



# AMONG FRIENDS

a newsletter for the members of the Friends of the Duke University Libraries

## Taking the Pulse of Our Publications

Change is in the air—renovation, construction, Dewey Decimal Classification to Library of Congress—making this feel like a good time to review our publications. Just inside the cover of the spring issue of *Duke University Libraries* that you received about a month ago, you will find a postage-paid postcard survey. Please fill it out, if you haven't already, and put it in the mail.—Or if you prefer, send an email message to the editor at [ilene.nelson@duke.edu](mailto:ilene.nelson@duke.edu). Please put Magazine Feedback in the subject line. In your email you can respond to the questions on the paper survey that came in the magazine or send a more general assessment. Outline strengths and weaknesses, suggestions for improvement, and new features you'd like to see included in the magazine.

We'd also like to have your evaluation of this newsletter. Should we continue to produce it—on paper? Or should we continue the newsletter but only as an electronic publication? If you want the newsletter to continue, what do you like about it? What suggestions do you have for improvements? Send your assessment and suggestions via email to [ilene.nelson@duke.edu](mailto:ilene.nelson@duke.edu), putting Newsletter Feedback in the subject line.

## 2007 Friends Award Will Support Jane Austen Research

Each year a \$750 Friends Award is given to a Duke undergraduate to support summer research. This year's winner, Sarah Ellis, will use the collections of libraries and archives in England to gather material for a project titled "Constructing Identity in Jane Austen's Personal and Literary Letters." Sarah will do research at the British Library and the libraries at Oxford and Cambridge. She will also visit the Centre for Kentish Studies, the library at Jane Austen's home in Alton, and Chawton House, where the library comprises a collection of books focusing on women's writing in English from 1600 to 1830. Sarah also plans to attend the Jane Austen Society's Annual General Meeting in July at Chawton House.

Sarah's research this summer, conducted under the direction of faculty member Charlotte Sussman, is part of a senior distinction project, which Sarah will complete through an independent study during the fall 2007 semester. In her application for the summer research fellowship, Sarah writes, "This research project extends far beyond graduation, however; I aspire to attend graduate school in English and ultimately become an English professor."

Sarah received the Friends Award and other funding through the Dean's Summer Research Fellowship Program in support of undergraduate research and inquiry. The fellowship program is administered through Arts and Sciences and Trinity College.

## The Renovation Goes On...

On 7 May the Libraries' administrative staff moved to the first floor of Perkins Library into a beautiful new suite of offices located in the Deryl Hart Room, a space that for many years has been a popular reading room. Eventually, the administration will move to a renovated Languages (Old Law) building, and the Deryl Hart offices will become home to the research centers of the Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library.

In mid-June the second, third, and fourth floors of Perkins will close for renovation that will be completed in the summer of 2008. The summer of 2008 is also the expected completion date for the transformation of lower floor one of Perkins, which will feature a teaching/learning center and will house several library departments. A reconfigured lower floor two, outfitted with compressed stacks and study areas, will reopen this summer.

Many extraordinary new and transformed spaces have been completed since the Perkins Project for the renovation and expansion of the Duke University Libraries began in 2003. However, much remains to be done, creating ongoing opportunities for donors to be part of the project. In recognition of leadership gifts, the Board of Trustees will name library spaces, on behalf of donors, in memory of a loved one or in honor of a special person or occasion. To discuss these naming opportunities, contact Director of Development Tom Hadzor at 919.660.5940 or [T.Hadzor@duke.edu](mailto:T.Hadzor@duke.edu).

## 2007 – 2008 Friends Leadership Elected in April

On a lovely spring evening, 120 members and guests of the Friends of the Duke University Libraries gathered at the Duke Gardens' Kirby Horton Hall for dinner and the annual business meeting. Gerry Larson, Mary Siedow, and John Valentine were elected to three-year terms on the Friends Executive Committee, and Jennifer Welsh, graduate student in history, was elected to a two-year term.

