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Friends of the Connecticut College Library

1-1-2009

Winter Newsletter 2009

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Recommended Citation

Deredita, Laurie M., "Winter Newsletter 2009" (2009). *Friends of the Connecticut College Library Newsletter*. Paper 21.
<http://digitalcommons.conncoll.edu/fo1/21>

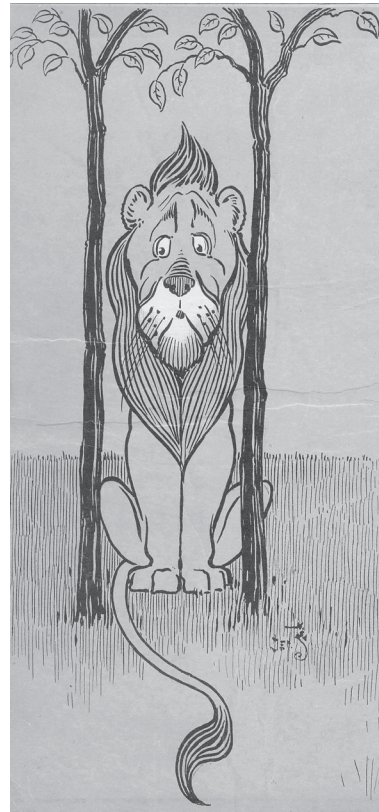
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MORE WIZARD OF OZ!

One of the treasures of the Gildersleeve Collection is the first edition of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900) by L. Frank Baum with illustrations by W.W. Denslow. So when an email message arrived at the end of July offering us a large collection of Wizard of Oz books and related material it did not take more than a few minutes to respond affirmatively. The collection described in Elissa Bromberg's email message had been collected by her father, William L. Bromberg. Mr. Bromberg, of Rockville Centre, New York, and a graduate of Yale and Columbia, was a school teacher in Long Island and active in community and professional theater. He was also a lifelong Ozophile. Before he died he expressed the wish that his Wizard of Oz collection, amassed over many years, should be given to a college or university that would value and maintain it, and make it available as appropriate to the student body for their edification and enjoyment. What better home than the Linda Lear Center for Special Collections and Archives at Connecticut College! Ms. Bromberg delivered her father's collection to Shain Library in August where it now awaits cataloging for the William L. Bromberg Wizard of Oz Collection.

Even though Connecticut College already has a fine collection of first editions of Baum's Oz titles and some works by other authors "founded on and continuing the famous Oz stories by L. Frank Baum", the Bromberg Collection significantly adds to our holdings. For example, Mr. Bromberg systematically collected every Oz and non-Oz title by Ruth Plumly Thompson, one of the first and most important of the Oz continuers, and titles by Baum's illustrator, John R. Neil, and even Oz books written by Baum's descendants. There are serial titles such as *The Oz Collector*, *Oziana* and *The Baum Bugle*; DVDs and video tapes of Oz movies; comic books and graphic novels; Oz figurines and games; and framed posters and prints. There is also a small collection of books about Baum and the Wizard of Oz phenomenon. In short, between the books and the ephemera, the Bromberg Oz Collection is a wonderful addition to special collections.

Some of the readers of this newsletter will remember the exhibition in 2002, "Interpreting Oz: Baum, Denslow, Moser and others", by Professor Charles Price, which focused on the illustrators of the Oz story and the opening lecture by Michael Patrick Hearn, author of *The*



The Cowardly Lion, by W.W. Denslow

Annotated Wizard of Oz. The story of the Wizard of Oz, published as a novel for children over a century ago, became an icon of American culture that has been reinterpreted countless times and has been read in many different ways. It may be time to give the Wizard another show at Connecticut College.

IT IS TIME TO RENEW

YOUR MEMBERSHIP IN THE FRIENDS OF THE CONNECTICUT COLLEGE LIBRARY!

Your membership for 2009, new or renewed, may now be sent in with the enclosed 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 2008 they included the Sound Lab Lecture about the changes that are transforming modern China by Howard W. French, senior writer for the New York Times and Shanghai Bureau Chief; *Visualizing* an exhibition of photography by Alex Hybel, the Susan Eckert Lynch '62 Professor of Government; *The Ubiquitous Chapbook*, an exhibition from the collection of Richard Dey; and several shows in the Chu Room including *Watercolors Through Eastern and Western Eyes: Paintings by Chiang Chien-fei*. Over the years support from the Friends has provided funding for hundreds of book and manuscript acquisitions, to underwrite the printing and mailing of this newsletter, postcard announcements of openings and lectures, and to pay for receptions and exhibitions. Since 1993, contributions from the Friends have supported a Library Scholarship that is awarded yearly to a Connecticut College senior or alumnus who is pursuing a graduate degree in library science, book conservation or archival management although no award was given in 2008. 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 and at Greer for those who contribute at the \$50 level and above, invitations to all Friends events and a subscription to the Newsletter.

