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Friends of the Connecticut College Library

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Fall Newsletter 2011

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2011 FRIENDS of the CONNECTICUT COLLEGE LIBRARY *Fall Newsletter*

CHARLES E. SHAIN LIBRARY ♥ GREER MUSIC LIBRARY ♥ LINDA LEAR CENTER FOR SPECIAL COLLECTIONS & ARCHIVES

LOST AND FOUND

You never know what you are going to find at the bottom of a box of books. There are roughly fifty boxes of books in the Lear Center for Special Collections & Archives awaiting processing. Many of them contain gift books being considered for inclusion in the collection. Others have items pulled from the shelves of the circulating collection and recommended for transfer to Special Collections. Still others contain books already in Special Collections that a librarian has flagged because of issues over their identification or cataloging.

It was in a box containing a mixture of gift books and old cataloging problems that a remarkable discovery was made. Tucked between a set of annual magazines containing stories for young Australian children and a biography of an Episcopalian missionary to the Navajo was a book of extraordinary rarity and value: a medieval manuscript containing religious music and texts.

The manuscript was one of four medieval manuscripts given to the College by Cornelia Palmer from her late husband Elisha's collection. Elisha's books together

with those of his brother George formed the Palmer Collection. In the early years of the College, the Palmer Collection was generally unused and consequently the manuscripts were largely un-

*A five
hundred
year old
manuscript
rediscovered
after over
fifty years.*

known. By the time the Library formally created a department of Special Collections in the 1970s, the manuscripts were gone and few people working in the Library were even aware that they had ever existed. That we know anything about Connecticut College's collection of medieval manuscripts is largely due to the investigative work of Alice Schroeder, a Return to College student who came to do research in the Library in 1989.

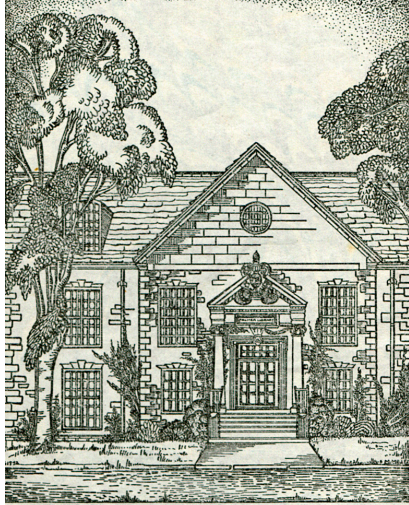
She happened upon correspondence between the College and the Frick Gallery concerning the Frick's desire to photograph the College's collection of medieval manuscripts. Checking the card catalog, Schroeder found no reference to the manuscripts, yet an authoritative census of medieval and renaissance manuscripts in North America prepared by Seymour De Ricci in 1935 indicated that there were four

continued on back page



TOP: Opening page to the newly rediscovered medieval manuscript, the gold and ink are worn because the book was probably unbound and the text was exposed to the elements.

BOTTOM: Gold F with butterfly for an antiphon during a procession for the Feast of the Assumption.



THE PALMER LIBRARY CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

The Friends of the
Connecticut College Library
<http://www.conncoll.edu/is/10875.htm>

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

This newsletter was designed by Susan Lindberg.

September 2011



CONNECTICUT
COLLEGE

FALL EXHIBITIONS

IN THE SHAIN LIBRARY EXHIBIT AREA

Demonstration, Engagement, Protest: A Century of Student Activism at Connecticut College

As on other campuses, students at Connecticut College have always used their years in school to try to make the world a better place. Although most people identify campus activism with the turbulent 1960s, student engagement at Connecticut College extends back before this famous period of protests and demonstrations to the very beginning of the College. From the Armistice marches of 1918 and the Farmerettes in the very early days to the Liberty Bond drives and student organized watches and patrols during the Second World War, Connecticut College students have engaged with the outside world in a variety of ways.



IN THE CHARLES CHU ASIAN ART READING ROOM

At Work and At Play: Images of Daily Life from the Chu-Griffis Collection of Asian Art

From shepherds tending their flock to old men kicking at a colorful ball, the Chu-Griffis Collection of Asian Art features many images of daily life in China and Japan. This exhibit will feature a wide variety of art demonstrating the themes of work and leisure from across the entire collection, including traditional literati watercolors, colored Japanese woodcuts, and contemporary folk paintings.



IN THE LINDA LEAR CENTER FOR SPECIAL COLLECTIONS & ARCHIVES

The Art of the Woodcut

Woodcut illustration has been a staple of printed illustration since before the advent of moveable type. The Lear Center has an extensive collection of woodcut illustration as part of its strong holdings in fine-press printing. This has been enhanced through a donation of books from the estate of Charles Price, Professor of Art at Connecticut College, as well as through an endowed fund Price established for the purchase of fine illustrated materials. This exhibit features illustrations from the 15th century to the important scientific work of the wood engraver Thomas Bewick, the revival of woodcut illustration by the Golden Cockerel Press and its many imitators, and the work of contemporary artists.



