

Friends *Folio*

A Newsletter from the
Friends of Ganser Library
No. 62 Spring, 2011

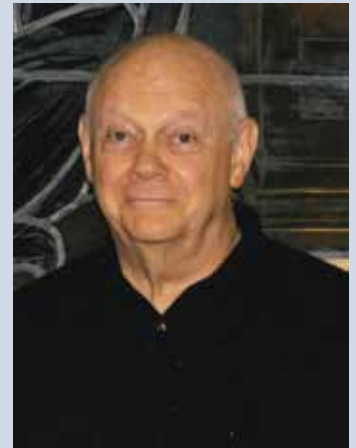
Building a Library by Accident

Bruce Kellner

The English literary critic Walter Pater said it better than I can:

But, besides those great men, there is a certain number of artists who have a distinct faculty of their own by which they convey to us a peculiar quality of pleasure which we cannot get elsewhere. . . .

I did not set out to read books by obscure writers, surely not to collect them; I started buying books when I was eighteen years old for fun, largely out of curiosity and without any thought of building a library. Now, sixty years and six or seven hundred books later, it is gratifying to know that they are part of Ganser Library's Special Collections as a library of "Un-read, Under-read, Mis-read, Under-rated, or Forgotten Writers." Here's an autobiographical ramble to account for how they got there:



Bruce Kellner

When I enrolled as a freshman art major at Colorado College in the fall of 1948, there was a used and rare book shop in town, good for sleuthing around in on Saturday afternoons. It was owned by a man who regularly posed in the nude for life drawing classes on campus. When entirely by accident I happened upon his shop, I was startled to see him with his clothes on, and I blurted that out. (I had been just as startled a few weeks before to see him with his clothes off.) Hank—whose last name I cannot now recall—laughed at my embarrassment and offered me a cup of tea. It was easy enough to become a regular customer. He seemed to me to have read just about everything, but then he was the first adult with whom I'd ever talked about books. Hank was an Old Salt, probably about fifty, enjoying retirement from the Merchant Marine in the crowded, musty, friendly bookshop he'd always dreamed of owning.

We fell into conversation that first day about Gertrude Stein. I had come under the spell



Gertrude Stein

of her strange games with language two years before, but my high school English teachers had sniffed in disapproval when I brought up her name, and nobody else I knew had ever even heard of her. Hank had. He pulled a copy of *Wars I Have Seen* from his shelves, said he'd enjoyed it, and predicted that I would too. I think it cost me a dollar. A few weeks later, I found a pristine copy of Gertrude Stein's *Geography and Plays* as part of the window decoration at a yard goods store, probably untouched since its publication in 1922. I bought that one too, and not long afterward Hank

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turned up a copy of her book for children, *The World Is Round*. I'd started a collection.

Hank introduced me to several writers whose books were sure bets for adolescent readers eager for almost anything written later than high school, standbys like *Silas Marner*. Then he challenged me with an Icelandic saga by Haldor Laxness, *Independent People*, which for a time dwarfed every other book I'd read, and *The Colossus of Marousi*, a magical travel memoir about Greece by Henry Miller and later on to his *Tropic of Capricorn*. At that time much of Miller's writing was still considered pornographic and therefore banned in the United States, which made him seem pretty daring even if he wasn't. Besides, Alvin Foote contended that no intelligent person ever got hurt by reading a book. He was a minor American poet doing double duty for a year, teaching composition to first semester freshmen at Colorado College, a job for which he was catastrophically unsuited.

Alvin Foote encouraged us to write whatever we wanted to write, then diligently corrected our spelling and punctuation, wrote encouraging lies, and never belittled our efforts. I was lucky to have been assigned to his class. We read poetry all semester, and we learned nothing whatever about how to construct 500-word essays, topic sentences, or Cicero's five fail-safe paragraphs. I got my scholarly paraphernalia during the second semester from George McCue, a scary little man who genuflected when he intoned Dr. Samuel Johnson's name. I doubt that he and Hank would have hit it off, but Hank taught me to read Dr. Johnson's dictionary B in two thick folio volumes bound in tooled calf and stamped in gold leaf in 1816. "It's as good as a novel," he said. "Dip in anywhere. You'll have a good time." I did, and I paid off my first serious investment in monthly installments.

