Early Days of the Rice Library
A LETTER TO THE FRIENDS

Dear Friends of Fondren Library,

A most active and interesting year is underway for the Friends of Fondren Library. Our Distinguished Guest Lecture presented by Jonathan Miller, M.D. was enthusiastically received by the students, faculty, and friends of Rice University. We are pleased to work together for the continuing success of this very valuable program and thank Elizabeth Kidd for chairing this event. Diana and Bill Hobby were most gracious and generous in hosting a lovely dinner in honor of Dr. Miller and Patron friends of the library.

On April 19, 1997, we will honor Anne and Charles W. Duncan at our annual Gala. We are delighted and privileged to recognize the significant efforts of this extraordinary couple to Rice University and to our community. Please do mark your calendars, for this will be an evening to remember and a true gala of celebration.

In the previous issue of The Flyleaf, I informed you of the retirement of the Executive Director of the Friends, Betty Charles. During the summer we advertised the position locally and in key national publications, and the response was overwhelming. We received 80 applications, the majority from the Houston area, but some came to us from other parts of the country. A sampling of the candidates included: four lawyers, three librarians, two architects, eight MBA degree holders, three Ph.D.'s, a banker, and one author of a best seller.

Vice Provost and University Librarian Charles Henry and Friends of Fondren board members Ed Koehler, Texas Anderson, Elizabeth Kidd, and I interviewed a small number of candidates, each of whom brought strong professional skills and experience to the table.

I am very pleased to announce to you that Mary Bixby began her tenure as the Executive Director of the Friends of Fondren Library on October 1, 1996. She brings to the position competitive technical skills, strong fund-raising experience, is an accomplished communicator and leader, and has a true love of books and libraries.

Mary holds a bachelor of science degree in history from East Tennessee State University and a master of library science from Sam Houston State University. Please join us in welcoming Mary to Rice at your earliest opportunity!

On November 2, 1996, we honored former Friends of Fondren Board member Karen Hess Rogers at the annual Homecoming Brunch cosponsored with the Rice Engineering Alumni. Your committed and active board enjoyed greeting many of you as we acknowledged the generosity and dedicated efforts of Karen Rogers to Rice.

With our new University Librarian, Charles Henry, and our new Executive Director, Mary Bixby, we can anticipate a year of high energy and good fun.

Cordially,

Sally K. Reynolds

FONDREN LIBRARY

Founded under the charter of the university dated May 18, 1891, the library was established in 1913. Its present building was dedicated November 4, 1949, and rededicated in 1969 after a substantial addition, both made possible by gifts of Ella F. Fondren, her children, and the Fondren Foundation and Trust as a tribute to Walter William Fondren. The library celebrated its half-millionth volume in 1965 and its one-millionth volume on April 22, 1979.

THE FRIENDS

The Friends of Fondren Library was founded in 1950 as an association of library supporters interested in increasing and making better known the resources of Fondren Library at Rice University. The Friends, through members’ contributions and sponsorship of a program of memorials and honor gifts, secure gifts and bequests, and provide funds for the purchase of rare books, manuscripts, and other materials that are needed to support teaching and research at the university.

THE FLYLEAF

Founded October 1950 and published by the Friends of Fondren Library, MS - 44-F, Rice University, 6100 Main Street, Houston, Texas 77005-1892, The Flyleaf is a record of Fondren Library’s and Friends activities, and of the generosity of the library’s supporters. The Flyleaf’s publication schedule corresponds to the academic calendar year.
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The Library of the 21st Century

by Charles Henry

When asked to describe the library of the 21st century, pundits, librarians, educators, and library patrons alike will often conjure two related images: one of an imagined interior space filled with technology, the other an exterior image of a future library that is sleek, rounded, or otherwise distinct from the rectilinear forms that have characterized libraries—including Fondren—for much of this century. Too easily, planners tend to define the library of the future in terms of a prevailing technology that will arise to reform the current ways faculty and students do research and course related assignments, or picture an odd if captivating design that will inevitably enclose it.

