopted in 2003 by the Association of Research Libraries (ARL), the development, preservation, support, stewardship and dissemination of special collections such as these are “both a characteristic of the true research library” and “an obligation assumed by all members of the Association of Research Libraries.” Special collections, the statement asserts, “represent not only the heart of an ARL library’s mission, but are one of the primary identifiers of a research library.”

The treasures of RBMSCL’s distinctive general collections are augmented by the holdings of the University Archives and several research centers: the Bingham Center for Women’s History and Culture; the John Hope Franklin Collection of African and African American Documentation; the Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising & Marketing History; the Archive of Documentary Arts; and the Archive for Human Rights. RBMSCL’s collections are heavily used by graduate students, faculty, and visiting researchers. However, undergraduate students are the largest user group, a fact that may distinguish Duke from other research libraries. Faculty in numerous disciplines—art and art history, cultural anthropology, economics, history, literature, music, political science, public policy, sociology, etc.—bring their students to the RBMSCL to use special collections for course assignments.

The interests and needs of these different groups of users are addressed in the architectural program for the re-design of the 1928/1948 building. The program objectives include increasing the seating capacity of the Special Collections Reading Room; providing consultation rooms to accommodate collaborative projects and staff assistance for users; creating exhibition galleries for display of the collections’ rare and unique materials; relocating the research centers’ curatorial staff to the Deryl Hart Suite where they will be easily accessible to users and available for consultation; and providing instruction spaces for faculty teaching courses that use special collections.

The program also addresses the imperative of a secure stack area where special collections can be shelved in an appropriately controlled environment. Currently, the 1928/1948 building has multi-tiered stack-supported floors typical of its era. By today’s standards, these stack systems have serious deficiencies related to code, security, and temperature and humidity control. In addition, the existing shelving systems are inflexible. Because they were originally designed to hold books, they do not support the larger dimensions and varied formats of special collections and archival materials. In the upcoming renovation, the entire stack core will be removed—from lower floor 1 to the roof—and replaced with a new floor structure on independent footings that will support high-density compact shelving.
The work on the stacks is essential for the well-being of the Libraries’ special collections, but visitors to Perkins will never see the extensive changes. Visitors will, however, be able to appreciate the attention the Biddle Rare Book Room and the Gothic Reading Room receive. The charm and character of these cherished Duke spaces will be be preserved, but their finishes, furnishings, lighting, and technology infrastructure will be enhanced.

The final phase of the Perkins Project will also include an office suite and meeting rooms for the Duke University Libraries administrative staff. This is a change from earlier plans that located the Libraries’ administrative offices in the nearby Old Law building. And, last but not least, the entrance to Perkins will be re-designed with new doors, windows, and lighting to make the 1968 and 1928/1948 buildings a more unified and welcoming presence on the historic West Quad.

The completion of the transformation of the 1928/1948 building will also complete the Perkins Project. It is anticipated that design for the final phase will begin in October 2008, construction approval will be sought in May 2009, and occupancy will occur by August 2011. At that point the Perkins Library master plan, as approved by the Board of Trustees in 2001, will be fully implemented.

Top ten reasons why we Dukies love our library

Lucy McKinstry

10. Quiet. Finally, no more fire alarms or construction noise.
9. Space. From study carrels to high-tech classrooms, there are so many different and versatile places to work.
8. Atmosphere. With great views and cozy rooms, the library is a happy place to study.
7. Rest. We love sleeping in the comfortable chairs.
6. Motivation. Seeing other people around you pursuing excellence creates a strong incentive.
5. Group study rooms. Essential.
4. People. The resourceful librarians go out of their way to be helpful and encouraging.
3. Parties. What other library hosts an annual cocktail party?

2. Balance. The library is a space respected for both academics and socializing; the von der Heyden Pavilion is a great example of this, where you can see your friends, chat with your professors, and finish your homework.

1. Community. The collaborative energy and spirit of Duke is more visible here in the library than anywhere else on campus.