During my sophomore year I discovered Frederick Buechner's first novel, *A Long Day's Dying*. The critics either praised it for its highly rarified language or accused the author of having sprayed the pages with Aqua-Velva. That was intriguing enough for me, but I felt as sophisticated as Alfalfa Schwitzer in an *Our Gang* comedy when I discovered that Buechner was about my age. So was Truman Capote. Well, Buechner got me on to Henry James, and Capote got me on to William Faulkner.

Hank introduced me to a literary journal called *The Tiger's Eye*, my first exposure to the avant-garde, where I discovered the bewildering prose of Marguerite Young. A few years later, in one of those

coincidences which happen so often that they should never surprise us, she was my graduate school advisor in the Writer's Workshop at the University of Iowa. So I began tracking down her books as well, including some chapters in periodicals from her nearly unreadable doorstep of a novel, *Miss MacIntosh, My Darling*.

In between Gertrude Stein and Marguerite Young, several other writers joined my modest orbit, and—well, I started collecting their books too. I'd met the long-forgotten Twenties novelist Carl Van Vechten by that time, through my interest in Gertrude Stein's work, and he had introduced me to the writings of several little-known writers, and their books began to populate my shelves too.

Almost without exception, the writers I collected are unlikely to turn up on reading lists for college courses or to undergo some magical revival and turn into a cottage industry—but then who knows? Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* failed when it was published in 1851, and seventy-five years later you could buy a first edition in a used book shop for fifty cents. Critics and readers alike were largely indifferent to Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, and she died in obscurity. Still other writers have fallen out of favor with changing tastes, for—in the long view—time is as fickle with the arts as it is with sex, politics, and religion.

Surely most of the books on the shelves of my library were less than familiar, although I believe it did not occur to me until about two years ago that—even without wide readerships—many of the books were rare. It seemed like a good idea to try to keep them together, so I was delighted when Marilyn Parrish and her colleagues in Ganser Library agreed to accept them

Friends Folio

The Friends Folio is published twice a year (fall and spring) and distributed to the Millersville University community and Friends of Ganser Library.

For more information or questions, contact us at (717) 872-3624, Special_Collections@millersville.edu.

Editors: Marilyn McKinley Parrish, Priscilla Oppenheimer
Graphic Designer: Diane Black

Current and past issues of the *Friends Folio* are available on the Special Collections website:
www.library.millersville.edu/sc.cfm?Parent=3336

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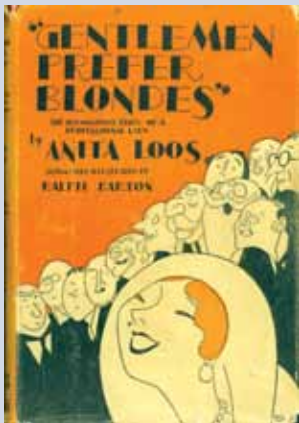


into Special Collections as a permanent archive. If in the future the books attract the attention and perhaps even the affection of a few adventurous students, they will have been worth preserving.

Here's a Who's Who of the writers included, one of whom is represented by a single book, and some of whom are represented by complete runs of their publications. Nothing identifies them with each other but the fact that the "how" of a writer's work is just as significant as the "what" of it; not what he says but how he says it—and that in my view is precisely what drew me to these writers and what gives them a chance at a foothold on Parnassus.

J.R. Ackerley was an influential editor in modern British literature and fostered many young writers. He was an uncommonly talented author himself but wrote little: a novel, a play, a poem, a memoir, a travel book, and thousands of brilliant letters.

Philip Barry was a hugely popular playwright, strongly influenced by the wave of Freudian psychology during the Twenties. He wrote *The Philadelphia Story*, but his more serious plays and psychodramas deal with faith and guilt and their roles in human behavior.



Ralph Barton was the most popular cartoonist of the Jazz Age, also a theater critic with attendant caricatures of actors. He was one of the founders of *The New Yorker*. Financial success and four failed marriages destroyed him; he committed suicide before he was 40.

Thomas Beer wrote the first biography of Stephen Crane, also a history of the 1890s, *The Mauve Decade*, and several novels notable for their critical assessments of social, political, and theatrical mores of the late 19th century.

