

# COE BIBLIOPHILE

Fall 2008

A newsletter for members of the Coe College Library Association

## Coe Staff and Students Helping to Preserve Story of Epic CR Flood

The worst natural disaster in the history of Cedar Rapids happened when the Cedar River crested at 31 feet—20 feet above flood stage—on Friday, June 13, 2008. Flood waters swamped 1,300 blocks (a 9.2-square mile area), destroying or damaging 5,390 homes and 1,086 businesses and non-profit agencies. Not including the homes, flood damage estimates total nearly \$700 million. Though Coe's campus lies just outside the 500-year flood plain, the Physical Plant building was flooded, as well as a small apartment building and houses owned by the college on E Avenue NE.

Since July, The Carl and Mary Koehler History Center, The Cedar Rapids Gazette, and Coe College have been working together on a project called "Capturing History Alive, The Flood of 2008." The objective is to obtain for historic preservation as many artifacts, visual images, printed sources, digital sources and oral histories pertaining

to the flood as possible. The History Center is the depository for all items collected, the Gazette is compiling information organized by all the addresses of the flooded properties, and Coe is conducting oral histories of people affected by the flood.

The Oral History Project is being managed by library staff with assistance from other departments. "I did not hesitate at all when President Phifer called and asked that I lead the project," says Rich Doyle, director of library services. Jill Jack, head of reference and college archivist, and Laura Riskedahl, head of the Audiovisual Department, are also involved, training students on proper oral interview techniques and the use of video and audio recording equipment. Work grant students and students in communications courses will be conducting the interviews. The college television studio in the Audiovisual Department will be the location for on-campus interviews. Portable equipment

is also available for off-site interviews.

"Obviously, given the magnitude of the disaster, we cannot interview everyone impacted by the flood, so we hope to interview a sampling of individuals, citizens, business people and civic leaders," says Jack.

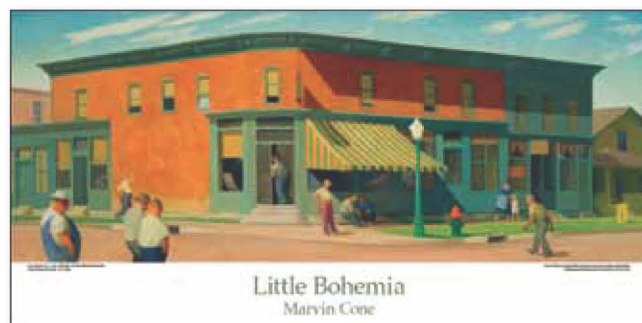


▲ The historical June flood reached Coe's Physical Plant building on the northwestern corner of the campus. As all power for the main campus is routed through that location, most of the campus was without electricity from June 12 through June 20, and the damaged electrical system went off again from July 11 through July 14.

## "Little Bohemia" Posters to Benefit Flooded Arts Organizations

The Little Bohemia bar, a familiar landmark (and destination) in Cedar Rapids' historic Czech Village area, was among hundreds of properties devastated by the June flooding in

eastern Iowa. It was also the subject of a Marvin Cone painting, "Little Bohemia Tavern," created in 1941 and purchased for the college's Cone collection in 1964 by the Fisher-Pilcher Fund.



Thanks to a joint effort by the Marvin Cone Art Club and Coe College, high-quality posters of the painting have been created for sale, with all proceeds to be donated to flood-damaged cultural and arts organizations in

the Cedar Rapids area through a special Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation flood-relief fund. The 18x36-inch poster costs \$50 plus \$4.50 shipping and handling. To order a poster and lend your support, send your name and information, along with a check made out to Coe College, to Cheri Pettibone, Stewart Memorial Library, 1220 First Ave. NE, Cedar Rapids, IA 52402—or stop by the library in person to save shipping costs.



## Elizabeth Coe Papers Come Home to Coe

Elizabeth Ann Coe '39, whose grandfather several generations removed was a brother to Daniel Coe, was immensely proud of her connection to the college's founding benefactor – a relationship that was clearly documented in her family genealogy book. While at Coe she also created a huge scrapbook packed with memorabilia – from report cards and academic citations to dance cards and Flunk Day posters, as well as notes and clippings about dozens of her Coe classmates. So when Head of Reference and Archives Director Jill Jack heard that the alumna's personal files had been found, she was eager to learn about what was contained there.

