

COE COLLEGE BIBLIOPHILE

A newsletter for members of the Coe College Library Association

FALL 2013

A GHOSTLY INTRODUCTION TO THE LIBRARY



Incoming first-year students explored the spectral realm—and learned about Coe's very own ghost—while

discovering the library's (nearly) supernatural resources at an open house hosted by the library staff during new student orientation this past August. The first-time event, themed "Ghosts at Coe: Explore the Supernatural," featured five activity stations throughout the library, including a donut decorating station, a bag toss, glow-in-the-dark putt putt golf and a Grant Wood cutout board where students could get their photo taken.

The fifth activity was a scavenger hunt that sent students to the library catalog, the archives, the audiovisual department, the bound periodicals section and the book stacks in search of ghost-related items. At each stop, they received a clue and a letter of the alphabet, with the letters eventually spelling out the name of Coe's legendary apparition, Helen. Students were eligible for prizes—including gift cards to Target, Brewed Awakenings and the Coe Bookstore—based on how many stations they visited and whether they completed the scavenger hunt.

"It was the first time we've had students here during orientation, and it gave them a chance to start checking out the library and find out what it has to offer," says Head of Reference Katelyn Wazny Handler, who created the library-wide scavenger hunt. "We were excited to have a library-centric event as part of the schedule. ▀



▲ CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

Students who completed the library scavenger hunt were introduced to a variety of library services—and Coe's fabled ghost, Helen.

A bag toss game gave students a chance to show their competitive spirit.

The donut-decorating station was the most popular stop at the library's "Ghosts at Coe" orientation open house, which provided a non-threatening introduction to library resources and departments.

Becoming part of Coe's famous art was part of the experience.

NEW ARCHIVES ASSISTANT COMES HOME TO COE

Nearly every day, Coe Archives Assistant **Rob DeSpain '04** handles questions, some easy—like finding Coe's enrollment for a given year—and some more complex, requiring knowledge of the college's valuable collections of papers relating to well-known graduates. During the summer, he hosted a scholar from Rhode Island who was researching the **Paul Engle '31** collection. He is currently hosting a researcher from the University of Stuttgart who is delving into the **William Shirer '25** Archives in preparation for writing a book.

"I am really the face of the archives," says DeSpain, who assumed his position in the college's George T. Henry Archives in July. "For any researcher, either an outside researcher or a faculty member or student looking for history related to Coe or Coe's collections, I am the point person to help them find what they need or lead them in the right direction—even if it's to another archive."

It's a responsibility that gives him joy every day, he says, and an unexpected chance to return to the place where he conducted his own academic research.

DeSpain graduated from Coe with a major in history and a minor in German. He lived and taught English in Germany, then

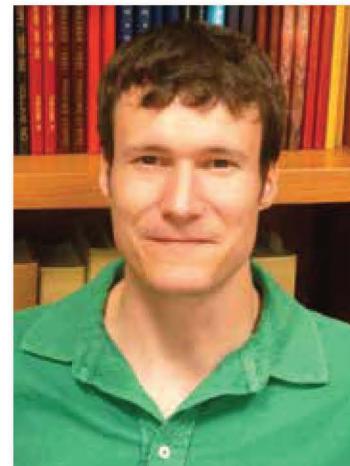
earned his master's in journalism at the University of Iowa, writing his thesis on the period of Shirer's life when the writer was fired from CBS and blacklisted. As a graduate student conducting his research at Coe, DeSpain never dreamed that he would be back someday to staff the archives, he says.

He reconnected with Coe after having part of his thesis published in a peer-reviewed journal and speaking at Coe's William Shirer Conference in the fall of 2010.

Since then he has been teaching at a two-year college in Chicago. He was grateful for the work, he says, but was eager for the opportunity to return to the research realm.

"What I enjoy most is being able to help someone find his or her answer successfully," he says.

That means knowing the collections, a challenge that grows with each item or collection donated to the archives. Coe's recent Homecoming celebration prompted several donations, he points out. The most notable was a collection of 90 years of Coe Homecoming buttons donated by **Robert Thurness '62**. The buttons, along with freshman beanies and **George Henry '49** photographs, were the subject of a Homecoming exhibit in Gage Union.



▲ Coe Archives Assistant **Rob DeSpain '04**

DeSpain is also familiarizing himself with Coe's collection of George Henry photos—especially the 36 framed prints that circulate among faculty and staff each year. Recently a theater class used the collection to study the history of dress through the decades, he notes.

Like his archives predecessor, **Sara Pitcher '07**, now working full-time at the Coralville Public Library, he is also applying himself to the task of cataloging the college's voluminous Shirer Collection. "It's an ongoing process," he says, noting that Shirer's daughter recently donated additional boxes of materials to Coe.