Lucy McKinstry T’10 presented her ten reasons following remarks by President Richard Brodhead and University Librarian Deborah Jakubs at the 28 August opening of Perkins floors 2–4.
This comment from a suggestion box in the men’s dining hall on West Campus captures student sentiment about the state of campus cuisine when Theodore W. "Ted" Minah arrived in January 1946 as the newly appointed manager of the Duke University dining rooms. The student discontent was in reaction to an outdated compulsory meal ticket system, wartime food rationing, and a decline in the quality of the dining services that was due to poor food preparation and an untrained staff.

Minah faced logistical challenges as well, such as feeding the influx of returning veterans, who increased the number of students on campus to 5,000. Long lines in the dining halls and insufficient seating only added to the student discontent.

Under these circumstances, it would have been understandable if Ted Minah had turned down Duke’s offer. But as the materials in the Theodore W. "Ted" Minah Records and Papers in the University Archives reveal, Minah was no ordinary man. During his twenty-eight years at Duke, he transformed the dining halls into an award-winning, highly rated operation that served millions of meals to generations of Duke students.

Early in Minah’s tenure he resolved to make the dining halls more than just a place to grab a quick meal. His objectives and operational philosophy for the dining halls were to provide a social atmosphere where students could mingle and have a healthy meal. More importantly, Minah believed that good dining was part of the students’ overall education.

Dining halls including the Great Hall and the Oak Room were designed, and in some cases, renovated, to encourage students from different racial and socioeconomic backgrounds to engage with each other and with faculty and guests. The Men’s Graduate Center (now Trent Hall) was a shining example of this model. Constructed in 1953, the new dining hall featured a cafeteria, private dining rooms where those students with “allied interests” could eat together, and a coffee lounge where graduate students, faculty, and friends could gather informally.

In 1961, the Graduate Center was opened to freshman and sophomore nursing students, with the hope that dining there would contribute to their “social education.”

Minah also believed that “adventurous and stimulating eating habits” contributed to a student’s education. His office is said to have been filled with cookbooks and magazines, and the assorted recipes preserved in his records and papers suggest that he frequently experimented to meet changing student tastes.

We know things are tough all over, but can’t we have any silverware? Restaurants seem to have steaks or good cuts of meat now. How about the Union? Must we eat chicken, chicken, chicken, chicken (poorly prepared too)? Will we ever have pitchers of cream on the table at breakfast like last year? Why continually run out of food?

*Duke dining hall suggestion box, 1945*
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Duke Dining Trivia

Ted Minah and his dining hall staff catered inauguration dinners for Dr. Arthur Hallis Edens (October 21, 1949), Dr. Douglas M. Knight (December 10, 1963), and Terry Sanford (October 18, 1970). Julian Deryl Hart (1960-1963) is missing from the list because as president pro tem (he was appointed to the position following the Gross-Edens controversy) he did not have as formal an inauguration dinner.

Institutions Magazine presented its Honors Award (the highest honor in the food service industry) to two Duke dining facilities: the Graduate Center (1953) and Gilbert-Addoms Dining Hall (1960).

The Oak Room closed in 2003 to make way for the Mary Lou Williams Center for Black Culture. The Blue & White Room has become the DukeCard Office.

The gargoyles in the Cambridge Inn watch over the coats of arms of the colleges of Cambridge University.

Minah's culinary offerings were popular with all Duke students (including the famous Duke Toll House cookies and hermit cookies, which some alumni still reminisce about!), others like the congealed apple and cottage cheese salad were reserved for the more “daring” appetite. Minah’s success in providing food that was healthful, nutritious, and palatable earned him the Silver Plate Award as Outstanding Food Services Operator in the Colleges and Universities Division in 1968.

Employing students in the dining halls was another Minah innovation. In a 1974 interview he claimed to be the first university dining director in the country to develop a program for student employees. The idea for the program probably derived from his own experience: Minah learned the food business from the bottom up—starting on the dish machine, washing pots, and then working his way up to the status of journeyman cook while still in college.

In the program Minah established at Duke, interested students were recruited, trained, and given opportunities to become dishwashers and cooks, cashiers and waiters, with the promise of gaining valuable work experience while still having ample time for an academic and social schedule.