Only **Gerald Lord Berners's** friends read his deadpan novels. A vicar's wife falls in love with a camel. A spinster unravels a German tapestry to protest the war. Cleopatra has plastic surgery on her nose. Berners composed serious music on a piano in the back seat of his automobile.

Frederick Buechner's brilliant novels are serious and hilarious and have been praised by critics for 50 years, although he has never had popular success. He is also a religious writer who can touch the heads of atheists as well as the hearts of intelligent Christians and Jews.

Miguel Covarrubias, a popular celebrity caricaturist and book illustrator during the Twenties, became a



highly respected anthropologist and wrote several books on the arts and artifacts in various cultures: Native American, Mexican, Balinese, all luminously informative and beautifully illustrated.

Donald Evans was a typesetter for the New York Times who wrote highly original futurist verse in arcane language, drank ox blood regularly, served in World War One, and committed suicide at 40. Only the testy critic Yvor Winters praised Evans' work. He deserves resurrection.

Almost nobody ever heard of **Max Ewing**, but he wrote what may be the funniest novel about the Twenties, *Going Somewhere*. He was a popular young man about town before he killed himself at the age of thirty-two. His scandalous letters to his parents detail the Jazz Age.

Ronald Firbank is still a cult figure, admired by few and dismissed with impatience by most. His comedies of manners were a strong literary influence on later writers. Firbank's naughty books either exasperate or they enchant; there is no middle ground.

Robert Francis was a poet who labored in the shadow of his great friend Robert Frost. He lacks Frost's darker view of the human condition, however, and is essentially a sunny writer. He lived in cheerful poverty, off the land. *The Trouble With Francis*, his autobiography, is astonishing.

Henry Blake Fuller wrote about social climbing in Chicago and Americans being gauche in Italy. Patient readers find him subtle; impatient readers find him dull. *Bertram Cope's Year* was shunned in 1919 because it dealt with homosexuality. 80 years later it was reissued to considerable critical acclaim.



Jim Harrison is neither under-read nor under-rated, but he has been dismissed by critics because of his subject matter: wild (and hilarious) sexuality and a powerful response to the natural world. Additionally, he has written an impressive body of poetry of considerable power.

In a poll of literary critics in 1922 **Joseph Hergesheimer** was pronounced the best writer in America. His upholstered prose was forgotten a decade later, and he died in obscurity. Nobody

now reads his books, but they reflect the excesses of the Twenties brilliantly as well as accurately.



Christopher Isherwood's celebrity stems from *Cabaret*, the dishonest musical based on his *Berlin Stories*. His homosexuality influenced his work and drew down the wrath of critics when it became too apparent. His memoirs are strong evocations of England, Berlin, and Hollywood.

Thomas Kinsella has been acclaimed as a great poet, but poets are always under-read. Kinsella has written a remarkable body of verse, in both traditional prosodies and organic forms to embrace Irish history and politics as well as intensely personal subjects.

Leonard Merrick never sold well, but his prose shines with a subtle drollery and affectionate tolerance. He was early to confront anti-semitism and racial bigotry. He is now largely absent from libraries, and even reference guides to English literature skip over him.

Philip Moeller wrote a good play that succeeded, so he wrote a second one that succeeded, but when the third one failed he just stopped writing. He translated European plays for the Theatre Guild and served as director, producer, designer, and dramaturg.

Oozing continental charm, **Ferenc Molnar** wrote *Liliom* and many other plays reflecting Hungarian misbehavior during early years of the last century. The *Paul Street Boys* has been called a Hungarian version of *The Catcher in the Rye* and carries a similar degree of reverence.

Alfred de Musset is largely remembered as one of George Sand's young lovers but he was a formidably talented poet and novelist. His plays credit him as having freed French drama of the restraints imposed upon it by Racine.

Edwin Muir, an Orkney Islands poet uninfluenced by the Pound-Eliot school left an impressive body of work filled with pagan mythology and legend, and Christian doubt. Also, he wrote a great autobiography, *The Story and the Fable*. With his wife Willa, he was Franz Kafka's first translator.

