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DiMenna-Nyselius Library

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Beyond the Stacks

The DiMenna-Nyselius Library Newsletter

Summer/Fall 2021, Volume 2, Issue 1

fairfield.edu/library



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The DiMenna-Nyselius Library Building Turns 20!

by Elise Bochinski, University Archivist

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the renovation and expansion project that made the DiMenna-Nyselius Library a focal point for the intellectual life of our campus. The original library building, named in honor of benefactors Gustav and Dagmar Nyselius, opened its doors in 1968 and featured room for 300,000 books, two typing rooms, and a smoking area. Over the years it had seen many changes: the first full-time reference librarian in 1968, the first woman to serve as University Librarian in 1974, as well as the library's first computer lab (consisting of eight Apple computers) in 1986.

But now it was the late 1990s, and the building was starting to show its age. After long and careful planning on the part of University Librarian James Estrada and Director of Library Services Joan Overfield, groundbreaking for an expanded and renovated building took place in July 1999. This tremendous undertaking was supported largely by a gift from alumnus and Fairfield University Board of Trustee member Joseph

A. DiMenna, Jr. '80. The librarians donned hardhats and adjusted to the construction area, as excavators dug into the earth to lay the foundation for a new state-of-the-art library that would virtually double the size of the old structure. The new building would feature capacity for 450,000 books, space for 900 seats, numerous group study rooms, two computer labs, a 90-seat multimedia auditorium, a cafe, various comfortable places to study and much, much more.

The newly renovated DiMenna-Nyselius Library opened its doors in the fall of 2001. Since then, we have seen even more changes. In 2019, the Library welcomed new campus partners into the building as part of the Academic Commons, a one-stop shop for student academic support services. In this way, the DiMenna-Nyselius Library continues its commitment to innovation and excellence.

Later in this issue, Joan Overfield, Dean of Libraries & University Librarian Emerita, shares her reminiscences from 20 years ago, when the Library transitioned into the new millennium. ■

Message from the Dean

I was a reference librarian at the University when we opened the renovated and expanded DiMenna-Nyselius Library in 2001. What a joy to share the article written by my mentor, Joan Overfield, Dean of Libraries & University Librarian Emerita. Looking at the scrapbook photos and reading the articles in this issue gave me an opportunity to reflect on those twenty years, and think about how we have changed and evolved as a library, and as a university. This summer and into the fall, the library staff has actively participated in retreats and in meetings to develop our roadmap for the future, our strategic plan, which we will share with the University community in 2022.

Please enjoy this issue of *Beyond the Stacks* in which we mark an important anniversary, recognize the student winners of the 2021 library research prize, highlight one of our staff members and his contributions to the University, and celebrate a milestone that our institutional repository surpassed.

Sincerely yours,
Christina S McGowan, MSLIS
Dean of the Library & University Librarian



The 2021 Library Research Prize

In May, we awarded the 12th annual Library Research Prize to Aarushi Vijay '22 and Jerri Bell '21, who topped the undergraduate and graduate categories, respectively. The award ceremony took place over Zoom on May 5th with an audience that included Fairfield University Deans, President Nemec, Provost Siegel, library staff, faculty, staff, students, and community members, who came together to celebrate our accomplished scholars and to hear more about their research.

Graduate Winner

Jerri Bell '21



Jerri Bell, the winner of the graduate Library Research Prize, was recognized for her research project, “The Golden Fourteen: How the Navy’s First African American Yeomen (Female) Fought Back Against White Supremacy”, which will soon become a book from the University of Nebraska Press/Potomac Books. She is completing a Masters in Fine Arts in Creative Writing with a dual concentration in Fiction and Non-Fiction in the College of Arts and Sciences and has conducted extensive research for her project under the guidance of Professor Eugenia Kim. The book is the story of the first African American women to serve in the US armed forces. Bell submitted a preface and the book’s first chapter as her prize submission. The preface covers the difficulty of uncovering women of colors’ stories in the military which involved digging through more than 1,000 pages of military service records, census and genealogy records, and other primary source documents.

Undergraduate Winner

Aarushi Vijay '22



Aarushi, our undergraduate Library Research Prize winner, submitted her paper “Analyzing Contemporary Indian adaptations of Shakespeare: Shakespeare as a medium for social and political commentary in a post-colonial India.” This project was done for a Humanities Seminar advised by Dr. Robert Epstein. Aarushi is a junior Computer Science and Professional Writing major in the School of Engineering. In her prize essay, Aarushi describes using library resources like she never had before, citing a wide array of sources such as plays, journal articles, newspaper articles, and critical analyses she found through various library databases. As a remote student, she also utilized the 24/7 library chat service where librarians helped her find resources in our collection and to identify resources to interlibrary loan. She says, “The use of interlibrary loan services expanded my research and helped me develop new ideas which would have been impossible without these loaned items.” She is “really thankful to the Library services for making this project possible, remotely, even during a pandemic.”

