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Spring Newsletter 2000

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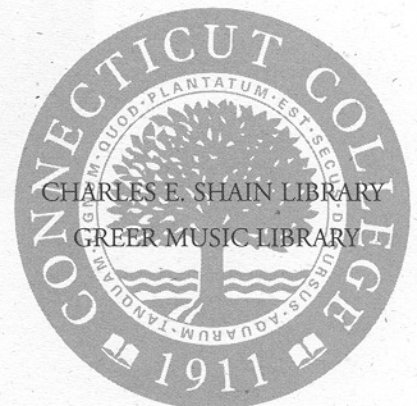
NEW VICE PRESIDENT for Information Services appointed

At the end of January, W. Lee Hisle arrived in New London to become the new Vice President for Information Services and Librarian of the College. Lee comes to Connecticut College from Austin Community College in Texas, a large multi-campus institution where he worked since 1980, most recently as Associate Vice President for Faculty Development and Learning Resource Services. A native of Kentucky, he holds his B.A. in English from Berea College, his Master of Science in Library Science from the University of Kentucky,

and his Ph.D. in Educational Administration from the University of Texas at Austin. Lee is the author of many papers and presentations about libraries and information technology. He is a past President of the Association of College and Research Libraries and will be the chair of ACRL's 10th Annual Conference, "ACRL X: Crossing the Divide," to be held in Denver in 2001.

For his year as ACRL President, Lee Hisle chose the theme "Facing the Millennium: Values for the Electronic Information Age." He believes that many of the core values of librarianship, such as an altruistic sense of service and the commitment to intellectual freedom, are being challenged by changes in society brought about by the electronic information age. To remain strong as a profession, librarians must face these challenges to traditional values. Lee says, "I believe that stability can come from our values: not from the way we do things, but by the beliefs we hold as immutable."

Lee is very interested in Special Collections and believes that rare books and archival resources have a critical role to play in the liberal arts curriculum. He would like to have more of the resources of Special Collections used in courses and for faculty and student projects. As he settles into his new position, he looks forward to getting to know the members of the Friends of the Library and welcomes their involvement in the library program at Connecticut College.



CHARLES E. SHAIN LIBRARY
GREER MUSIC LIBRARY



ONLINE! New Special Collections Home Page

The World Wide Web is a powerful medium for disseminating information about special and archival collections in libraries and museums. Through the Internet it is possible to display texts and images and to mount exhibitions that until now required personal visits. Special Collections has had its own home page for several years featuring resources such as the exemplary William Meredith web site, created by English major David Kieran '00. The redesigned Special Collections site has a collage of images reflecting the major collections, with links from the images to information about the collections themselves.

An outstanding feature of the new Special Collections site is the home page for the Frederic Irwin Collection created by Connecticut College junior Daniel Pincus using Flash technology. The Irwin Collection is an online exhibit with images of most of the documents and photos in the collection as well as its own finding aid. The Irwin Collection was given to the college in 1999 by Niantic resident Catherine D. Irwin, in memory of her husband Frederic Irwin. It consists of photographs, letters and documents dealing with Frederic Irwin's experiences as an American flyer in World War II and as a prisoner of war in Germany. The site also has scanned photographs from a German war propaganda publication and links to similar sites on the Internet.

The *Friends of the Library Newsletter* now appears online for the first time with the back issues for 1998 and 1999. You will find the new Special Collections home page with links to the Irwin Collection and the online *Friends of the Library Newsletters* by clicking on <http://camel2.conncoll.edu/is/info-resources/special-collections/> If you do not have access to the Internet at home, please call Laurie Deredita at 439-2654 to arrange a demonstration.

The Friends of the
Connecticut College Library

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March, 2000

LEONARD BASKIN EXHIBITION in Shain Library

INTRODUCTION TO THE EXHIBITION, BY CHARLES T. PRICE, PROFESSOR EMERITUS OF ART HISTORY

This exhibition is occasioned by the recent gift to the Charles E. Shain Library of material related to The Gehenna Press and its proprietor, Leonard Baskin, by Kenneth Nesheim, collector, librarian, and bibliophile. Mr. Nesheim's gift greatly expands the library's holdings of Gehenna Press books and provides the means of introducing Leonard Baskin's work as typographer, designer, and publisher.