To best appreciate the complexity and value of a library in an academic society, however, it is revealing to approach the question, "What should a 21st century library be?" from a more philosophical perspective. If Fondren Library is to succeed as the central academic support for Rice, it is important to declare which of its attributes are considered essential to conserve, and how those attributes might be enhanced in the coming decades: enhanced through printed and electronic resources, through staff appointments, through new technologies, and through new and thoughtful spatial arrangements.

Put another way, one can ask, "Why have libraries remained a central cultural institution for over four thousand years?" Part of the answer lies in

...a library like Fondren has enormous cultural significance and tremendous responsibility for the community it serves...

a fundamental generality: a library facilitates the confrontation of living memory with the accumulated knowledge of the past; it allows for personal transformation and new perspectives that can profoundly alter an individual's sense of self and the world; it facilitates collaboration, for a library is an institution founded upon the realization of the empowerment of historical continuity and the social nature of knowledge acquisition. In this respect a good library is an organic, as opposed to a static, construct, that embodies and advances our collective heritage.

Charles Henry, Vice-Provost and University Librarian

Thus a library like Fondren has enormous cultural significance and tremendous responsibility for the community it serves.

Contemplating the future library in a less generalized way—always understanding that the coming century is far less crystalline than our metaphorical objects of viewing it would imply—two related themes arise for consideration. The first is the nature of learning, the second is the organization of knowledge. How does learning happen? What are the optimal physical settings and available resources for a student to learn, or a faculty member to perform research? How does the organization of books and journals, and more recently the structure of databases, influence what and how we learn? Why do the schemes of cataloging and subject designations change so frequently? Why, in other words, do our concepts of the various properties of knowledge continually shift? A library is at the center of these issues.

What is often missed when responding to these questions is the determining effect of the prevailing culture. Two examples from the fairly recent past help to explain how the ideas we hold true about learning and knowledge organization are nuanced by "local" histories and are not eternal verities.

Slightly more than one hundred years ago, Princeton University was as distinguished as it is today, a pre-eminent institution of higher learning
in the United States. Remarkably, its library was open to students for only one hour per week. This was in response to the prevailing understanding of how students were supposed to learn: they were not to be given free reign to the library collections, but were instructed mostly by rote in fairly small increments—one might say "doses"—of texts and written exercises. A library such as today's Fondren, with open stacks, expert librarians, and online access to the digital world beyond the hedges, would have been unthinkable. The general environment at that time can be characterized as highly controlled, heavily reliant on memory, and none too hospitable for creative reflection or individual ascendency.

The organization of knowledge has similar tracings. Melville Dewey was a Victorian. His concept of the modern library was heavily influenced by the industrial revolution: a variety of departments, with staff performing often small, highly specialized tasks. His organization of knowledge, known as the Dewey Decimal System, was also influenced by prevailing cultural practice. In the earlier publication of his categorical scheme, the section on religion was divided rather neatly into "Judeo-Christian" on the one hand, and "Other". One can also discern a bias toward Western culture and certain ethnic prejudices. The newer Library of Congress classification system is more inclusive, and strives for neutrality in its subject labeling. It, however, also changes over time, with the rise of interdisciplinarity, new areas of study, and new discoveries of the physical universe.

All this is to say that Melville Dewey, 19th century students, and most of the libraries extant in the United States today were and are very much shaped and influenced by their time. In order to best prepare for what may be a most extraordinary chapter in the evolution of Fondren, the Rice community—its faculty, students, librarians, and Friends—needs to look intently at the past and the present to discover the cultural, social, and historical influences that both enable and constrain Fondren and those who use it, decide what attributes to preserve into the next century and which to discard, and then begin to design a library that will embody and encourage these essential characteristics for generations to come.

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**NEWS AND NOTES...**

- **FRIENDS ON THE WEB** The Friends' membership brochure can now be found on the World Wide Web. Look for it at [http://www.rice.edu/Fondren/About/For/fof.html](http://www.rice.edu/Fondren/About/For/fof.html). Additional information will be added soon!