Incentives spurred the workers to move up into better and higher paying positions. Countless letters from students seeking employment in the dining halls speak to the program's success. One, dating from 1966 reads, “my sister … spoke to you concerning my working in the dining hall next fall, and I was glad to hear that a place is available … I appreciate your giving me the opportunity to work at Duke and am looking forward to it.”

Minah’s rapport with students never faltered, even in difficult situations. During his career he weathered three boycotts—grapes, lettuce, and meat—and the 1968 dining hall strike for “decent living wages.” While the episodes were marked by controversy and strongly held views, Minah always tried to reach common ground with students, not only to meet their demands, but to keep the dining halls open. During the dining hall strike, he recalled that “there were some 250 students who volunteered to work—they simply didn’t want this crowd (union supporters) to take over the university.”

Recognizing that students were a vital part of the dining halls’ success, Minah was always open to their suggestions and ideas. The “chowman” was one such initiative. Students proposed the service to counter the night-time bootlegging of food in dorms that had culminated in unsanitary conditions in rooms, food poisoning, and complaints about students knocking on door at all hours of the night trying to sell food. Introduced in 1950 and run by the M.S.G.A. (Men’s Student Government Association) Catering Service, the student chowman vendors peddled sandwiches, milk, ice cream and other snack foods from 10:30 to midnight to hungry West Campus students. Student vendors earned a commission—up to 20% of the sales, which was about $500 per student per semester. Eventually replaced by “robot rooms” (vending machines) in 1961,
the chowman left a legacy of feeding Duke students for nearly eleven years.

As important as students were to the success of the dining halls, they were just one side of the equation; the dining hall employees were the other half. When Minah arrived at Duke, more than 90% of the food services employees were African American, and, as he said, “there was no one in the vicinity that had had restaurant experience…” Demonstrating a commitment to equal opportunity that was rare for the time, Minah set out to “provide an atmosphere in which all those employees who are in our employ will have the opportunity and desire to improve their skills and by their increased productivity attain higher goals of status and remuneration.” Minah backed up his words with action.

In 1947, he initiated an on-the-job training program, taking advantage of the U.S. government’s offer to fund education for returning veterans of World War II under the G.I. Bill. In the program’s first year, six veterans were enrolled in training for institutional or restaurant management, with fourteen others learning to be professional cooks and bakers. Over the course of several years, Minah expanded on-the-job training, enabling cooks and supervisors to attend schools including the Culinary Arts School and the Cornell Hotel School. He also instituted promotion policies and worked to ensure that pay and benefits were competitive. By 1967, nearly half of the supervisors and clerical staff (including cashiers) were African American, and for many years there was less than a 5% turnover rate in Minah’s department.

Minah’s commitment to his employees is well-documented. His records and papers are replete with thank-you letters from employees grateful for Minah’s interest in their well-being; service bulletins and newspaper advertisements promoting dining hall employees who were available for summer jobs in North Carolina and out-of-state resorts (an arrangement that enabled them to combine vacation with extra income); and letters of recommendations, including Minah’s letter praising William “Big Bill” Jones. Minah had known Jones since 1937 and, when he came to Duke in 1946, Minah thought Jones would be ideal as the banquet manager for the dining halls. The two worked together at Duke for nearly thirty years, and in 1970 Minah wrote of Jones:

I shall always consider it a great privilege to have been associated with him for the past 33 years since we began working together in the Brown University Dining Halls back in 1937. He has taught me a great deal not only about the operation of a dining hall service but how better to understand my fellow man.

Managing employees and the operations of the dining halls were only part of what Minah did every day. His duties also included buying, warehousing, preparing, and serving food; service and selling; housekeeping; office management and accounting; and
renovations, repairs, installations and alterations. In performing his responsibilities, Minah’s goal was to “initiate and engage in continuing experimentation, research and self-development which will raise the standards of [the] profession.” As with his other operational philosophies, Minah’s actions matched his words. During his tenure at Duke, he not only introduced new dining hall concepts (for some of Minah’s innovations, see the sidebar), but also established a reputation for successful high-profile catering events, including Duke presidential inaugurations, receptions for dignitaries such as Vice President Hubert Humphrey, and banquets, including a 1,000-person affair in the Cameron Indoor Stadium honoring Dr. Wilburt C. Davison, the first dean of Duke Medical School.

