'How wonderful that someone cared'

The following is an excerpt from a November 22 editorial by Jill Bernhard, editor-in-chief of the Coe Cosmos.

...As I write this in the Macintosh [computer] lab, second floor Hickok, four lovely paintings are hanging on the wall opposite. I don’t know why I never noticed them before. I guess I’m only here when a deadline is close at hand, not looking at anything but the monitor. But here these paintings are, brightening a room of rows and rows of keyboards and screens.

I also have been appreciating the artwork and architecture that makes Stewart Memorial Library such a showcase. I’m not normally comfortable in libraries; when I was three, a bookcase fell over, nearly crushing me, and I’ve been irrationally afraid of large collections of books ever since. But the big bay windows and the hardwood floors in Stewart are so beckoning. And the art—once I was struggling with some laws of optics on the main floor—what a thrill to look up to Einstein’s compassionate portrait. How wonderful that someone cared enough about being in the library to hang art there.

Someone cared enough to put the books in the library, too. One little book I opened on the top floor said on the title page that it was given “in memory of Alice King,” who taught English at Coe. How fitting, that someone would present a book on behalf of a teacher, so that Alice King may teach generations she could not live to see. That’s caring and beautiful...

Card catalog moves out after 60 years—computer access expands

It’s a matter of space and new technology.

At the same time Coe’s 60-year-old card catalog is moving out, Stewart Memorial Library’s computer connection with Fisher Music Library in Marquis Hall has at last been accomplished.

The 440-drawer wooden card catalog that served Coe library patrons since 1931 has been sold to the Iowa State Historical Society. After a refurbishing, the cabinet will again be in use in the society’s Iowa City headquarters.

Coe’s campus computer access, meanwhile, has been extended to include the 3,958 LP records and compact disks in the Fisher Music Library located in Marquis Hall.

“We never had room for a ‘union’ catalog before that combined the two collections,” explains head librarian Richard Doyle. “Now we have a terminal in Fisher Library that can access the main library collection, and vice versa. It’s a real breakthrough in terms of convenience for students and faculty alike.”

Another rapidly expanding collection is in the Stewart Library’s audiovisual department. Cedra Williamson directs that department, which today includes 781 videotapes for classroom use.

With the library’s automated circulation system in place and the audiovisual collection having grown to this level, students and faculty can now check out the audiovisual materials for their own use, just as they do books and periodicals.

“Feedback from the students has been very positive, and we haven’t had any problems with them not getting the tapes back on time,” says Williamson. “So far the system is working beautifully.”

For anyone concerned that Stewart Library is now completely high tech, there’s comforting news. Some cards from the card catalog were retained for items that are not available in machine readable form. Among the materials still cataloged on paper are some items from the audiovisual collection and an entire set of historic literature on microcards.

Memberships to Library Association received until June 30

Coe College is grateful to all who have responded to President Brown’s request for membership in the Coe College Library Association this year. Members who joined the group of contributors to the library’s acquisition fund before July 1, 1991, are listed in the fall issue of the Coe Courier.

Anyone interested in contributing $25 or more toward the purchase of new books for the library may still do so. Memberships for the 1991-92 year will be gratefully accepted at the college until June 30. Simply send your check and your intention to join CCLA to the Coe College Development Office, Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52402.
Six new art works come to Coe at Marvin Cone’s birthday party

The 100th anniversary of the birth of Marvin Cone was marked with a birthday party in the Perrine Gallery of Stewart Library. Winnifred S. Cone, widow of the artist, alumnus, and beloved professor, was among the guests—as were those responsible for the acquisition of six new works to Coe’s Permanent Collection of Art.

A birthday cake decorated to portray a whimsical self-portrait of Marvin Cone was served at the reception.

William Shuttleworth, chairman of Coe’s board of trustees, and Winifred Shuttleworth made a gift to Coe that allowed the college to acquire four new paintings. One of the works, “Strange to Me Now,” was painted by Cone in 1948 and is part of the well-known series of door paintings. Two other paintings, “Greene Square” and “Barns,” are by Richard Pinney, former director of public relations at Coe. And the fourth, “Coe Williston Hall,” was painted in 1946 by one of Cone’s students, Zora Paul DuVall ’47, a professional artist now living in the Chicago area. (All four of these works were formerly in the collection of Carl and Marilyn Chyle Kane ’40, ’42.)

Hualing Nieh Engle, widow of poet, educator, and 1931 Coe graduate Paul Engle, presented the college with a large charcoal drawing, “Stone Fruit,” done by Marvin Cone in the 1930s. This work is the only example in Coe’s collection of the stone fruit motif.

And finally, artist Peter Xiao, a 1984 Coe graduate, was present to give the college one of his recent paintings, “Domestic Nomads,” in memory of Paul Engle, a friend of his family. Xiao is an assistant professor of art at Augustana College and had an exhibition of his work at Coe this fall.