"I got a call from a man in Florida who buys storage units that no one has claimed," says Jack. He had discovered two cabinets full of Coe's papers and collections, with no contact information listed but ample references to her alma mater. After trying unsuccessfully to reach her survivors, Jack acquired portions of the collection for the college's George T. Henry College Archives. She describes the new collection as "a shelf's worth" of letters, scrapbooks, photos and family genealogy materials from the 1920s, 30s, 40s and 50s. "She kept a very detailed scrapbook of the 1930s, which was a difficult time to go to college because of the Depression," says Jack. "We didn't have a scrapbook from that era,



▲ Elizabeth Coe's recently acquired scrapbook is loaded with Coe College memorabilia from the late 1930s.

► While a student at Coe, Elizabeth Ann "Betty" Coe posed in front of a portrait of her distant forebear, college namesake and benefactor Daniel Coe.



and that's one reason I was interested in it, along with her connection to the Coe family. You lose your history over time, and when you can get back some of that history it adds to the value of the college and its lineage."

Betty Coe, as she was known in college, was a standout science student whose honor thesis in botany was titled, "New Species of Carboniferous Spores from the Des Moines Coals of Iowa." After graduating, she went on to teach and study botany at Duke University before marrying Coe classmate Darrel Costello '39. His career in military

intelligence led him to far-off places, sometimes accompanied by his wife.

"She was in Korea and Japan soon after the Korean War," Jacks notes, "and we have fewer resource materials about that than about World War II, telling us what was going on and how people felt about it." Elizabeth, who died in 2002 at age 88, also corresponded with countless friends and family members. "This was not a woman who lost track of people," laughs Jack, as she considers the processing challenge that lies ahead.

## Support for a Vital, Behind-the-Scenes Resource

Coe's archival collections are not the most visible or visited part of the library, but they drew an enthusiastic crowd during Alumni Reunion Weekend this past June when Archives Director Jill Jack and Archives Assistant Sara Pitcher opened the George T. Henry College Archives for viewing and created special displays of the collections. Jack also presented an Alumni College class on the archives.

"I talked about what happens when a collection comes in, how materials are

processed and preserved, and why it's important to have an archival collection where students can do research from primary sources," she explains. She showed examples of interesting and unexpected items found in the collections and talked about ongoing efforts to process the college's large and valuable collection of materials related to journalist and author William L. Shirer '25.

In response to her talk, a number of visiting alumni made gifts of support to the archives. They include Lloyd Brown

'58, Dana Van Burgh '54, Don West '53, and Mel Guthman '58 and his wife Diana. Alan '78 and Ann '81 Anderson also continued their support for the William Shirer Papers project.

Such gifts play a key role in advancing the objectives of the Archives, says Jack. "Our biggest priority now is to fund the software and server needed to create a comprehensive archives catalog."



## New AV Head Eager to Expand Use of Media Resources

Coe's new Head of Audiovisual, Laura Riskedahl, is a new kind of library professional. "I'm not a book librarian," she says. "I deal in resources available electronically instead of in big thick volumes."

Trained in the field of "digital librarianship," Riskedahl brings passion and expertise in the areas of art, film and digital collections to Coe's well-used Audiovisual Department on the lower level of Stewart Memorial Library.

An Iowa native, Riskedahl earned her B.A. in studio art at the University of Northern Iowa and got her first taste of collections management as a volunteer curator at the Groat Museum in Waterloo. She went on to earn her master's in library and information science at the University of Iowa.

"I'm a painter and a printmaker," she says, "but I didn't want to sell my art or support myself that way. I wanted to work in a service profession."

While at the university, she worked as an art librarian and "metadata cataloger," providing assistance to patrons using the collection and helping to create the online database of artworks in the university's collection. An opportunity to work as a metadata librarian and library liaison for art and art history took her to Bucknell University in Lewisburg, Pa.

"It was a great position," she recalls. "I bought all the art books and did library instruction for art and art history. I started the institutional digital repository of anything produced by anyone at Bucknell, and I helped plan a digital library conference." But she missed the friends

and the lively arts and entertainment scene she had left behind in Iowa City, so returned in search of work closer to home.

Through her positions at Bucknell and the University of Iowa, she says, she learned that smaller libraries offered the interdisciplinary environment she craved, so she was eager for the opportunity to join the Stewart Memorial Library staff.

"When you work at a small library, it's like a family and it's not rigid. You can be creative, and the AV position tied in closely to my interests. I'm a pretty big film fan. The campus community is really, really welcoming," she adds. "Within the first week I felt like I had been here a long time. I can talk to anyone about anything."

She's eager to do that, she says, stressing that her top priority is interaction with faculty and students. "I want to reach out to students and let them know our resources and grow the resources. They watch a lot of films for educational purposes as well as entertainment. I'd like to do more instruction on use of video technology, and I hope to have a pretty robust AV Web site within the library Web site, because that's how many students find their information."