2009 Friends of the Connecticut College Library Winter Newsletter

IN MEMORIAM CHARLES CHU (1918-2008)

With great sadness we note the passing of Professor Charles Chu on October 30. Much has been said about his many accomplishments at Connecticut College, chief among them his role in establishing a major in Chinese language and literature, but what happened in the years following his retirement was even more interesting. Charles was a gifted painter and calligrapher in the traditional Chinese ink and brush style, and he became convinced that Connecticut College needed to include the teaching of Chinese art in the art history curriculum. He dedicated much of his seemingly boundless energy during the years of his retirement to his vision of amassing a teaching collection of painting examples by traditional Chinese artists for the benefit of future students at the college.

The Chu-Griffis Asian Art Collection has been one of the library's "special" collections since 1987. When it was exhibited for the first time in 1988 it consisted of only nine scroll paintings. By 2008 it numbered nearly 250 items, chiefly 20th century Chinese artists but including Japanese prints, examples of Chinese calligraphy and a few Korean works. The dramatic growth of the collection was due to Charles's knowledge of traditional Chinese painting, his personal contacts among artists and collectors and his extraordinary ability to raise the money needed to build the collection. Together with his good friend and fellow collector Hughes Griffis and with financial support from the Griffis Foundation an excellent teaching collection was put together, unusual for a small college that did not even teach Chinese art. Eventually, through the generosity of his friends John and Heidi

Niblack, the Charles Chu Asian Art Reading Room was built in 2001 to provide display space for the Chu-Griffis Collection and to house a reference collection of books about Asian art. Finally, again through the generosity of the Niblack, an endowed position in the art history department was created to teach Asian art and to curate the Chu-Griffis Collection.

After he retired, Charles maintained a very strong interest in everything that happened at the college but nowhere did he feel more at home than in Shain Library where he knew all of the staff members and where he came frequently, usually with friends, to visit his beloved art collection in Special Collections. Charles never got to see the new Linda Lear Center for Special Collections and Archives but he would have been pleased to see that his scroll collection and the handsomely refinished scroll cabinets have an honored place in a beautiful new home. We miss him greatly.

There is no place like home!
哪兒也不如井底好
年已夏末
井底蛙
某年暴雨成灾井水溢出井底蛙終於見到了井外世界但是洪水退後井底蛙還是回到了井底它認為外面並沒有開口圓況且情誼文的實在太少



The Frog, by Wan Qing-li (gift of Kathy Willis)



THE LEAR CENTER COMPLETED

The last issue of this newsletter began with a description of the major renovation project that was about to transform the old special collections area on the second floor of Shain Library into the Linda Lear Center for Special Collections and Archives over the course of the summer. We are happy to report that the project was completed on time and within budget and the Lear Center opened for business the second week of September. Since then the Lear Center has been a busy place with classes held in the Palmer Room and dozens of students and researchers using the resources of the merged collections in special collections and the college archives. In fact, on more than one occasion a class or a meeting has taken place in the Palmer Room at the same time that researchers are studying in the reading room.

The public areas of the Lear Center are visible through the large glass windows and doors that line the corridor at the top of the main staircase. The interior of the carpeted reading room presents a serene and tranquil atmosphere with the book lined Palmer Room visible in the background through another set of floor-to-ceiling glass walls. The décor is elegant but functional and the subdued lighting is conducive to reading and studying. The floor plan is open yet intimate. There is something about this new space that seems to welcome visitors and researchers to come in and to lower their voices when they enter. Visitors are attracted by the displays in the new exhibit cases and by the art works on the walls, currently paintings by Old Lyme artist William Chadwick. Although the Lear Center has the atmosphere of an old-fashioned library reading room the advantages of modern technology are available. At the flip of a switch a digital projector and a screen drop down from the ceiling in the Palmer Room, and the tables in the reading room are generously equipped with electrical outlets for connecting laptop computers. Internet access is wireless. You will find more information and photographs in the "Lear Center Project" blog on the Lear Center home page.

SPRING SHOWS PLANNED FOR THE CHU ROOM

Charles Chu's recent death has inspired plans for a major retrospective show of his work in the Chu Room as a way to honor his memory and his artistic legacy. The exhibition, to be curated by Chu-Niblack Associate Professor of Art History Qiang Ning, will be called "Remembering Charles Chu through His Paintings." The paintings will be borrowed from the Chu family and from many members of the Connecticut College community. The owners will be asked to write about what the paintings mean to them or about how they acquired them thus creating a series of personal narratives about Charles' life and work that will be displayed next to the paintings.