To read exclusive interviews with Jerri and Aarushi, please visit bit.ly/researchprizewinners or scan this QR code





Recapping the Summer Reading Challenge

Over 30 students, faculty, and staff participated in this year's Summer Reading Challenge, which ran from May 16 to August 20. Participants were invited to set goals for the number of books they thought they could read in that span of time. People could read whatever their hearts desired: romance novels, serious literature, historical fiction, comics, YA books, anything. Every book read was an entry into a raffle

with prizes provided by the Library, the Fairfield University Bookstore, and the Health & Wellness committee.

This year a total of 373 books were read with an average of 11 books per participant. One person read 36 books! In addition to reading, participants logged their books in a shared Quip document where they were encouraged to have conversations with each other about the books they were reading.

The Quip document, along with

Lattes with Librarians virtual events -- where participants met via Zoom to talk about their summer reading - - were great ways to connect with each other and discover new books to add to our 'to-read' lists. ■

Stay tuned for the Winter Reading Challenge or contact Lisa Thornell, Student Engagement & Outreach Librarian, at lthornell@fairfield.edu to learn more!

Reflections on the DiMenna-Nyselius Library's 20th Anniversary

by Joan Overfield, Dean of Libraries & University Librarian Emerita

What comes to mind first is the tremendous support of the entire campus for the library project. When I arrived in 1974, the library was fairly new. By the mid-1990s, the building was bursting at the seams and the shelves were packed. The student population had grown and there was increased demand for materials, study space, and services. There had been some small facelift projects between 1974 and 1995. These included a more welcoming lobby, microfilm was moved to the lower level, a small computer room was opened, and there was some re-carpeting on the main level. But the building was looking tired and no longer adequately served the increased demands by a growing student population and new academic offerings.

What excited me about the building project was the opportunity to dream and design spaces for new services. The entire staff was enthusiastically involved in the planning. All services continued during the renovations—quite a feat at various points. My minivan took staff on trips to several new building projects at other academic

libraries and we debated about what we would like to incorporate in our project. We dreamed of better equipped and expanded space for media, a 24/7 computer lab, a cafe, a dedicated room to support library research instruction, a conference room, and an auditorium to be used by the entire campus for smaller programs. We dreamed of expanded and more visible service desks. We dreamed of private rooms for small groups to collaborate, more efficient staff work spaces, and offices where librarians could meet privately with faculty and students to coordinate instruction efforts and new collaborations. And, we dreamed of space to expand our growing physical collections!

When the expanded and renovated building opened in 2001, our usage counts jumped in all areas. When finals came, study spaces throughout the building were fully utilized—a wonderful sight!

Working with the architects and the construction team was a fantastic professional experience for me. We were so fortunate to have a construction manager that was, and

is, a true book lover—David Frassinelli. I remain grateful to James Estrada for asking me to oversee the day-to-day challenges of the project and work so closely with library staff and the project team. I learned so much that I was able to put into use with future renovations over the next 16 years. The building design was flexible enough to allow for various focused renovations as we added space for the Center for Academic Excellence, ITS, tutoring, graduate study space, shared student work spaces with large monitors, and compact shelving to name a few. As the campus grew and changed, the library was able to anticipate and meet new needs as a full academic partner. ■



Joan Overfield



RENOVATION SCRAPBOOK

Groundbreaking Ceremony for the expansion takes place on June 3, 1999. Pictured left to right are Scott Simpson, Stubbins Associates, Dr. Mary Frances Malone, Assoc. Academic Vice President, faculty member Dr. Jesús Escobar of the Library Building Committee, Joan Overfield, Assoc. University Librarian, William Gilbane Jr., Vice President Gilbane, and Ric Taylor, Director of Campus Operations.



THE DIMENNA-NYSELIOUS
LIBRARY



FAIRFIELD UNIVERSITY



Builders work in the rain on the exterior construction of the new building, December, 1999. The expansion was designed by Stubbins Associates and built by Gilbane.

Program for the groundbreaking ceremony for the DiMenna-Nyselius Library, June 3, 1999

For the full scrapbook, visit:
bit.ly/renovationscrapbook



The lighting fixtures are already in place in the new extension of the library. Photo: Amy Womack

Grand Opening

Library extension to open soon

By Kelly DiMario
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Construction workers furiously sawed unfinished furniture and hammered the last of the light fixtures this week in a rush to complete the new addition of the DiMenna-Nyselius Library for this Monday, February 19.