Riskedahl, along with Coe Instructional Technologist Lisa Stroschine, is also overseeing the new Coe TV studio located in the AV area, which offers students the use of state-of-the-art filming and editing equipment to create their own programming. She is encouraging student-led ventures such as a weekly cooking show,



▲ New Stewart Memorial Library Head of AV Laura Riskedahl welcomes the opportunity to work in the interdisciplinary environment encouraged at the Coe library.

and she sees the potential for a host of other possibilities such as recorded student interviews with campus lecturers.

Coe is also in the process of converting its on-campus cable TV system from analog to digital, she says, bringing several advantages. The system will go from 51 to 90 channels, including seven local origination channels, and will provide better quality for less cost. "Several foreign language channels will be broadcast in the academic buildings on campus," she adds.

Riskedahl is excited by recent changes made in the AV area prior to her arrival, such as the creation of a "New Releases" wall and the intershelving of the VHS and DVD titles. The goal is to promote resources for students, she says, noting that they are a vital part of the process. "Our students run the library," she says of the library's faithful corps of student workers. "It's amazing. They are a lot more connected than in other campus environments where I've been."

### Engle Papers Finding Aid Online

Thanks to a recently completed index linked to the Archives Web site, members of the campus community, alumni and off-campus researchers are now able to search the contents of the college's collection of letters and papers from one of its most notable graduates, poet and educator Paul Engle '31.

Donated to the college by Engle's wife Hualing Nieh Engle after his death, the collection consists of 18 linear feet of office files, manuscripts and correspondence, including letters from well-known literary figures such as Robert Frost, Gwendolyn Brooks, Kurt Vonnegut and many others.

Library staff members have been processing the collection for several years. The project was completed this past summer by Archives Assistant Sara Pitcher '07, who also created the 70-page Paul Engle Papers Finding Aid describing the contents.

"If a researcher is looking for a specific poem or a letter," explains Archives Director Jill Jack, "he or she will be able to go to the index and easily find where it's located in the collection." The actual documents must be viewed in the library, although the staff plans to load some images onto the Web site to provide examples of items in the collection.

To view the Engle Papers Finding Aid, go to the Stewart Library Web site, <http://www.public.coe.edu/departments/Library/>, click on Henry Archives and Paul Engle Papers.



## Sending Off Our Faithful Library Workers



This past summer, the library said farewell to another wonderful group of graduating student workers, many of whom had worked all four years in one or more of the library's six departments. Each group of students enriches the lives of library staff members and patrons, even as they learn from and develop close friendships with staff members and work-study colleagues. Pictured at left are most of this year's graduates, with their names, hometowns, and—for those who let us know their post-graduation plans—what they're doing now.

- ◀ *Front row: Gannon Hjerleid, Wapello, IA, working at Fastenal Co. in Sterling, IL*
- Second row: Jessica Fraghia, Chicago, IL, planning to write for a local newspaper in the Chicago area; Denise Eslinger, Ottumwa, IA, attending graduate school at the University of Northern Colorado; Lidia Batista, Chicago, IL; Mary Ensminger, Mt. Pleasant, IA*
- Third row: Tamara Brown, Newcomb, NM, nursing at a major hospital in Seattle, WA; Alonso Avila, Chicago, IL, working in Chicago while awaiting Peace Corps placement; Lauren Banos, Chicago, IL*
- Fourth row: Count Lebbly, St. Louis, MO, doing an internship at a radio station in the Chicago area; Justin Hoyt, Middletown, IA; Vivek Shrestha, Kathmandu, Nepal; Dan Arroyo, Chicago, IL*
- Not pictured: Sarah Jarmon, Froilan Sanchez, Hayley Bright, Melissa Mai*

## Conger Cards Support Library

You can share the intriguing beauty of paintings created by renowned Coe alumnus Conger Metcalf '36 and support the library thanks to a new collection of notecards available from Stewart Memorial Library. The packet of eight blank cards includes two each of four favorite Metcalf works: "Ancient Wall" (pictured), "Eggs on Matisse," "Kneeling Draftsman" and "Painting for an XVIII Century French Frame." All four are owned by the college and on exhibit in the library's Metcalf Galleries. The set of notecards and envelopes costs \$10. To order yours, send a check made out to Coe College to Cheri Pettibone, Stewart Memorial Library, 1220 First Ave. NE, Cedar Rapids, IA 52402, noting that the check is for the Conger Metcalf notecards.



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