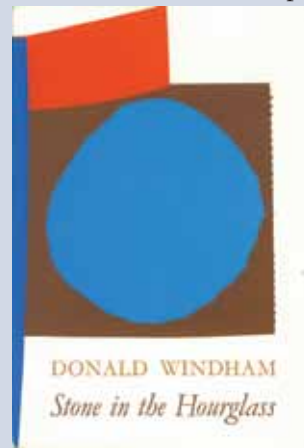
Carl Van Vechten was America's first dance critic and endorser of jazz music. He was a popular novelist, also the earliest white publicizer of African American arts and letters. He fostered the careers of several writers, including Gertrude Stein, Wallace Stevens, and Langston Hughes.

R.G. Vliet was a writer of quirky originality. *Clem Maverick*, his dramatic monologues about a country western singer, is a masterpiece. His unsettling novels about the Southwest are not widely known. He died young, leaving only the promise that his early work suggested what might lie ahead

Denton Welch was a promising artist and writer when a motorist knocked him off his bicycle, and he lived thereafter in constant pain from horrifying injuries. His writing is so intensely personal and startlingly frank that the line between fact and fiction is impossible to draw.

Thornton Wilder may prove to be the great American writer of the 20th century, yet he was offered grudging admiration by the literary establishment, largely because his work is essentially tonic instead of angst-ridden. Is Wilder ever required reading in the college classroom?

Donald Windham was praised by Thomas Mann, Albert Camus, and E.M. Forster. He never made a living wage from his writing. Windham was homosexual and wrote from that point of view, an invitation to condescension from critics when he began to write in 1950.



Austin Tappan Wright created "Islandia" in his youth, an imaginary country that became his life-long preoccupation, including its history, folklore, genealogy, geography, literature, and the politics, economics, and for his Utopian world. It is an unforgettable reading experience.

A few years ago I gave all of my of books by women writers to Special Collections as "The Margaret C. Woodbridge Collection of Books 'By A Woman Writt'." It occurs to me now that some of those estimable writers are also "un-read, under-read, mis-read, under-rated, or forgotten": **Mildred Aldrich, Hortense Calisher, Isa Glenn, Vassar Miller, Christina Stead, Elinor Wylie**. I hope they too might be excavated one day by some enterprising students.

Bruce Kellner (professor emeritus) is a retired Millersville University faculty member from the English department.

Images within this article are from covers or interior pages of books from the Under-read, Under-rated Writers collection. The Gertrude Stein image is from the Carl Van Vechten Memorial Collection of Arts and Letters, also donated by Bruce Kellner.

News & Special Events

Book Sale

The last Friends book sale before the library renovation took place March 13-16, 2011. Many eager book buyers left with arms full of finds—from pieces of art work to VHS tapes, recordings to books. While the library is under renovation, everyone is encouraged to donate books to the Lancaster Public Library book sale. Call 717-295-1950 for more information. The Friends Board wishes to extend a special appreciation to all who have supported this sale during the past 33 years.

Friends Spring Banquet



The Friends Spring Banquet took place on April 4, 2011, featuring Marilyn Johnson, author of *The Dead Beat* and *This Book is Overdue!* The evening began with a reception and dinner, accompanied by the wonderful music of a student guitar duo. Steve DiGuseppe presented information about the capital campaign and the exciting plans for the library renovation. Marilyn Johnson's engaging presentation

and passionate advocacy for libraries inspired those in attendance. Following her lecture, Johnson signed copies of her books.

Library Renovation

As a result of the upcoming library renovation, library services will be moving to new locations during the summer of 2011. Construction is scheduled to begin in the fall. Circulation services will be moving to Gerhart and Archives & Special Collections will be moving to Franklin House. We look forward to meeting the needs of students and researchers in our new locations. If you have any questions about the renovation project or timeline, check out the renovation blog, available here: <http://blogs.millersville.edu/newlibrary>.



SOAR TO
Greatness THE CAMPAIGN FOR
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Join us in supporting student learning at the University Library by contributing to the Soar to Greatness Capital Campaign.

www.millersville.edu/campaigns/soartogreatness/library/



Students Win Awards

Each year the Friends of Ganser Library rewards students who demonstrate fine research and writing skills using materials from Archives and Special Collections.