- **RICE AUTHORS** On Wednesday, January 29, 1997, at 7:30 p.m. the Friends of Fondren Library will sponsor a program honoring those members of the Rice alumni, faculty, staff, and members of the Friends who have authored books published in 1996, edited journals published in 1996, composed major musical works, or mounted one person art shows in 1996. Information can be sent to the Friends of Fondren Library, Rice University, MS 44-F, 6100 Main Street, Houston, TX 77005-1892; or you may fax the information to 713-285-5258.

- **SCHUBERTIAD** On Sunday, February 16, the Friends of Fondren Library and the Shepherd Society will present an afternoon of nineteenth century music performed by students of the Shepherd School of Music. The event is scheduled for 3:00 p.m. in the Lillian H. Duncan Recital Hall, Alice Pratt Brown Hall.

- **BOOK SALE** The Friends of Fondren Library will host a book sale on Saturday, March 15, and Sunday, March 16, 1997, in the Grand Hall, Rice Memorial Center. Members’ preview will be Friday, March 14. Books may be dropped off at Detering Book Gallery, 2311 Bissonnet, at Star Motor Cars, 7000 Katy Freeway, or at the Friends’ office during business hours.

- **FRIENDS OF FONDREN GALA** Fondren Saturday Night XVII on Saturday, April 19, 1997 will honor Anne and Charles W. Duncan. Cocktails, dinner, silent and live auctions will benefit the Friends of Fondren Endowment Fund. The event will be held in the new computational engineering building named the Anne and Charles Duncan Hall.
As the stream of passengers from United 1073 continued past me, I registered that Jonathan Miller must not have flown first class. Growing concerned, I floated a tentative "Dr. Miller?" toward a gentleman I thought very like Dr. Miller, but bald. After all, in the twenty-eight years since I'd attended his lectures at Rice, Jonathan Miller might well have grown bald.

But not to worry; a tonsorially well-endowed Dr. Miller finally emerged, smiling, energetic, and, as one might expect, very much in charge. Before I could register recognition, never mind motion to him that I was his official greeter, he was approaching, hand extended, to greet me.

We carried on rapidly down the corridor to collect his luggage, his questions and comments prodding me to respond quickly or be left as he moved to the next thought. He was concerned about the current mood of the USA. What did I think? From his recent travels here, observations at airports and such, he judged there to be a disturbing "aerosol of testosterone" pervading the
country, all these angry men. And what, he went on as
we progressed to the car, were my thoughts on violence
in films? We discovered that we had in common film-
enthusiast sons whose favorite film is Reservoir Dogs,
which neither of us had seen, but intended to, someday.
Our reluctance related to the reputed violence of the
film. His son had argued that plays with much violence,
such as The Duchess of Malfi, were not judged
unworthy because of their violence, and films should
not be. From this Dr. Miller determined that our sons
must like the film for its visual elegance and style.

And so it was with Jonathan Miller for the next
two days. He was always provocative, but thoughtful,
always irreverent, but respectful, always witty, but
serious.

If you missed his lectures, I'm sorry, for they
were far too substantive and full of references
to describe adequately here. In the lecture
Sunday night on "The Afterlife of
Plays" he argued that irreverence
towards our greatest playwrights
is necessary to ensure their works
have an afterlife. The director
has as a guide the words of the
characters only, and must
"write" the nuances of gesture
and inflection that create a
performance and provide the
play a new "life."

There was much, much more
about music and painting, about
listeners and observers as part of the
process that creates an afterlife for a work
of art. But in the main the lecture was an
argument by Jonathan Miller, the director, that the
director becomes "co-creator" of the play, and he
made a very good case.