Ted Minah was a prolific writer, publishing dozens of articles in *College and University Business* and *Institutions Magazine*, and he frequently provided counsel and the benefit of his experience to the industry. Minah served as president of the College and University Food Service Directors (1964), vice president of the North Carolina Restaurant Association (1950), and president of the Kiwanis Club of Durham. With each position he had the opportunity to promote healthy eating, employee training, new methods of cooking, and the importance of the food services industry. The National Association of College & University Food Services recognized Minah’s significant contributions to the profession by renaming its highest award the Theodore W. Minah Distinguished Service Award in 1973; Minah had received the award when it was established in 1967. Today, the award is still bestowed on those who have made an outstanding and enduring contribution to the food service industry and to the association.

By his retirement in 1974, Minah had transformed dining services at Duke University from a small, disjointed department to an award-winning operation of twelve dining halls serving approximately 15,000 meals per day. Throughout the nation, Ted Minah was known as the “dean” of college and university food service directors. He died in 1991 at the age of 82.

Minah’s records and papers, which were received by the University Archives soon after his retirement, show a complex man who was kindhearted, creative, and wholly committed to his profession, students, employees and the University. For those who worked with or knew Ted, and for those being introduced to him for the first time, he will be remembered for the indelible mark he made on the foodservice industry and Duke University.

All quotes are from materials in the Theodore W. “Ted” Minah Records and Papers in the University Archives.

Mary Samouelian was the 2007-2008 Isabel Craven Drill Intern in University Archives. In 2008 at the annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists, she received the Theodore Calvin Pease Award, which recognizes superior writing achievements by students of archival administration. Samouelian received the award for her paper, “Embracing Web 2.0: Archives and the Newest Generation of Web Applications,” an investigation of the extent to which Web 2.0 features have been integrated into archival digitization projects.
Duke Dining “Firsts”

During his tenure, Ted Minah introduced many innovations. A few of the more notable include:

- **The “scramble” cafeteria** Ted Minah introduced the concept of free-flow service counters in the Blue & White Room in 1962. This system didn’t require students to line up, but instead gave them the freedom to go directly to the counter that served the food they wanted. This change made it possible to serve large numbers of students in a short time. While the “scramble” concept was wildly popular with students, it befuddled their visiting parents.

- **The Cambridge Inn** Created to return some of the business lost to the “robot room” and to meet the needs of student requests for a room large enough for groups to gather formally or informally, the “C.I.” became the first university/college self-service snack bar in the country. Open 7:30 to midnight, it boasted “raid-it-yourself” refrigerators, snack bar and pizza kitchen. Students who could not eat during regularly planned dinners or those who craved late-night snacking welcomed the new snack bar.

- **Food waste refrigeration** Minah was the first Durham food handler to adopt the practice of putting garbage in cold storage until it could be hauled away. Thousands of noses rejoiced.

- **The Oak Room** Opened in 1946, the Oak Room became the first dining hall within a dining hall system to rely on student waiters and waitresses. It offered table service in an intimate restaurant-style dining setting (coat and ties required for men) where faculty, student and guests could meet on common ground.

- **Food credit system** Ted Minah discontinued meal tickets and instituted a cash cafeteria service for the men on West Campus and a cafeteria board system for the Woman’s College on East. The parents received the bills (instead of relying on the students to have enough cash readily available). Over time the food credit system became a million dollar business, with losses of less than $250 annually.