Each of these new members offers the Friends and the Duke University Libraries valuable connections to both the University and Durham communities. John Valentine, who holds both undergraduate and graduate degrees from Duke, is co-owner of The Regulator, an independent bookstore in Durham. Mary Siedow participates in local literacy programs and looks forward to creating a link between the Libraries and her literacy activities. Gerry Larson, who served on the Executive Committee from 1998 to 2003, is a Duke alumna and Duke parent and brings years of experience as a Durham educator. Student members of the Executive Committee have always generated excellent ideas for Friends activities to benefit students, so the group welcomes Jennifer Welsh and looks forward to her contributions.

Four members of the Executive Committee—Sarah English, Dale Gaddis, Heidi Madden, Nancy Tuttle May and Leland Phelps—were acknowledged for completing three-year terms and were elected to second terms. Jean O'Barr was honored for completing six years of service to the Friends Executive Committee, during which she served as chair (2003-2005), vice-chair (2002-2003), and chair of the nominating and outreach committees. Retiring Committee members Wendy Aims Rowe, Kimberly Pressley and Kinohi Nishikawa were also thanked for their service. Barbara Branson and Nancy Tuttle May were elected to co-chair the Executive Committee for 2007-2008.

After the business meeting and dinner, Dick Gordon entertained the Friends and their guests with a talk about reporting the news by interviewing the people who are living the stories of the day. Gordon is host of National Public Radio's syndicated and appropriately titled program, *The Story*. For the benefit of those who were not able to get a ticket to the sold-out Friends dinner or who live too far away to attend events at Duke, a video of the talk is available at <http://quicktime.oit.duke.edu/library/dgordon.mov>.

## Local Contest Winners Compete for National Prize

The winners of the student book collectors contest co-sponsored by the Friends and the Gothic Bookshop now have a chance to win the Collegiate Book Collecting Championship. Duke students Jennifer Welsh, who took first place in the graduate category, and Elizabeth Boudreau, the undergraduate winner, will be competing with the winners of other college and university student book collecting contests for first, second, and third prizes of \$2,500, \$1,000 and \$500, respectively. All three prizes also include airfare and accommodations to attend the awards ceremony hosted by the Book Club of Washington on 12 October in Seattle. In addition, the first prize includes a \$1,000 donation in the winner's name to the sponsoring academic library; second place carries a \$500 donation and third place a \$250 donation. The Championship is sponsored by the publisher and editor of *Fine Books & Collections* to support young collectors and their college libraries.

Duke's graduate winner, Jennifer Welsh, is a PhD candidate in the Department of History. Her collection, "Medieval and Early Modern Europe," includes primary sources, reference works and textbooks, historical journals, books on medieval and early modern languages, and even medieval mystery fiction. She is particularly interested in gender history and the cult of the saints.

Elizabeth Boudreau, winner of the undergraduate prize, graduated from Duke in May with a major in literature and a minor in biology. Her book collection represents her growth as a person, reflecting her changing interests over the years. Among the subjects represented are classics, philosophy, math/science, politics, geographical writing and spirituality.

# Recommended by a Friend...

## ***The Outermost House***

Henry Beston  
New York: Owl Books, 1992

I've recently re-read Beston's story, first published in 1928, of a year he spent in his two-room cottage on a Cape Cod beach, and I am still enchanted by it. The author intended to have a two-week stay at the cottage, but, he explains, "the beauty and mystery of this earth and outer sea so possessed and held me that I could not go."

The narrative is respected as a classic of beach natural history and continues to grip readers with its descriptions of life in the sea, air and dunes. Beston's language is poetic and evocative, informed by careful observation and sensory perceptions. His pace is sedate, allowing the reader to contemplate along the way. His description of storms and shipwrecks alone makes the book worth the reading. A photographer friend to whom I recommended this book says that she can open it at any page and find a picture there. *The Outermost House* is a great beach book, in the best sense.