This year's winners of the Sally Woodward Miller awards (given to students in English 110) are: Erica Beaver for "Schuylkill County: The Rise and Fall of the Coal Region," Lorraine Neef for "Gettysburg," and Stevie Younker for "The Start of a New Life."



photo D.J. Ramsey

Sally Woodward Miller award winners: Erica Beaver, Lorraine Neef, and Stevie Younker.

These award winners were students in Dr. Kasia Jakubiak and Dr. Carla Rineer's English 110 classes during 2010. The review panel included Prof. Kim Grotewold, Priscilla Oppenheimer, and Dr. Michelle White.

Winners of the Robert Sayre awards (given to students in History 105) are: Kristen Lefever-Schuller for "The Paxton Boys and the Government of Pennsylvania," Norman Ressler for "John Lechler: A Case Study into 19th century American Capital Punishment" and Kaitlyn Pearson for "The Classic Identity"

Award winners were students in Prof. Monica Spiese and Dr. Jeff Prushankin's History 105 classes during 2010. Review panelists included Dr. Joe Labant, Dr. Clarence Maxwell, and Dr. Erin Shelor. We were grateful that members of Robert Sayre's family were present for the award ceremony, including his widow Roma Sayre, and daughter Jennifer Sayre Croyle.



photo D.J. Ramsey

Jennifer Sayre Croyle with winners of the Robert Sayer award: Kaitlyn Pearson, Norman Ressler, Kristen Lefever-Schuller along with Roma Sayre.

Students use Archives & Special Collections for Research

We've had a busy year with classes and student research projects. During the 2010-2011 academic year, 745 students in 33 sessions have examined primary source materials related to topics such as the history of children's literature, the Civil War, presidential campaigns, Millersville history, history of medicine, letters and diaries, and oral history. In addition, along with other areas of the library, we hosted 85 middle school students from Lincoln Middle School in Lancaster in their preparation for National History Day research projects.

Faculty members such as **Kasia Jakubiak**, **Dr. Carla Rineer**, **Joyce Anderson**, **Dr. Yufeng Zhang**, and **Dr. Caleb Corkery** (English) wanted their students to examine narratives for English and University 103 classes. History faculty members **Dr. Jeff Prushankin**, **Monica Spiese**, **Erin Shelor**, and **Tanya Kevorkian** requested that their students be introduced to primary sources suitable for undergraduate and graduate research. Students from **Dr. Dotti Blum's** class on the history of mathematics came to examine examples of early math texts from the Rousseau collection. **Dr. Kim Mahaffy** (Latino/a Studies and Sociology) and **Dr. Christine Filippone** (Art) brought their classes for instruction in oral history methodology and use of digital recording equipment for



the mural project with Michelle Ortiz. Students from **Dr. Lesley Colabucci** (Elementary & Early Childhood), **Dr. Cheryl Desmond** (Educational Foundations), and **Dr. Jeff Wimer's** (Wellness) classes engaged with a variety of rare materials relating to the history of the University, the history of children's literature, and body image anxiety. **Marie Qvanstrom's** Humanities 230 students examined primary and secondary source materials relating to the Amish and their culture.

Treasures from the Archives

by Janet Dotterer

We are fortunate to have a number of items that belonged to Henry Frank Eshleman, Class of 1890. Included is a photograph collection of members of his graduating class from 1890, a large manuscript collection that includes daily research notebooks from 1936 to 1946, notebooks on specific subjects relating to Pennsylvania history, manuscripts of articles, scrapbooks from 1906 to 1909, personal account ledger from 1897 to 1925, the Lancaster County Voting Register from 1911 to 1916, notes on law by Congressman Marriott Brosius, and miscellaneous correspondence from 1909 to 1945. The photograph collection is especially valuable to the history of the Normal School since the photos predate the publication of a yearbook.

Henry Frank Eshleman was an attorney and local historian from Lancaster, Pa. He was born near Marticville, Lancaster County, in 1869, educated in county schools, and attended Millersville State Normal School, graduating in 1890. He later entered the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor and received a law degree in 1894. Eshleman passed the Lancaster County Bar in October of 1894 and began his own law practice soon afterwards. He was a prolific writer of history and was one of the founders of the Lancaster County Historical Society. During the 1920s, he served as president of the Society and as editor of its journal. Henry Frank Eshleman died on Oct. 13, 1953.