PROMOTING STUDENT RESEARCH

Student honors papers represent the high quality of academic research performed at Connecticut College. From Dora Milenky's voluntary deposit of her study of the comedies of Plautus and Molière in 1925 through the 2010 academic year, over a thousand student theses have been added to the Library's collection. As a special collection, the theses may only be consulted in the Linda Lear Center for Special Collections & Archives.

In order to provide students increased visibility for their honors papers, the Library began offering them the option of archiving their papers online in Digital Commons. While only a small number of students exercised this option at first, those who did saw incredible interest from the global community in their research. Twenty student honors papers have been accessed over a thousand times and some are downloaded on average about once every five hours. While most papers are downloaded by users in the United States, a significant number of requests come from Canada, Great Britain, France, Germany, and Japan.

This year, faced with dwindling space and wanting to promote accessibility, the Library requested that students be required to archive their papers electronically. Because some of the research may be used in the future for books, journal articles, or patent applications, or may be of a sensitive nature, students and their advisors were given the option of preventing the honors paper from being downloaded by users off campus. About half of the seniors exercised this option. Those who chose to make their papers public to the world have already seen great interest in their research, with some papers having been read over a hundred times just since the end of the last school year. A complete list of the publicly accessible papers may be found at <http://digitalcommons.conncoll.edu/honors/>.

NEW ACQUISITIONS

Our Dominican Processional is not really a new acquisition, but this manuscript is new to everybody at Connecticut College and it deserves to be highlighted. The manuscript was written on vellum

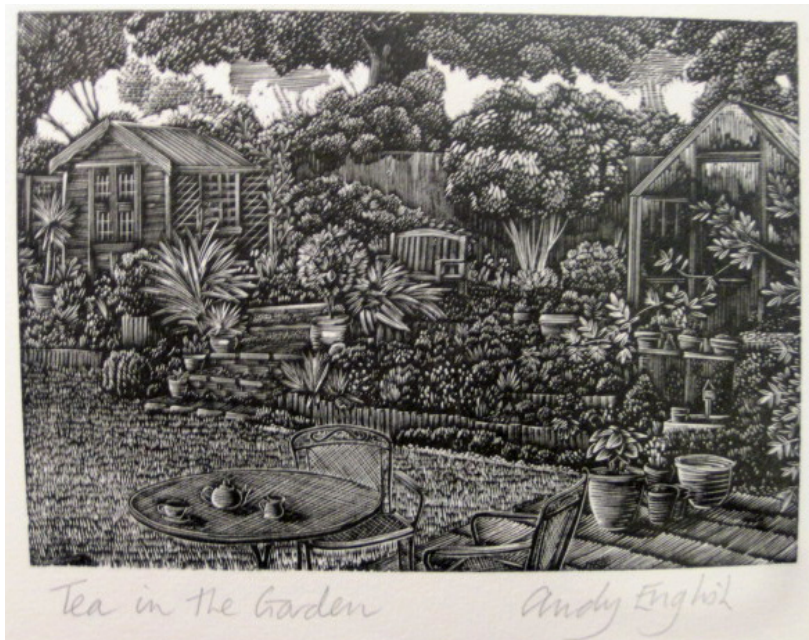
(a fine prepared animal skin) in Latin and French and contains texts and music for the opening processions for Sunday services, saints' feast-day celebrations, and other religious holidays. It contains the service for the initiation of nuns, texts for the feast days of St. Dominic and many of his followers, and has the text for the feast of St. Romain, the patron saint of Rouen, France. From this, it can be reasonably inferred that

the manuscript belonged to the royal monastery of Saint Mathieu dit les Emmureés, the only Dominican convent for women in or around Rouen. It contains texts for the feast of the Dominican bishop St. Anthony of Florence (canonized in 1523) but not for the Dominican scholar St. Raymond of Pennafort (canonized in 1601), meaning that it was probably created at some point in the middle of the 16th century. There are no full-page illuminations as such, but the initial letters for each text are gilt and adorned with multi-colored botanical themes.

Surroundings is a collection of illustrations by fourteen different wood engravers from across North America and Europe who were invited to submit their artistic responses to the theme of "surroundings." The result is fourteen separate treatments of their immediate environment featuring radically different uses of the technique of woodcut illustration. Interpretations include a still-life of a window-sill, an artist's studio, a child surrounded in a corn maze, and several landscapes. Each illustration in this fine press, limited edition book is signed by the artist.