—Barbara Branson

## ***The Last Shot: City Streets, Basketball Dreams***

Darcy Frey  
Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1994, 2004

Selected by the Durham County Library as the "Durham Reads" selection for this year, *The Last Shot* is the story of four members of the Lincoln High School basketball team in Coney Island, New York, and their quest for basketball scholarships to NCAA Division I schools as a way out of the New York projects. As readers, we get to know these young men intimately—their motivations, their joys and passions, their fears. We are introduced through their own words and actions to the uniqueness of each. They are all amazing athletes, and we are brought to imagine the beauty and magnificence of their movements, both individual and as elements of the extraordinary organism that is their team. We meet their families and coaches and hear the hopes and dreams they have for these young men and see their extreme efforts and sacrifices to help make these dreams come true. We also are exposed to the environment in which they live—drug and gang-infested neighborhoods, where the only hope for escape is basketball. And we are thrust into the heady world of basketball camps and big name recruiting and become more and more aware of the dark sides and the unfulfilled promises and worry about what really will become of these remarkable young men. And we leave frustrated that basketball is their only hope for the future, and we know that somehow we all bear some responsibility for this and for them.

—Dale Gaddis

## ***Returning to Earth***

Jim Harrison  
New York: Grove Press, 2007

Jim Harrison is the only author whose books I buy in hardback without even reading a review; I love the way he writes. This novel—his fourteenth book of fiction—concerns characters he introduced in the earlier *True North*. Donald, who is dying of Lou Gehrig's disease, narrates the first part of the book; the rest is taken up by other members of family, including—in the last section—his widow. It is hard to describe a classic Jim Harrison work of fiction; it rambles all over the place, takes up subjects at will. But more than any other writer I know of, he gives a feeling of life as it is actually lived, by ordinary people, except that no one seems ordinary in a Harrison novel. In this novel all four characters are distinct and memorable, but the most interesting, alas, is Donald himself. This isn't the Harrison book to start with; that would be *Dalva*, or perhaps *Legends of the Fall*. But real Harrison fans don't need my recommendation. They've long since bought and read the book.

—David Guy

## ***Charmed Circle: Gertrude Stein & Company***

James R. Mellow  
New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974

In the early years of the twentieth century, Gertrude Stein went to Paris with her brother Leo. The salon that they began in their studio at 27 rue de Fleurus became a gathering spot for artists and writers: Picasso, Matisse, Jean Cocteau, Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Cezanne and many others. The collectors Claribel and Etta Cone were welcomed into this circle, and Alice B. Toklas joined the group and formed a close relationship with Gertrude that lasted forty years.

If you were admitted to the Saturday evening salon, you would experience exciting talk and see "outrageous modern paintings." Gertrude introduced many of the artists to the Cone sisters who began their serious art collecting in Paris. Gertrude bought her first Matisse in 1905 for \$100.

Artists whose works never entered the Stein collection were disgruntled. Among them there was the speculation as to whether the Steins bought their peculiar paintings because they liked them or whether they liked them because they had bought them.

There are wonderful photos of Gertrude, Alice and many of their 'charmed circle'. James Mellow began studying the life and work of Gertrude Stein in 1950 after graduating from Northwestern University. His writing demonstrates the close relationship between her everyday experiences and her writings, bringing the reader into that world.

—Nancy Tuttle May

## ***March***

Geraldine Brooks  
New York: Penguin Books, 2005

In this companion novel to Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*, the author follows Mr. March, the absent father in the Alcott novel, during his service in the Civil War. Even though he is much older than the average soldier, Peter March's conscience leads him to enlist in the Union Army. While his wife and four daughters struggle financially at home in Massachusetts, March serves as a chaplain first in Virginia and then on a former cotton plantation along the Mississippi River. Having worked with the Underground Railroad and championed John Brown, Mr. March is an idealist, but he finds himself in situations where he is powerless to defend his ideals. The author tells the story through March's letters, with flashbacks giving background on the March family, and—for a few chapters—from Mrs. March's point of view as she tends her wounded husband in a hospital in Washington, D.C. Fans of historical fiction will enjoy the information on the Concord Transcendentalists, the Abolitionist Movement, and the details of daily life during the Civil War.

—Ann Wilder

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