The Link

Rentschler Library Faculty Newsletter. Spring 2011

engage| explore | inform| innovate | seek |discover| inspire | preserve | create | support | communicate| imagine |transform

Doing Local Research: Finding a Mountain in a Molehill

You would *think* it would be easier to locate information about events within a 10 mile radius than those across the globe, but conducting local research in an academic library can be frustrating, at best. Sometimes the best way to explore community topics is by going to the heart of the town—the local public library.

Lane Public Libraries offer a variety of resources pertaining to local research. For example, the Cummins Photo Collection is a digitized repository of images from Hamilton's history, dating back to the early 1900's (www.lanepl.org), and the Oxford branch houses the "Smith Library of Regional History". This collection of Butler County history includes maps, photographs, and a microfilm collection of the 19th century non-federal population census records (www.lanepl.org/smith.html).

Need to cast your net further? The website for the Cincinnati Public Library includes a directory of websites relevant to researching Cincinnati and the Tri-State area (www.cincinnatilibrary.org).CPL's main library, located downtown, offers visitors an entire department devoted to Genealogy and Local History. In addition to providing specialized reference assistance, the collections include the complete U.S. Federal Census (1790—1930), passenger lists, city directories, military histories, maps, church and cemetery records, and slave and freedmen records.

Both library systems also provide access to specific databases that you will not find in most academic libraries—those centered on genealogy research. *Heritage Quest* can be accessed online using a public library card number, but using *Ancestry.com* will require an actual visit to the library to use it in person.
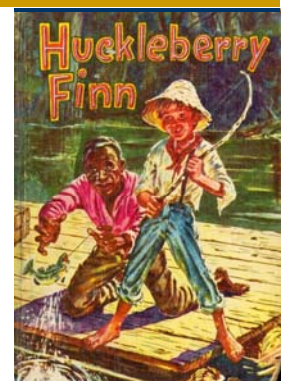
Ohio Memory (http://www.ohiomemory.org) is also a valuable resource for primary sources, including images , letters, and documents. Visitors can browse by Subject or Place, making it easy to discover information on specific issues or counties.

So where does the academic library come in? Miami University Libraries have access to hundreds of databases that are useful for putting these localized topics into a broader perspective. For discipline related databases, see our website at www.ham.muohio.edu/library/research .

Rewriting Race In Literature: An Interdisciplinary Panel

Alan Gribben's rewriting of the classic novel for youth, Huckleberry Finn, has people talking. By substituting the "n-word" with "slave" and also changing "injun" to "Indian", Gribben hopes to attract readers previously deterred by the offensive language. But does changing an author's language set an unwelcome precedent? How does this alter our ability to understand history? Or to facilitate dialogue on diversity?

We hope you will join us in discussing these issues on Monday, February 21st at 3:30 pm in Wilks Conference Center. Kicking off the conversation will be an interdisciplinary panel of your colleagues, Dr. Oleta Prinsloo (HIST & BWS), Dr. Katherine Kickel (ENG), and Instructor Karen Brentley (BWS). Light refreshments will be provided.

Pump up the Creativity

Tired of reading essays? Rentschler Library has a variety of resources to support creative projects. Due to high demand, technology resources are checked out on a first-come, first-serve basis and are not eligible for renewal; have your students get an early start to ensure availability.

- **Digital Voice Recorders**: Ideal for recording personal interviews and creating oral histories.
- **Digital Cameras:** Perfect for photo journaling, slide-shows, and short video captures.
- **HD Video Cameras:** Useful for recording special events, making "movie trailers", or reenactments.

Once your students have created their audiovisual files, they can use the library's equipment for editing or for creating the end product.   Images and audio can be inserted into PowerPoint presentations, while Windows Live Movie Maker can be used to edit HD video files and convert them to standard format for uploading to You-Tube.

Before committing to an assignment, be sure to give it a try yourself! Clear assignment directions and guidelines will help technology timid students produce the type of creative project that you expect and students will feel more confident about coming to you for help.

*Please note that technical support is provided by Computing Services; the library is not staffed or trained for providing technical assistance for operating equipment or software.

Staff News

Mark Shores's review of "Free Range Databases" was published in the *Library Journal's Academic Newswire* on December 16, 2010. His resource review can be viewed online at http://tinyurl.com/4m5rsxz .

Library News

Black History Month Display: Did you know that while he was in the Army during World War II, famed heavyweight champion Joe Louis led protests against the segregation policies of the U.S. Armed Services? Learn more fast facts from the library's February display honoring Black History Month.

African American Read-In: On February 7th, Rentschler Library supported the Multicultural Center's participation in the national African American Read In. The most frequently read author? Maya Angelou.

Winning Haiku: The second annual Haiku contest drew 35 creative entries. This year's winner, Rachael Herrle , won a t-shirt and bragging rights. Her winning haiku is listed below. A collection of all original MUH haikus can be seen at: www.ham.muohio.edu/library/originalhaikus .

> **Love, I don't know it**
> **I taste the word, spit it out**
> **It burns in my cheek.**

18th & 19th Century Literature Collection Continues to Grow

The unveiling of the Sharon B. Krafft Memorial Collection was a holiday hit with MUH faculty and staff. Rentschler Librarian Polly Whitaker introduced the display, noting that the selections were inspired by Sharon's well-known enthusiasm for 18th and 19th century British literature.

To promote and reward reading these select titles, the Library has issued a Sharon Krafft Challenge. There are five levels based on number of books read; prizes will be awarded for each level reached. Reach the top two tiers and you will also earn bragging rights and a spot on our website as proof of your literary prowess.

From Jane Austen to Oscar Wilde, titles in the growing collection can be viewed on the library website at: www.ham.muohio.edu/library/krafft .

MUH Enjoys the Victorian Christmas Party

Rentschler Library—More than Great Books

If you stopped by the library during Fall semester, you were not alone. We had over 60, 600 visits during that time, and we wanted to know how people felt about their library experience.

78 library users responded to our print and online survey, with 83% rating their experience "excellent", 15% calling it "good", and 1 respondent (1.2%) noting that noise from fellow library users made his experience "disappointing".

Rate your Experience

- Excellent [65]
- Good [12]
- Disappointing [1]

Finding the right balance between the need for quiet study and the desire for collaborative space continues to be one of the library's goals. 45% of respondents utilize the library as a space to study alone, but the library is also used as a place for collaboration (12%) and relaxing between classes (35%). While computing and printing are both main draws, many students are still using the library for "traditional services", like getting books and locating research articles.

When asked the open ended question, "how the library has helped with your academics", most respondents mentioned the library's resources and the staff's knowledge of how to find them. In fact, the staff's friendliness and willingness to help was the most frequently cited reason library users rated their experience "excellent". These sentiments were echoed when asked "how can the library improve your experience", as many respondents expressed doubt that it could be improved. Still, others noted that free printing, faster computers, and more quiet zones are desired.

You can view the survey results in full from our website at www.ham.muohio.edu/library/survey .

How did you use Rentschler Library Today?