His second lecture was somewhat in
contradiction to his first. While Dr. Miller suggests
that we must show irreverence toward great plays to
help keep them alive, he also insists we must show
great reverence for works of fiction. That is to say, we
should not make great novels into movies. Such movies
are dangerous to fiction because they "habituate
audiences to the idea that the film is a full accounting
of the author's thoughts."

Those of you who, as I, love films of Jane Austen's
novels must trust me on this: He made a strong
argument, using scientific studies (remember he's
also a neuropsychologist) that the "mind's eye" used
in reading sees things differently. In the mind's eye of

the reader not limited by having seen a film, great
works of fiction are always different from, and more
expanded, than the film. Thus, by encouraging such
films we threaten the true "afterlife" of great works of
fiction.

These things and much more preoccupy Jonathan
Miller. He is deeply concerned about the militance of
organized religion: at the Houston Museum of Natural
Science a docent told him that she limited her
explanation of evolution to avoid offending anyone.
He sees philistinism everywhere from the primitive
He dislikes pretention of all sorts: Twombly's
"writings" on his paintings, again the New York
Times critics, the New York Times itself.

Dr. Miller also cares about what he sees as a
collective loss of innocence—and about the
poor and the young who are powerless
and ignored. He is not sanguine about
the future. Listening to him one
hears an echo of Yeat's lines from
"The Second Coming":

The best lack all conviction, while
the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

But listening to Dr. Miller, one also feels hopeful. He often
speaks of what he enjoys as
well—Houston Grand Opera,
films like "The Thin Blue Line"
and "Hoop Dreams," the paintings
of Cy Twombly (the writings
notwithstanding), the lighting in the
building that holds the Twombly, the Soames
museum in London, cottages in Scotland, his coming
production of "a Midsummer Night's Dream", his
sculpture. He is all the titles by which we know him:
neuropsychologist, actor, director, author,
artist, and also,
grandfather...

...[Dr. Miller] is all the
titles by which we
know him:
neuropsychologist,
actor, director, author,
artist, and also,
grandfather...
Early Days of the Rice Library

by Karen Hess Rogers

In a letter to the Library of Congress in 1917, the acting librarian of the new Rice Institute writes, "If convenient will you please lend us the following volumes...They are needed by one of our professors who is doing research along the lines indicated." Borrowing books from the Library of Congress was necessary because there were not many on the shelves of the young Rice library in 1917. In 1913, the Preliminary Announcements set forth the policy of "providing only such books as are necessary to supplement the courses of instruction and to support the independent investigations of the staff and advanced students." It went on to suggest that, for works of general interest, members of the institute had access to the public library.

Long-time English professor George Williams notes in a 1966 article in The Flyleaf that, "as with almost anything else at Rice in the early years, the first library's books were ordered personally by President Lovett," although later an informal three-member faculty committee took over that job. This committee also had the task of supervising the "librarian" at the early Rice library. Alice Dean began as a student assistant in 1914 after entering Rice in the fall of 1913. She continued as librarian while she earned her master's degree in math and then taught Math 100. Ann Tuck Williams '43 remembers that Rice had to let Dean be librarian so she would teach math. Over the summer of 1916, she studied library science at Columbia and at that time decided to use the Library of Congress classification system. This seemed cumbersome at the time for so few books, but she felt that one day Rice would have many more volumes and would not have to change the system again. Eventually Miss Dean was appointed Acting Librarian, a position she held for thirty years.

Another "temporary" arrangement was the location of the first library on the second floor of the administration building—for thirty-five years. There were different opinions about this library. Sarah Lane, Circulation Librarian for many years, loved the long gallery with its beautiful marble fireplace, magnificent light and cross-ventilation, French doors to the balconies and exquisite seven-foot bookcases. George Williams, on the other hand, describes it as "dark, medieval, accidental" and "dim, shadowy, heavy and overpowering." He remembers everything as dark brown and insists that even the chandeliers gave off "a strange yellowish brown religious light." Miss Lane's lovely bookcases which divided her room into ten charming alcoves, Mr. Williams describes as jutting "out from the walls like precipices into a dark sea."