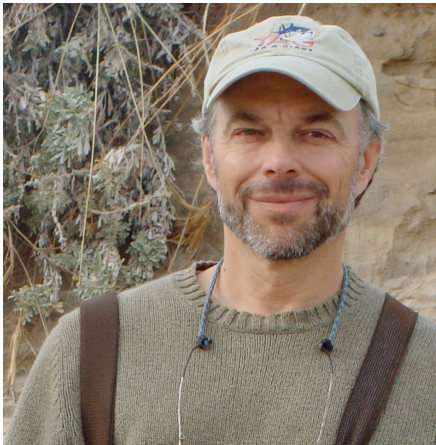


Gold I for the beginning of the opening antiphon for the Feast of the Epiphany.



Wood engraving by Andy English entitled Tea in the Garden.

CARL SAFINA TO BE 2011 SOUND LAB SPEAKER



Noted ecologist and conservationist Carl Safina will deliver the 2011 Sound Lab Memorial Foundation Lecture on Nov. 17, 2011. The lecture is scheduled for

7 p.m. in the Ernst Common Room in Blaustein Hall. The lecture is free and open to the public and is supported by the Friends of Sound Lab and the Friends of the Connecticut College Library.

Carl Safina is the author of six books dealing with the health and well-being of the oceans and marine life, including *Eye of the Albatross*, which won awards for nature writing and science writing, and *Voyage of the Turtle* and *View from Lazy Point*, both of which merited selection as Editors' Choice books in the *New York Times Book Review*. His lyrical style and ability to communicate complex scientific ideas to a broad readership have earned him comparisons to Rachel Carson. Safina is co-founder and president of the Blue Ocean Institute, a Long Island based

conservation organization that seeks to use literature, art, and science to educate people about the crucial importance of protecting the oceans. He is a MacArthur fellow, a senior World Wildlife Fund fellow, and winner of the Pew Scholar's award among many other awards. A complete biography, list of books, and links to other conservation resources may be found at his website: <http://carlsafina.org>.

LOST AND FOUND

continued from front page

medieval manuscripts in the possession of the College.

Schroeder managed to locate a librarian who had been working at the College in the 1940s and 1950s and her hazy recollection provides the little that we know about the manuscripts' disappearance. In the early 1950s, an independent scholar unaffiliated with the College began using the Palmer collection. He became familiar to the library employees, who trusted him and allowed him to use the collection unsupervised, even giving him a key to the locked cabinets. After he had been using the collection for a while, librarians noticed that several medieval manuscripts and a letter from Horace Walpole were missing.

A complaint was brought to the police who, in the course of investigating, discovered that the researcher was also suspected in a theft from the Connecticut State Library. Schroeder inquired with the police, the college's attorneys from the 1950s, and the State Library, but without the name of the suspect or even the approximate date of the complaint, she was unable to

find out what the outcome of any investigation might have been. We will never know whether the suspect went to trial or what happened to the manuscripts he was accused of taking. As was the standard practice at the time, the College quietly removed any records of the manuscripts from the card catalog and pretended that they had never existed.

How the manuscript ended up in a box with gift books to be processed is a mystery that will probably never be solved. Did the thief not know about it? If not, why did he leave it behind? Did librarians remove it from the shelves of the Palmer Collection to protect it and then forget about it? Or did they not know what they had on their hands and couldn't recognize it as one of the missing manuscripts? Or maybe the thief suffering from a guilty conscience sent the manuscript back in the guise of a gift book. OK, so we don't really believe that, but we do know that we are happy to have our missing manuscript back, however it happened. And we are enthusiastically processing the remaining fifty boxes in the hopes that one of the three medieval manuscripts still missing may be among the treasures discovered.

FRIENDS OF THE CONNECTICUT COLLEGE LIBRARY MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Friends of the Connecticut College Library runs from January 1 to December 31, but it is never too late to join or renew your membership. The dues from the Friends are used to support the acquisition and preservation of materials, lectures, exhibitions, receptions, mailings, and scholarships.

If you wish to join, download a form at <http://www.conncoll.edu/IS/10886.htm> or contact Benjamin Panciera at bpancier@conncoll.edu or by calling 860-439-2654.

Membership has the following levels, named for important benefactors at the College's founding: Bolles (\$500), Palmer (\$250), Plant (\$100), Gildersleeve (\$50), and Wright (\$25). For recent graduates there is also a Young Alumni level (\$10). All members receive the newsletter and invitations to lectures and other events. Those who contribute more than \$50 will also receive borrowing privileges at both the Charles E. Shain and the Greer Music Libraries. Those who contribute at or above the \$100 level will receive a set of Friends of the Connecticut College Library bookplates and for a gift of \$250 or more, we will personalize the bookplates.