Read More about Dining at Duke


Golden Horn Bay
Images of the Russian Civil War in Siberia from the Robert L. Eichelberger Collection at Duke University Libraries

Eric Zitser

Robert L. Eichelberger (1886-1961), a 1909 West Point graduate, served with distinction in the U.S. Army, rising to the rank of lieutenant general before his retirement in 1948; he later received a fourth star. Throughout his career, during many extended assignments away from home, Eichelberger wrote letters every day—and sometimes as frequently as four times a day—to his wife, Emma, a native of Asheville, N.C. Addressing her “Dear Miss E,” Eichelberger filled the letters with details of his experiences (without divulging military secrets) and anecdotes about colleagues, including Douglas MacArthur, referring to them in a code only Miss Emma would understand. And along with the letters he sent photographs.

After Eichelberger died, Emma Eichelberger donated her husband’s personal papers, comprising nearly 30,000 items, to Duke’s Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library. While the bulk of the collection dates from the World War II era, a series of unique and almost unknown photographic images of the Russian Civil War in eastern Siberia recall one of the general’s earliest assignments.

Eichelberger was posted to Siberia in 1918, where he served for two years as assistant chief of staff, Operations Division, and chief intelligence officer with the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF). The AEF went to Russia by order of President Woodrow Wilson on a mission that constituted America’s first attempt to use its armed forces for peacekeeping purposes. From an office on Svetlanka St., in Vladivostok, Eichelberger oversaw an intelligence network that extended over 5,000 miles into the Ural Mountains. In his official capacity as America’s chief intelligence officer in Siberia, he interviewed (frequently over a bottle of vodka) hundreds of Russians from all walks of life, including “everything from a Baron to a prostitute.”

The intelligence he gathered, his analysis of it, and the reports he wrote allowed his commanding officer, Lieutenant-General William S. Graves, to set an American course in the face of “competing signals” from both Washington and the Inter-Allied Military Council, a ten-nation coalition of American, British, French, and Japanese officers. The Council debated, formulated, and tried to implement a coherent Allied policy for Siberia and eastern Russia between 1918 and 1920.

Materials in the Eichelberger Papers pertaining to his participation in the AEF’s incursion into Siberia are grouped into two series: military papers and pictures. The Military Papers Series includes typed letters, handwritten notes, intelligence summaries, memoranda and reports, and leaflets, as well as maps. An oversize “top secret” map is one of a series made on tracing paper to record the changing locations of military bases and troop strength of American forces in Siberia along the railroad linking Vladivostok and the Nikolsk-Ussuri and Suchan mines.

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installations were also deemed critical to the success of the U.S. military’s political mission, namely, supporting “any efforts at self-government or self-defense in which the Russians themselves might be willing to accept assistance.” The question, of course, was which one of the various warring factions in the Russian Civil War constituted the true representatives of the Russian nation.

The Picture Series, comprising over a thousand photographs, complements the written record of Eichelberger’s tour of duty in eastern Siberia and is equally important. Some of the photographs are loose and some have been pasted, probably by Emma Eichelberger, into two photo albums. The albums contain official AEF photos (primarily of foreign troops parading down Svetlanka) as well as scenic views of Siberia’s architectural and natural landscapes, among them Golden Horn Bay.

The many loose photos differ in character from the official pictures and panoramic landscapes preserved in the albums. These are much less romanticized images of everyday life in eastern Siberia: an enormous hog outside a Chinese tailor’s shop; three peasant children; a young Russian soldier almost drowning in his big fur hat and heavy military overcoat.

Eichelberger’s Siberian photos provide unique visual documentation of both American involvement in the Russian Civil War and daily life during war-time in an ethnically and religiously diverse region on the border of three major 20th-century powers: Russia, Japan, and China. And now these images are available on the Web at http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/esr to anyone with access to an Internet browser. The Eichelberger photographs and other related photographs have been digitized to form a collection titled “Americans in the Land of Lenin: Documentary Photographs of Early Soviet Russia.” “Americans in the Land of Lenin” was modeled, at least in part, on the University of Michigan’s “Polar Bear Expedition Digital Collections,” which consists of materials related to the American intervention in northern Russia at the end of World War I.