MYSTERY WRITER BRINGS MUSE – AND MUSIC – TO PERRINE

Erin Hart, author of the acclaimed Nora Gavin/Cormac McGuire crime novel series and niece of longtime Coe Head of Reference Betty Rogers, presented to a packed house in a reading at the Perrine Gallery on October 16. Hart read from her latest work, *The Book of Killowen*, and talked about creating the layers of evidence unraveled by her pathologist/archeologist duo. As a bonus, Hart's program featured a musical introduction by her husband, Paddy O'Brien, a renowned performer and collector of Irish traditional music. O'Brien also read from his memoir, *The Road from Castlebarnagh*. The pair live in St. Paul, Minnesota, and travel frequently to Ireland, O'Brien's home country and the setting for Hart's novels.



'PERSONAL LIBRARIANS' AT THE READY FOR STUDENT RESEARCHERS

A new Personal Librarian program is making it easier and less intimidating for students to learn how to search for and access appropriate library and media sources for their research projects, says Stewart Memorial Library Director Jill Jack. Through the program, Coe's second-year class has been divided into groups by majors, with each student assigned to one of five librarians.

"With first-year students the emphasis is on writing," explains Jack. "As they get into the second year, the research requirements become more demanding and in-depth. We're trying to help them bridge that transition to becoming researchers."

The personal librarians contacted all of their mentees through email at the beginning of the semester to offer their services, and will check in with them at regular intervals each term and throughout their years at Coe.

"We want to offer a one-to-one relationship," Jack says. "We find that students are hesitant about coming up to someone they don't know and asking questions. We'll help them with searching for the most valuable websites and databases, writing citations, copyright issues, understanding plagiarism and so forth. Faculty know who their students are assigned to and can encourage a student to consult with their personal librarian for help with research."

Head of Reference Katelyn Wazny Handler, who is serving as the personal librarian for students in the areas of English, communications, speech, rhetoric and public relations, recently received a typical inquiry from one her assigned students. "This student is taking a PR class and asked about resources we might have to help him learn about writing in that style," she says. "I was able to find some electronic and print resources that will be useful to him."

A HIGH-TECH HOME FOR LIBRARY CLASSES

A remodeled classroom located on the library's main floor provides a bright, interactive space that combines the latest teaching technology—including a Smart Board and overhead digital projector—with a nod to Coe's past, captured in classic George Henry photos. For use by library staff and other faculty, the popular classroom has space for 24 students.





1220 First Avenue NE
Cedar Rapids, IA 52402

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 26
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

COE COLLEGE BIBLIOPHILE

A newsletter for members of the Coe College Library Association

LAUNCHED FROM THE LIBRARY

The library said farewell to another talented group of work-study students in May. Many of them had worked in the library for four years, building lifelong friendships with students and staff, learning new skills and helping the library staff with a wide range of responsibilities.

Our 2013 library graduates included (left to right):

Brittney Sleewenhoek, currently on a one-year assignment with Americorps, teaching reading at an elementary school in Cedar Rapids;

Anh Hoang, in graduate school at Brandies University; Miranda Vollmer,

working part time at the Marion Public Library and Village Needlework; Megan Ehlen, teaching fifth grade in Waterloo; Kristine Gift, spending a gap year working and applying to graduate schools; Cat Widder, working at Express and a tattoo shop in Cedar Rapids;

Aaron Babbitt, grad student and teaching assistant at Southern Illinois University, working toward his M.S. in the field of small RNA analysis; Allison Dieckman Thompson, earning her master's in sports management at Indiana State University and office manager for the Iowa Barnstormers in Des Moines; David Mataloni, working toward his MBA at Upper Iowa University, where he is also a graduate assistant for the men's basketball team. Not pictured: Bimal Adkihari, Aubrey Gaul, Ciera Minor, Cassie Morigaki, Gina Sterk



SUN GUARD FOR THE GALLERIES

The library staff recently applied for and received a \$3,000 Linn County Historic Preservation Grant to place a 3M ultraviolet coating on windows in the Marvin Cone and Perrine Galleries in Stewart Memorial Library. The high-tech UV coating, installed in late October, provides upgraded protection for Coe's valuable collection of works by Grant Wood and Marvin Cone. "Long-term exposure to ultraviolet rays will cause permanent damage, in the form of fading, to paintings and drawings," explains Gallery Director Jennifer Rogers. "With the last renovation to Stewart Memorial Library, UV glass was installed, but over the last 20 years new products have been developed that can offer even greater protection. The 3M UV film installed in the Cone and Perrine Galleries is state-of-the-art technology that will block up to 99 percent of the ultraviolet rays."