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Friends of the Connecticut College Library Newsletter

Friends of the Connecticut College Library

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WHAT'S NEW IN THE CHU ROOM

Capturing the Living Creatures with a Brush is the name of the current exhibition in the Chu Room. On display are animal and bird paintings that belong to the Chu Griffis Art Collection and that demonstrate popular themes in traditional Chinese painting that imply specific political, social or personal meanings. The horse motif, for example, symbolizes the talent and ambition of the artist or that of the patron who requests the work. Eagles are depicted in paintings for their sharp eyes and the strength of their wings and claws; frequently they are symbols of human heroism and fighting spirit. Cows, often associated with human beings in cultivated land near villages, stand for faith, kindness and sacrifice. Many of these works were painted after the end of the "Cultural Revolution" and exemplify how paintings of animals and birds are turned into visual metaphors to represent political and social ideas.

This exhibition will continue through March. Information about the Spring exhibition will be mailed when it becomes available.



IT IS TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP in the Friends of the Connecticut College Library!

Your membership for 2008, new or renewed, may now be sent in with enclosed remittance envelope.

Membership contributions to the Friends of the Connecticut College Library are the primary source of financial support for the events and exhibitions that are held at the library. In 2007 they included the Sound Lab Lecture about global warming by Elizabeth Kolbert, author of *Field Notes from a Catastrophe: Man, Nature, and Climate Change*; a half-day program to celebrate the centennial of the birth of environmental pioneer Rachel Carson with speakers and an exhibition of highlights of the Lear/Carson Collection; and a celebration of the 30 year milestone of the building of Shain Library. Over the years support from the Friends has provided funding for hundreds of book and manuscript acquisitions, to underwrite the printing and mailing costs of this newsletter, the postcard announcements of openings and lectures, and to pay for reception and exhibition costs.

Since 1993, contributions from the Friends support a Library Scholarship that is awarded each year to a Connecticut College senior or alumnus who is pursuing a graduate degree in library science, book conservation or archival management. In 2007 the award went to Caitlin Corless '06 to pursue her studies in the library science program at Simmons College after serving with AmeriCorps in Vermont for a year. As a librarian, she plans to continue her work with children.

We hope that by affiliating with our library—the best in southeastern Connecticut--you will feel that it is yours as well, whether you use Shain Library or Greer Music Library. Membership has many benefits including borrowing privileges at Shain or at Greer for those who contribute at the \$50 level and above, invitations to all Friends events and a subscription to the *Newsletter*.

Horses by Chiang Chien-fei



THE ALEXANDER-O'NEILL COLLECTION

It is with great pleasure that the department of Special Collections and Archives announces a major addition to its holdings in the field of Eugene O'Neill scholarship. In 2006, we received a letter from Doris Alexander telling of her intention to give us the research archive formed in connection with her books about O'Neill written over a period of more than forty years, The Tempering of Eugene O'Neill (Harcourt, Brace & World, 1962), Eugene O'Neill's Creative Struggle: The Decisive Decade (1924-1933) (Pennsylvania State University, 1992), and Eugene O'Neill's Last Plays, Separating Art from Autobiography (University of Georgia, 2005). Since then many boxes of Professor Alexander's notes and other research materials have been shipped to Shain Library where they were unpacked and stored in acid-free containers to await further archival attention.

Professor Alexander's many years of reflection on the relationship between the actual facts of O'Neill's life and his use of artistic license in dramatizing episodes of his family history lead her to feel that there was a need for a fresh look at his biography and to clarify some of the facts about his life that remained in error. Critic Thomas F. Connolly wrote in his review of Eugene O'Neill's Last Plays, Separating Art from Autobiography that "...it is a radical revision of O'Neill studies that shines a searchlight on fundamental problems that have interfered with our understanding of O'Neill. Alexander fearlessly argues that we have been held bound by our fascination



Doris Alexander

with his life and failed to grasp fully his artistry. Alexander's tone is so reserved, her demolition work so quiet and swift, that it leaves the reader breathless, a rare occurrence for scholarly work." This is an illuminating and very readable book.

Professor Alexander is retired from her position in the English department of the City University of New York and for many years she has made her home in Venice, Italy. She has also written and published about the work of Charles Dickens and other writers. She is also a good friend of Robert Proctor, professor of Italian at Connecticut College, whose influence we gratefully acknowledge in bringing this valuable resource to Connecticut College. The new Alexander-O'Neill Collection significantly enhances the research material available in Shain Library to O'Neill scholars.



THE FAME OF THE LEAR/CARSON COLLECTION SPREADS TO ESTONIA

The Friends of the Connecticut College Library

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Thanks to Susan Lindberg of College Relations for her assistance

This and other issues of the *Friends of the Library Newsletter* may be viewed online at http://digitalcommons.conncoll.edu/fol/

January 2008

Ever since the Lear/Carson Collection was given to Connecticut College by Linda Lear in 1998, the department of Special Collections and Archives has received hundreds of requests for information about Rachel Carson or for pictures of her. The centennial year of the birth of Rachel Carson was even busier than normal with many requests from television stations and from abroad. Other archives such as the Beinecke Library and the Chatham College Library have Carson image collections but it is not surprising that these requests come to us because when you "Google" Rachel Carson, www.rachelcarson.org is the site that pops up first and it leads directly to the phone number and email address of the curator of the Lear/Carson Collection.