The Duke project encompasses roughly 1,400 images, many with captions and other annotations, and is one of the largest collections of photographs of the Russian Civil War in the United States. The launch of “Americans in the Land of Lenin” marks the completion of the first step in the digitization of Duke University’s extensive collection of 20th-century Russian visual culture.
Read More about Robert Eichelberger and the U.S. in Siberia

About Eichelberger:


Fiction


Personal Narratives


Additional Resources


Given the obvious similarities between music and language, it is not surprising that there has been a running debate for more than two hundred years as to whether they evolved in tandem or independently—and, if the latter, which came first.

Editor’s Note: Excerpted from Musicophilia: Tales of Music and the Brain by Oliver Sacks. Copyright ©2007 by Oliver Sacks, reprinted with permission of The Wylie Agency, Inc. Oliver Sacks is professor of clinical neurology and clinical psychiatry at Columbia University and the author of nine other books. Dr. Sacks will deliver the Weaver Lecture at Duke University’s Page Auditorium at 6:00pm on Wednesday, November 12. His topic will be “Music, Healing and the Brain.”

What an odd thing it is to see an entire species—billions of people—playing with, listening to, meaningless tonal patterns, occupied and preoccupied for much of their time by what they call “music.” This, at least, was one of the things about human beings that puzzled the highly cerebral alien beings, the Overlords, in Arthur C. Clarke’s novel *Childhood’s End*. Curiosity brings them down to the Earth’s surface to attend a concert. They listen politely, and at the end, congratulate the composer on his “great ingenuity”—while still finding the entire business unintelligible. They cannot think what goes on in human beings when they make or listen to music, because nothing goes on with them. They themselves, as a species, lack music.

We may imagine the Overlords ruminating further, back in their spaceships. This thing called “music,” they would have to concede, is in some way efficacious to humans, central to human life. Yet it has no concepts, makes no propositions; it lacks images, symbols, the stuff of language. It has no power of representation. It has no necessary relation to the world.

There are rare humans who, like the Overlords, may lack the neural apparatus for appreciating tones or melodies. But for virtually all of us, music has great power, whether or not we seek it out or think of ourselves as particularly “musical.” This propensity to music shows itself in infancy, is manifest and central in every culture, and probably goes back to the very beginnings of our species. Such “musicophilia” is a given in human nature. It may be developed or shaped by the cultures we live in, by the circumstances of life, or by the particular gifts or weaknesses we have as individuals—but it lies so deep in human nature that one must think of it as innate, much as E.O. Wilson regards “biophilia,” our feeling for living things. (Perhaps musicophilia
is a form of biophilia, since music itself feels almost like a living thing.)

Given the obvious similarities between music and language, it is not surprising that there has been a running debate for more than two hundred years as to whether they evolved in tandem or independently—and, if the latter, which came first. Darwin speculated that “musical tones and rhythms were used by our half-human ancestors, during the season of courtship, when animals of all kinds are excited not only by love, but by strong passions of jealousy, rivalry, and triumph” and that speech arose, secondarily, from this primal music. His contemporary Herbert Spencer held the opposite view, conceiving that music arose from the cadences of emotional speech. Rousseau, a composer no less than a writer, felt that both had emerged together, as a sing-song speech, and only later diverged. William James saw music as an “accidental genesis . . . a pure incident of having a hearing organ.” Steven Pinker, in our own time, has expressed himself even more forcibly: “What benefit could there be [he asks, echoing the Overlords] to diverting time and energy to making plinking noises? . . . As far as biological cause and effect are concerned, music is useless. . . . It could vanish from our species and the rest of our lifestyle would be virtually unchanged.” There is, nonetheless, much evidence that humans have a music instinct no less than a language instinct, however this evolved.

We humans are a musical species no less than a linguistic one. This takes many different forms. All of us (with very few exceptions) can perceive music, perceive tones, timbre, pitch intervals, melodic contours, harmony, and (perhaps most elementally) rhythm. We integrate all of these and “construct” music in our minds using many different parts of the brain. And to this largely unconscious structural appreciation of music is added an often intense and profound emotional reaction to music. “The inexpressible depth of music,” Schopenhauer wrote, “so easy to understand and yet so inexplicable, is due to the fact that it reproduces all the emotions of our innermost being, but entirely without reality and remote from its pain. . . . Music expresses only the quintessence of life and of its events, never these themselves.”