The new portion of the library will open for use at the same time the currently operating portion will close for

renovations. The purpose of the construction is not only to increase the size and style of the library, but also to change the focus of campus. The University has intentionally made the library the most well lit structure on campus to make it the center of attention.

"It is a beacon," says Vice President for Information Services and University Librarian James Estrada. "There was an intention to make that beacon visible."

Fairfield University was denied a Certificate of Occupancy for Feb. 6, which would have given the school permission to open the new structure. The smoke evacuation needed to be completed and the sprinkler system needed more testing. The school still needs to obtain the Certificate of Occupancy to open next week, but Estrada said he did not expect any problems.

Anxiety is building among students and faculty who have been enduring the arduous construction process which began over the summer of 2000. The new portion was supposed to have been open for the two weeks of finals before winter break in December.

No more Napster?



With the framework of the new addition established, we begin to see the new library take shape. April, 2000.

Front page article from Fairfield Mirror, Vol. 26., Issue 16. Published February 15th, 2001



Library staff tour the construction site with the architects to survey the ongoing construction of the new library, June 2000. Library staff includes: Eleni Skokos, Chris Dunham, Christina McGowan, Angela Courtney, Grace Bissenden, Helen Lucas, and Mona Hefzallah.

Program

- WELCOME
 - Dr. Orin L. Grossman
*Academic Vice President
Master of Ceremonies*
- OPENING PRAYER
 - Rev. Charles H. Allen, S.J.
Executive Assistant to the President
- REMARKS
 - Rev. Aloysius P. Kelley, S.J.
President
 - James A. Estrada
*Vice President for Information Services
and University Librarian*
 - Joan T. Overfield MA'79
Director of Library Services
 - Lara M. Eckler '02
Alpha Sigma Nu
 - Dr. Jesús R. Escobar
*Past Chairman, Faculty Library Committee
Assistant Professor of Art History*
 - Joseph A. DiMenna, Jr. '80
*University Trustee
Managing Director,
Zweig DiMenna Associates LLC*
- Ribbon Cutting
- Reception and Tours

Program for the dedication ceremony for the DiMenna-Nyselius Library, October 4, 2001



Libraries Love Lakes Collaboration

by Dr. Jen Klug, Professor of Biology

Libraries Love Lakes is an outreach project which pairs school and public libraries with lake scientists to provide collaborative programming emphasizing the importance of lakes in our everyday lives. By providing libraries with programming, training, and event resources, *Libraries Love Lakes* hopes to encourage a lifelong appreciation of lakes in their patrons. The project was started by members of the Global Lakes Ecological Observatory Network (GLEON) in 2019. The leadership team includes myself and Teresa Sauer '20 along with Nadia Harvieux,

Education and Outreach Specialist at the Finger Lakes Institute at Hobart and William Smith Colleges and Olenka Duncan, a University of Vermont student.

At the DiMenna-Nyselius Library, Mat Blaine, Research and Outreach Librarian, and Lilah Heyman '21 worked with me to create a book display and digital resources for patrons. Additionally, the team created a series of lake-related trivia to post on the Library's Instagram Stories. Other participants included public libraries in Connecticut, New York, and Vermont. Examples of their programming include story times,



Display in the Library, July 2021

craft activities, book displays, and educational flyers.

We are currently seeking funding to better support our library partners. If you'd like to learn more, contact Jen Klug (jklug@fairfield.edu). ■

If you would like to collaborate on an exhibit with the Library, please contact research@fairfield.edu

Over 500,000 Global Downloads from DigitalCommons@Fairfield

At the time of this writing, the research housed in DigitalCommons@Fairfield has reached over 573,000 global downloads.

DigitalCommons@Fairfield is an institutional repository maintained by the DiMenna-Nyselius Library that offers open access to the collected scholarship and creative works of Fairfield University faculty, students, and staff. The repository increases the visibility of the University's scholarship, maximizes its research impact, and provides worldwide access in order to further the University mission of expanding knowledge, deepening human understanding, and sharing expertise. Contributors have the opportunity to explore the impact of their individual scholarship as well, through metrics showing how many times their work has been downloaded, and from where in the world it has been viewed.



Screenshot of Readership Map on DigitalCommons@Fairfield. August, 2021

Interested faculty and staff can submit their work for inclusion in DigitalCommons@Fairfield by sending a copy of their CV or publications list to digitalcommons@fairfield.edu. Faculty are also encouraged to

get in touch about nominating exceptional student work for inclusion in the repository. ■

To learn more, visit:
digitalcommons.fairfield.edu



Get to Know: John Cayer, Interlibrary Services Coordinator

by Matthew Blaine, Research & Outreach Librarian

What better way to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Library renovation than to talk to the people who have contributed to its success not just as a library, but to the University as a whole. John Cayer, our Interlibrary Services Coordinator, is a perfect representation of how the Library goes above and beyond to ensure the academic success of our students, faculty, and staff, which is why I chose to ask him some questions to kick off this series. Here's what he had to say.