Library Renovation Update

Planning the Reading Sculpture Garden for the New Library

By Kimberly Grotewold

Given the task of designing a garden, many of us might consider which plants develop attractive flowers, produce edible fruits and vegetables, or even give off pleasant aromas. We might think about color arrangements and the addition of benches and other furniture that give us the ideal vantage point for observing plants and animals. When charged with designing the “soon-to-be” realized Reading Sculpture Garden outside what will be the newly renovated library, students took the project to a whole different and exciting level.



Dr. Christopher Hardy

When asked to get involved in the planning process for the Reading Sculpture

Garden, art professor Line Bruntse and biology professor Dr. Christopher Hardy recognized and embraced the opportunity to engage their students in a real-world design project. As a first step in the process, Bruntse's

advanced art students and Dr. Hardy's Biology 325 students visited Longwood Gardens to spark some inspiration and look at how biological elements and architectural features can complement each other to create aesthetically appealing and functional spaces. In the case of the Reading Sculpture Garden, these spaces would mirror the designs for the library's interior renovation, namely that adaptable, multi-use environments, conducive to group-, as well as individual-, learning activities, would be key. Dr. Hardy's students wrote individual papers detailing themes for the plants to be included in the garden and were asked to incorporate at least one architectural element they observed in use at Longwood. Ms. Bruntse's art students worked in teams of two to four students and were tasked with creating models of the architectural features which also addressed how plant-life would contribute to the overall design.



Line Bruntse

The instructors and student participants faced a demanding but thrilling challenge early on. “We began with this concept of an intimate 3,000-sq.-ft. sculpture garden, and then suddenly it just exploded!” Ms. Bruntse declares. Shortly after beginning the planning process, the professors were told they could also design an amphitheater and walkways connecting the planned outdoor features. “I put the problem directly to my students,” Bruntse explains, referring to the idea of multifunctional spaces, “How do we incorporate large group seating for around 25 students, seating for more of a seminar-sized group, plus individual seating [within the same defined area]?” She also asked the students to think about the types of spaces that would attract them and make them want to spend time there. Even walkways, which are obviously functional, can also be elegant and even instructional. One possible inclusion in the design would punctuate the walks with individual “seating pods” that would showcase Pennsylvania fossils or fossil imprints within the concrete structure.

Fittingly for a library renovation project, all the students involved did research. The biology students investigated plant taxonomies and the evolutionary relationships these groupings imply. They also studied biogeography and the species of plants native to particular regions. The decision was made to include only native Pennsylvania flora in their designs for ecological, as well as sustainability reasons. The art students considered





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Sculpture Garden *continued from page 4*

durability of materials when developing their designs, envisioning structures that would still be in good condition ten years from now, so they used concrete and steel as their building “blocks.” They investigated safety concerns, such as the potential growth height of particular flora used around seating areas, to make sure that these would not become potentially dangerous visual obstructions. To determine if the planned spaces would be accessible to people with disabilities, the students had to gather information about the Americans with Disabilities Act and confirm that their designs would be in compliance.

If you visit the Reading Sculpture Garden or the amphitheater upon their completion, you may decide to take a self-guided tour to learn about the evolution of Pennsylvania’s plant- and wildlife. You might observe a biology lab in progress or listen to a jazz concert. You might sit in on a writing class and compose some nature-inspired poetry. You will

probably see students gathered in groups to work on projects or socialize and you may glimpse some enjoying a quiet moment alone. As one biology student noted, “I like being hands-on; it was fun to put knowledge to use.” The knowledge and creativity these students put to use will benefit the Millersville community for years to come.



Kim Grotewold is an adjunct faculty member in the library.

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Becoming a Friend

People become Friends of Ganser Library when they make a donation to Millersville University and request mailings from the Friends. Encourage your friends to become Friends of Ganser Library through their support of Millersville University. For more information, contact the Millersville University Development Office at (717) 872-3820.

Keep up to date on the plans for the Library renovation. Visit the renovation blog: <http://blogs.millersville.edu/newlibrary/>