Top Right: Marvin Cone’s “Stone Fruit,” given to Coe by Hualing Nieh Engle in memory of Paul Engle ’31.

Lower Left: Marvin Cone’s “Strange to Me Now,” acquired by Coe through a gift from William and Winnifred Shuttleworth.

Top Left: Peter Xiao’s “Domestic Nomads,” given to the college by the artist in memory of Paul Engle ’31.
Paul Engle's papers yield opera libretto and true adventure account

Six cubic feet of personal papers from the late poet and educator Paul Engle '31 have come to Coe. The University of Iowa, where Engle taught and developed two internationally known writing programs, also received selected manuscripts and papers from the collection.

Among the pieces of correspondence, news clippings, and reviews coming to Coe were the original manuscript, typescript, and reader sheets for Golden Child. Engle wrote the libretto for this 90-minute folk opera, which premiered on the Hallmark Hall of Fame Christmas Show in 1960, and Philip Bezanson composed the music. Both men were on the University of Iowa faculty at the time.

"The opera is a tribute to women and the tremendous force they exerted in shaping the American frontier," says Randall Roeder, head of the library's technical services. Roeder has been examining and cataloging the Engle papers for the Coe collection since they arrived on campus this summer.

He also ran across a 1958 newspaper clipping that describes a frightening experience the Engle family had at their summer home in Stone City. Paul's first wife, Mary, was sewing one afternoon when two escapees from the state reformatory broke into the house and held her at knifepoint. Daughter Sarah came in soon afterward and was also held. Several hours later, Paul and daughter Mary came home and were also held hostage. Paul, according to the account, went upstairs and wrote two reviews for the Chicago Tribune. Just before midnight, the two convicts tied up the entire family with clothesline rope, cut the phone lines, and sped off in the Engle car. Sarah Engle slipped out of her spot, recovered a fingernail scissors she had hidden in her parakeets' cage, and cut the family loose.

"The kids were sharper than the cons," Paul Engle was quoted as saying when the episode was over.

Three additional works bring new acquisitions to nine

An abstract painting from the collection of Professor of English Emeritus Neal Woodruff and Christine Woodruff, was given to Coe by the couple when they retired to Pennsylvania this summer. The work is by Marvin Cone Professor of Art Robert Kocher, and is given in memory of former Coe Chaplain Larry Rickey.

Prof. Richard and Lois Bahwell have given the college "Studies for Dancers," a painting by former Coe art faculty member James Hurt.

An early Marvin Cone work, discovered by the Coe biology department, has also been added to the Cone collection. The work is a 1912 scientific drawing of a clam, which Cone evidently completed as a Coe student. It is the earliest known Marvin Cone work in existence.

Assistant professor of biology Kurt Redborg discovered the drawing, which is actually a wall chart, while cleaning out a department storeroom. "I looked at the drawing and thought, 'My, that's good!" Redborg recalls. "Then I examined it more closely and saw a date and signature--Marvin D. Cone, July, 1912."

Hualing Nieh visited with library director Richard Doyle during her first visit to the Coe archives this summer. She was able to see the display of Coe's collection of Paul Engle's publications and memorabilia selected for the reunion of his 1931 class.

"These papers are a nice addition to the Ada Stoflet collection of Engle clippings and articles which came to Coe in 1979," notes Roeder. (Miss Stoflet graduated from Coe in 1931 with Engle, earned her master's degree at Bryn Mawr, and maintained an extensive collection of clippings and articles on Engle throughout her many years as librarian at the University of Iowa. She died in 1976 and willed her collection of Engle papers to Coe.)

When Engle's widow, Hualing Nieh, visited the Coe archives in June to see the college's display of Engle memorabilia, she saw several things for the first time—the poem, "Girls in a Silver Basket," that Engle had written for his Coe professor Ethel Outland; a copy of Paul's Coe honors paper on John Keats and Leigh Hunt; a 1929 diary Paul had written in pencil; Cosmos articles written about and by Engle; and a copy of the book, Prairie Christmas.

Hualing recalled, sadly, that Paul never visited the newly remodeled and expanded Coe library before his death last March. "He always thought he'd make the trip later," she remembers, when travel out of the country, illness, or bad weather kept him from accepting several Coe invitations.

She adds that Paul always had a high regard for Coe College and said in recent years, "Without Coe, I would not be where I am today."
Book fund honoring Neal Woodruff reaches $10,000

An endowed fund honoring the Coe College teaching career of Prof. Neal Woodruff was established by friends and former students at his retirement from the English Department in May.

The fund has now grown to $10,000 and will be invested, allowing the income to be used each year to acquire new books for Stewart Memorial Library. Colleagues and family congratulated them at the May reception held in their honor at Coe. Neal taught English at Coe for 23 years, and Christine headed the psychology department at Mt. Mercy College.