Hey John, why don't we start by having you tell us about yourself- how long you've been at Fairfield, how you spend your spare time, etc.

Oh my, I've been here for just over 23 years-- always in Interlibrary Services. Early on I used to split my time between here and actively working in professional theater. I also love to collect art and ephemera. I dabble in the kitchen (especially challenging, cultural cuisines). I'm a natural world junkie so the outdoors is home to me-- I garden, hike, cross-country ski. And writing has always been a passion of mine, poetry mostly.

How has your work changed over the years?

A lot! When I first started, requests were submitted handwritten— articles were sent and received were also in paper format which in turn we would forward to the patron via campus mail. No PDFs, no eBooks or digital content. Imagine that! It was all paper until the early 2000's when electronic transmission of content started to arise. Books are about the only thing that hasn't changed much, though the transmission of eBooks is on the horizon which will be a huge game changer. The pandemic has accelerated that reality for sure.

Do you see your work connected to the world of remote learning?

Oh, in a very big way. After all that is what we do— search for the content via the request a patron has submitted remotely, have that content delivered to us, verify that it is correct, then deliver that document to the user. It is all quite seamless and expedient.

What excites you about your job?

Well, that is twofold. Regarding our lending operation, Fairfield provides content to our partner libraries and many others around the world. That factor is often overlooked in the equation but really it balances out the service we get from libraries to fulfill our student and faculty needs. Now I'll speak to the borrowing aspect, which gives me the utmost satisfaction. Quite simply, I get a kick out of getting our users here at Fairfield the tools they need for their research. It might be an article from an esoteric medical journal or a chapter scanned from a rare book that a handful of libraries own. If a patron has a deadline or comes to us with an 'I need this yesterday' plea we'll bend over backwards to accommodate them. For instance, if it's later in the day we might seek out our West Coast partner libraries to fill that request. I've become accustomed to which libraries out there give us the best and quickest service so getting that content in time and of use is a pleasure.

So how far has something traveled to get to Fairfield?

For a book, Spain. With physical books, transit time and distance can be an enemy, making a loan unrealistic for a patron's use so we often look closer to home for that material or seek out chapter scans. As far as articles, we have received documents from Germany, South Africa, England, Canada, and Taiwan to name a few. Just last week we got an article from Shanghai. We have lots of partners throughout the US with whom we have reciprocal agreements in order to ensure quick processing of requests. Should the requested material not be available through these partnerships, we will search afar to honor a patron's request.

What have you been reading lately?

I was really floored by the passing of playwright Sam Shepard in 2017. I've been re-visiting some of his plays, some of which I was fortunate enough to work in. That and his last two prose works "The One Inside" and "Spy of the First Person". A fearless spirit that man possessed.

Finally, is there anything that you would like our readers to know about InterLibrary Services?

We are here to help...come to us and let us. You might be pleasantly surprised what we can get and how quickly we can get it. ■



A Year in Review: Highlights from the Annual Report

by Barbara Ghilardi, Assessment Librarian

In another year of unprecedented challenges and events, the Library continues to move forward and meet the needs of our University community. We continued to provide the services and resources necessary for the University's pivot to a hybrid teaching and learning environment due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Because we had to alter many of our services and workflows in order to accommodate the changes to hybrid teaching and learning, we created *Continuity & Creativity During COVID-19: A Timeline of Library Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic* to document how the Library's work, programs, and services were impacted by the pandemic.

Collaboration was seen across the Library staff through a number of different projects: technical services became more comfortable and accustomed to our integrated library systems platform, ALMA, and made great strides in improving workflow efficiencies.



Interlibrary services staff partnered with cataloging and collections staff to identify holdings from our e-book collections whose publishers allowed for digital lending of chapters. This allowed our remote users to make requests for this type of content. A number of staff across departments worked to bring forth our new home delivery service of physical items for remote learners.

In addition, we worked with other campus partners on projects such as the Faculty Research Resource Day, virtual and in-person student orientations, and a number of University history projects such as

50 Years of Women: Honoring the Past, Igniting the Future and the *Diversity and Inclusive Excellence at Fairfield University Timeline*.

The Library staff has begun the task of crafting a strategic plan with the help of consultants from Organizational Performance Group. This process will result in a new library mission statement, values, and a strategic plan which will guide the library's priorities for the next few years. We look forward to sharing the plan with our community in 2022! ■



DiMenna-Nyselius Library

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