One of the more unusual recent requests came from the editor of the magazine Eesti Loodus (Estonian Wildlife) which is published by an Estonian NGO. There is great concern about the state of the environment in Estonia and to mark the Carson centennial in their 2007 yearbook he asked for some images to illustrate an article about the author of Silent Spring, which I was happy to send as email attachments. In return the editor sent us a copy of the yearbook, a very professional and attractive hardbound publication that we will add to the Lear Book Collection. It looks like an interesting article and the Lear/Carson Collection is clearly identified as the source of the photographs. But it may very well be the only book written in Estonian in Shain Library!

Spring Semester EVENTS

As we send out the Winter issue of the *FOL Newsletter* a number of events for the Spring Semester are still in the scheduling and planning stage. Announcements with dates and more details will follow when they become available.

Bridging East and West: The Search for Japan in the Midst of Modernization. During the Fall Semester of 2007 Sydney LaLonde '08 worked with visiting instructor Takeshi Watanabe to create an exhibition of items from the Louis Black Collection of Japanese woodblock prints in the Cummings Art Center and the Shain Library Japanese print collection in Special Collections and Archives. Sydney's show will feature examples from the Shin-hanga art movement of the early 20th century. Shin-hanga means "new prints" and its practitioners revitalized traditional ukiyo-e art. This will be the first exhibition in 2008 in the display cases on the main floor of Shain Library and it will run from January 22 until February 14. An announcement will be mailed in January with more details about the show and the date of the opening.

Exhibiting Activism from the Holleran Center for Community Action and Public Policy will be back in the library from February 15 through March 15. The focus this year will be on Teach for America. The opening program will take place during the Common Hour, 11:50 a.m. until 1 p.m. on February 15 in the Chu Room.

Richard Dey's chapbook collection will be the final exhibition of the semester. Mr. Dey is a poet, commercial fisherman, freelance journalist and editor and collector of chapbooks, the literary name for the booklet or pamphlet format that is often used today to publish poetry. Chapbooks are small and inexpensive but many of them have become valuable and collectible in the rare book market. The exhibit of Mr. Dey's collection and some chapbooks that belong to Special Collections and Archives will begin in March and continue through the end of the term. At the opening Mr. Dey will give a short presentation about this interesting genre. Mr. Dey is the father of Alexander Dey '09. An announcement and more details about the program will be released later.

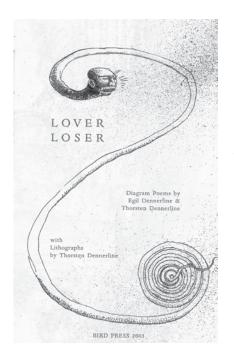
GRABHORN PRESS GIFT

One of the best known and most successful 20th century private presses in the United States is the Grabhorn Press. After starting in Indianapolis around 1915 under the name of the Studio Press, Edwin Grabhorn moved his shop to San Francisco in 1920. The period between the two world wars is considered to be the heyday of the private press movement, and much fine printing was done in California during this period for patrons such as the Book Club of California. For 45 years Edwin Grabhorn, his brother Robert and other members of the family produced dozens of beautifully designed and printed books. The Grabhorn Press later became the Arion Press, under the direction of Andrew Hoyem who apprenticed with the Grabhorns and who today continues the tradition of fine typography and book making.

Recently our library received a generous gift from Tess Peterson of Sugar Land, Texas of more than a dozen Grabhorn Press titles that greatly enhance the private press book collection in Special Collections and Archives. The typical Grabhorn Press book with its well chosen typography and illustrations combines a simplicity and beauty that make it delightful to read and to hold. The Grabhorn titles in the gift include some of the Shakespeare editions illustrated by Mary Grabhorn and the stunning *Four Poems of the Occult*, with drawings by Picasso, Leger, Tanguy and

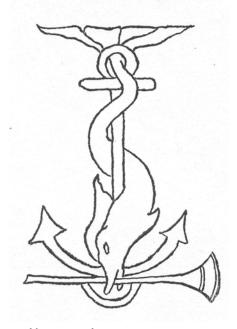
BIRD PRESS ACQUISITION

Lover Loser, the collaborative product of artist and bookmaker Thorsten Dennerline and his brother Egil, a member of the Connecticut College class of '97, is a beautiful recent addition to our collection of small private press books. A successful combination of traditional and digital bookmaking processes, *Lover Loser* has sixteen color lithographs printed on St. Armand handmade paper and overlaid with digital letterpress "diagram poems" printed on translucent Japanese paper. The book is beautifully bound by Barry Spence at the Open Book Bindery in Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts in red leather with a yellow open-sewn spine, and the handmade dropback box in gray cloth lined with black has the title mounted in the same red leather on the spine.



The Dennerlines write in the introduction: "These diagram poems are inspired by the ridiculousness of this human condition. In the tradition of Vicente Huidobro and Guillaume Apollinaire, the poems become drawings and are held together with lines, shapes and arrows. By printing texts on translucent papers, image and text are drawn ever closer. In this way, we add a depth and versatility of meaning to our impressions and lace them with a little bit of humor, because sometimes there is nothing to do but laugh."

Lover Loser was issued in an edition of 24 books signed by the Dennerlines and the book binder. The Shain Library copy is number 12. Thorsten is a member of the faculty at Bennington College and the publisher of a number of books under his own imprint of The Bird Press. Poet and musician Egil Dennerline lives in Denmark.



Grabhorn Press device

Arp. The donation also includes imprints from the Allen Press and The Book Club of California. Ms. Peterson's generous gift doubles our holdings of Grabhorn and Allen Press books. We are also grateful to professor Abby Van Slyck who suggested to her friend that she give these books to Shain Library.