Leonard Baskin is widely recognized as a major American sculptor and printmaker. His contribution to the arts of the book is generally less known, confined as it is to an astute minority of collectors and typophiles. It should be added that Baskin is an omnivorous collector, particularly of books and prints of the Renaissance. It is this taste that, in part, explains the sometimes archaic flavor of Gehenna Press books, particularly the early ones.

The Gehenna Press is but one of the many private presses of the twentieth century inspired by the example of William Morris and his Kelmscott Press whose quality transcended that of commercial printing.

The Gehenna Press began in the printing shop at Jonathan Edwards College when Leonard Baskin, as a Yale undergraduate, produced the first book bearing The Gehenna Press imprint, a collection of his own poems entitled *On a Pyre of Withered Roses*. That was in 1943 and some years were to pass before a second appeared.

The choice of the name of the press derived from Baskin's reading in Yale's browsing library, Linonia and Brothers. In the first book of Milton's *Paradise Lost* he came upon the line "And black Gehenna called, the type of Hell." The punning appropriateness of the name appealed to a man who, for all his humanitarian instincts, has consistently represented humanity in bleak images. The association of Gehenna with Hell has inspired the many press-marks appearing in publications of the press of which the pomegranate, in Classical mythology the food of the dead, is the most often found.

The Gehenna Press resumed its life in 1951 with a book of linoleum and wood engravings entitled *A Little Book of Natural History*. From that time on, a more or less steady sequence of publications has been

issued. The flow increased with the move to Northampton, Massachusetts, when Leonard Baskin joined the faculty of Smith College and gained access to the facilities of the Metcalf Printing Company.

The range of content has been defined by the interests of the artist. As a printer fascinated with typography and typographical ornament, books have appeared devoted entirely to these subjects. Texts have been found for books and broadsides on artists admired by Baskin and illustrated with engraved portraits. Contemporary poets have been published; a series of scholarly art historical texts begun; forgotten social and political tracts have been reprinted; obscure artists of the Renaissance and Baroque have been revived. The range of work done at the press is an expression of the mind of Baskin.

For nine years, while the Baskins were living in England, only a few books appeared under The Gehenna Press imprint. With Baskin's return to the United States and the area associated with its early work, the press is again in production albeit with changes in its aims and its mechanics. Baskin's influence is impressive. The region of the Connecticut River Valley between Holyoke and the Hatfields has been a hothouse of activities concerned with the arts of the book.





LECTURE by Linda Lear '62

“THE VALUE OF ARCHIVAL SOURCES
IN UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION”

TUESDAY, MARCH 28, 4 P.M.,

HAINES ROOM, SHAIN LIBRARY

The Friends of the Library will sponsor a lecture by Linda Lear, the author of *Rachel Carson: Witness for Nature*. Linda Lear '62 is an environmental historian at George Washington University who has placed her extensive collection of Carson material in Special Collections at Connecticut College. Professor Lear will be on campus from March 27 to April 6 to collaborate with Professor George Willauer of the English Department in his course “The Natural Environment and the North American Literary Imagination.”

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS to acquire the Moser Bible

Plans have been set in motion to purchase for Special Collections a copy of one of the 400 examples of the primary edition of the King James Bible, published in 1999 by the Pennyroyal Caxton Press and illustrated by Barry Moser. The Bible will take its place beside the Pennyroyal Press 1982 edition of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* illustrated by Moser and purchased with the support of the membership dues of the Friends of the Library. The Library has already received several contributions from Friends to subsidize the cost of the Moser Bible and encourages other Friends to contribute.

YOUR MEMBERSHIP INVITED FOR 2000

As another year begins, we invite you to renew your membership in the Friends of the Connecticut College Library. To those who have already done so, we sincerely thank you. We welcome new members at any time and urge readers to let us know of anyone in our area who would enjoy a formal association with one of the New London area's major cultural resources.

Membership contributions are one of the primary sources of financial support for the department of Special Collections. They enable us to purchase rare books and other materials and to support other ways of reaching out to the campus and regional community through public exhibitions and lectures. Member support also provides the annual Library Scholarship to a graduating Connecticut college senior or alumnus and underwrites the cost of this newsletter.

The Palmer Room on the second floor of Shain Library is the reading room for Special Collections and is normally open weekdays from 1 to 5 p.m. Members of the Friends are invited to stop by when visiting the library, although if you are in the library specifically to use Special Collections resources, it is advisable to make an appointment in advance by calling Laurie Deredita at 439-2654.