Listening to music is not just auditory and emotional, it is motoric as well: “We listen to music with our muscles,” as Nietzsche wrote. We keep time to music, involuntarily, even if we not consciously attending to it, and our faces and postures mirror the “narrative” of the melody, and the thoughts and feelings it provokes.

Much that occurs during the perception of music can also occur when music is “played in the mind.” The imagining of music, even in relatively nonmusical people, tends to be remarkably faithful not only to the tune and feeling of the original but to its pitch and tempo. Underlying this is the extraordinary tenacity of musical memory, so that much of what is heard
during one’s early years may be “engraved” on the brain for the rest of one’s life. Our auditory systems, our nervous systems, are indeed exquisitely tuned for music. How much this is due to the intrinsic characteristics of music itself—its complex sonic patterns woven in time, its logic, its momentum, its unbreakable sequences, its insistent rhythms and repetitions, the mysterious way in which it embodies emotion and “will”—and how much to special resonances, synchronizations, oscillations, mutual excitations, or feedbacks in the immensely complex, multi-level neural circuitry that underlies musical perception and replay, we do not yet know.

But this wonderful machinery—perhaps because it is so complex and highly developed—is vulnerable to various distortions, excesses, and breakdowns. The power to perceive (or imagine) music may be impaired with some brain lesions; there are many such forms of amusia. On the other hand, musical imagery may become excessive and uncontrollable, leading to incessant repetition of catchy tunes; or even musical hallucinations. In some people, music can provoke seizures. There are special neurological hazards, “disorders of skill,” that may affect professional musicians. The normal association of intellectual and emotional may break down in some circumstances, so that one may perceive music accurately, but remain indifferent and unmoved by it or, conversely, be passionately moved, despite being unable to make an “sense” of what one is hearing. Some people—a surprisingly large number—“see” color or “taste” or “smell” or “feel” various sensations as they listen to music—though such synesthesia may be accounted a gift more than a symptom.

William James referred to our “susceptibility to music,” and while music can affect all of us—calm us, animate us, comfort us, thrill us, or serve to organize and synchronize us at work or play—it may be especially powerful and have great therapeutic potential for patients with a variety of neurological conditions. Such people may respond powerfully and specifically to music (and, sometimes, to little else). Some of these patients have widespread cortical problems, whether from strokes or Alzheimer’s or other causes of dementia; others have specific cortical syndromes—loss of language or movement functions, amnesias, or frontal-lobe syndromes. Some are retarded, some autistic; others have subcortical syndromes such as parkinsonism or other movement disorders. All of these conditions and many others can potentially respond to music and music therapy.

For me, the first incitement to think and write about music came in 1966, when I saw the profound effects of music on the deeply parkinsonian patients I later wrote about in Awakenings. And since then, in more ways than I could possibly imagine, I have found music continually forcing itself on my attention, showing me its effects on almost every aspect of brain function—and life.

While music can affect all of us—calm us, animate us, comfort us, thrill us, or serve to organize and synchronize us at work or play—it may be especially powerful and have great therapeutic potential for patients with a variety of neurological conditions.

Read Books by Oliver Sacks

The Island of the Colorblind (1997)
A Leg to Stand On (1984)
The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat (1985)
Seeing Voices (1989)

Uncle Tungsten: Memories of a Chemical Boyhood (2001)
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Oliver Sacks, M.D. will present the 2008 Weaver Lecture, which the Libraries host biennially in memory of William Weaver T’72, a former member of the Library Advisory Board. This year the Weaver Lecture is co-sponsored by the Duke Institute for Brain Sciences.

Sacks, professor of clinical neurology and clinical psychiatry at Columbia University and the author of Musicophilia: Tales of Music and the Brain, will speak on the subject of “Music, Healing and the Brain.” In addition to Musicophilia, Sacks is also author of nine other books, including Awakenings and The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat.

Wednesday, 12 November, 6:00pm, Page Auditorium. No ticket or registration required.