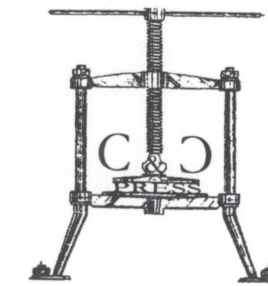
Another show with the same title is scheduled for exhibition at the Lyman Allyn Museum. It will take place around the same time as the Shain Library show and also be curated by Professor Ning but the paintings for the show in the museum will be borrowed from people in the wider regional community. The dates for the exhibitions will be announced when more information becomes available pending determination by the Chu family of a date for a memorial service for Charles at the college.

Two more shows are scheduled for later in the semester. Professor Ning's Modern Chinese Art course will choose items from the Chu-Griffis Collection for a show organized by the students. After that, Jennifer Wang'11 will curate an exhibition of calligraphy that features the work of Charles Chu and her grandfather, artist Wang Fangyu. This show will create a narrative of a friendship that spans three generations and two continents. Dates and times will be announced later.

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

C & C Press of Salinas, California is a new press established in 2005 and co-owned and operated by Matt Cohen and Sher Zabaszkiewicz. Luis J. Rodriguez is a leading Chicano writer, poet and multi-cultural activist. Their collaboration to create *Seven*, a letterpress printed limited edition of seven unpublished poems by Rodriguez, began when the two young artists, who were undergraduate Art Studio majors at the time, attended a reading of his poetry at the University of California at Santa Barbara. There they studied many aspects of the book arts and became fascinated by the possibilities offered by the artists book, in particular the juxtaposition of word and image. On his web site Matt Cohen explains what is unique about the artists book as opposed to other artistic genres: "You can physically put a painting, a drawing, or a photograph into a book, but you cannot physically place a book into any of these. The book has thus been a vehicle to express our interest in all areas of art, whether it is print, photography, sculpture, painting, drawing or digital media. The book represents a powerful and stimulating way to combine the different artistic mediums that are often disparate and simultaneously opportune for interaction."

In *Seven*, one of three C & C Press collaborations with Rodriguez, they have created a book in which structure, design and content harmoniously integrate the poet's text with Aztec images that reference his cultural background. The young artists of C & C Press are purists who do all of their own bookmaking. They even make their own paper! In *Seven* the handmade paper end sheets were made from the poet's tee-shirts. One of the more interesting features of this book is the wire edge binding technique, developed by Daniel E. Kelm, that lets each page lie motionless and completely flat, allowing the reader the opportunity to pause, reflect and understand the meaning of each poem. This lovely book,



Top: Illustration in *Seven*
Bottom: C&C Press device

signed copy number 33 of an edition of 50, was purchased by the endowed fund established in memory of Charles Price.

Angela Lorenz is a gifted American book artist who has lived and worked in Bologna since 1989. *Life, Life, Eternal Life: Uncle Wiggily Meets the Pilgrim's Progress*, created in an edition of 17 copies in 2006, is an elaborate "board game" based on her interpretation of the famous Christian allegory *Pilgrim's Progress*, first published in 1678 by John Bunyan. Although rarely read today, *Pilgrim's Progress* is considered to be one of the most significant works of English literature and it has never been out of print. It was enormously popular and influential for many generations. Using modern and antique fabrics, buttons, pen nibs, book pages, Velcro, gum wrappers, safety pins and other recycled objects and materials, Lorenz has painstakingly fashioned a visual and allegorical

representation of Bunyan's book in which every detail is significant. The book/game comes in its own linen pillowcase because the story unfolds in a dream. The strap inside converts the pillowcase into a pilgrim's bag that may be worn by the players. A golden crown holds the unopened accordion fold cloth book in place. Once the book is opened, the crown is worn by each player in turn and, at the end, is placed just beyond the gates of the Celestial City. It took Ms. Lorenz two years to research, design and create this book. It was purchased in August, 2008 using money from the Brian D. Rogers and Friends of the Library endowed funds.

EXCITING DANCE HISTORY PROGRAM SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 2009

Paul Taylor and the History of Dance at Connecticut College, planned for March 23 to April 27, is an exhibition in Shain Library that will draw heavily on the rich resources in the American Dance Festival and other dance history collections in the college archives, reflecting the thirty year period from 1948 to 1978 when the ADF and School of Dance were located at Connecticut College during the summer. On April 1, Suzanne Carbonneau, a performance critic and historian who is writing a biography of Paul Taylor, and Norton Owen of the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival will give a public lecture in the Charles Chu Asian Art Reading Room, followed by a reception. This program has been arranged by Rob Richter, Director of Arts Programming, and Nova Seals, Librarian for Special Collections and Archives. In addition, there will be an OnStage at Connecticut College performance by the Paul Taylor Dance Company in Palmer Auditorium at 8 p.m. on April 3.

The Friends of the
Connecticut College Library

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Thanks to Susan Lindberg for her assistance

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Library Newsletter* may be viewed online at
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January 2009