The library was run with great economy; in the year 1916-17 the operating budget was $1,200 with student assistants earning $.20 per hour. Book dealers were instructed to ship books in the "most economical way." A package once arrived addressed to:

The Rice Institute
Sent by Cheapest Method
Houston, Texas
The 1920s saw such an increase in the number of books that the shelves had to be extended to the ceiling, and then the number of bookcases themselves were doubled. They were so close together that portly Dr. Axson could not bend over to see the bottom shelf. George Williams remembers the room as having a "sad, cluttered look."

It became necessary to find other spaces for library use. Engineering periodicals were relegated to the engineering labs. The chemistry and architecture libraries were in the Chemistry Building; biology and physics, in the Physics Building. The boys' study on the first floor of the Administration Building and the girls' club room eventually became part of the library, too. George Williams regarded the next step as downward—literally—to the basement. If he did not care for the first location, he really disliked this annex: It was a dismal sight with scarred furniture, flaky plaster and "flooding, not uncommon." Sarah Lane once encountered a water moccasin swimming at the foot of the steps.

The library opened at 8:00 in the morning and students were promptly chased out at 5:00 in the afternoon. In an experiment in the 1920s a graduate student (male, of course, since women had to be off campus by dark) petitioned to open the library from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m. Few students took advantage of the opportunity, some books disappeared, and some boys even wandered into places they should not have been—like the president's office. The experiment was deemed unsuccessful.

Rice's early librarians encountered challenges not commonly seen today. One summer Alice Dean, upon returning from vacation, discovered that all of the periodicals stacked on a table by the window had been blown out by the 1915 hurricane. During the Depression students were employed by the National Youth Administration to work in the library. Emily Ladner '37 remembers pulling bookworms from books shipped from India using a long scalpel and tweezers. She also recalls that the government would pay for salaries ($25 an hour) and tools, but not supplies; so electric erasers were purchased to erase old catalogue cards which were then retyped with the current information. Miss Dean had a strict rule against student workers talking to each other—even in the middle of the summer in the basement of the Administration Building.

By the beginning of World War II the library had nowhere to expand. The war years slowed growth and by 1949, with a generous gift of one million dollars from the Fondren Family, the Rice Institute was able to build a brand-new library with a first floor larger than a football field. But that is another story...
1996 Friends of Homecoming
Fondren Annual Brunch
Hosted jointly by the Friends of Fondren and the Engineering alumni, brunch in the Fondren Library is always a favorite Homecoming event. About two hundred Rice alumni, friends and family met on November 2, 1996 in the lovely Kyle Morrow Room to socialize and to acknowledge the many contributions of this year’s Homecoming Brunch honorees, Karen Rogers ’68, K. Terry Koonce ‘60 and William White ‘86.

President Sally Reynolds, presented the Friends of Fondren Library Award to Karen Rogers, who has continued a family tradition of service to the Rice community. Her parents, Jacob ‘31 and Leota ‘33 Hess, her aunt, Catherine Hess ‘38 and uncle, Wilber Hess ‘35 are Rice alumni. When Karen arrived on campus she was primed for a lifetime of dedication to the University. A member of the Elizabeth Baldwin Literary Society, she served as business manager in 1965-66, secretary in 1966-67 and president in 1967-68. “Always one of the first to step up to the plate when Rice has a need,” as Linda Brachrach of the Development Office recently observed, Karen is as enthusiastic as the chairman of an organization as she is making sandwiches and cookies for other volunteers.

Last year Karen founded and became the first president of the Rice Historical Society; she was president of the Society of Rice University Women in 1993-94, co-chaired the 1993 Homecoming Events, served as second vice president of the Association of Rice Alumni in 1988-89, and was class chair of the Annual Fund in 1980-81. Karen’s husband, Arthur Rogers III ’67 is also an active alumni volunteer and was class chair for the 1990-91 Annual Fund drive.

Rose Sundin of the Alumni Office remarked that Karen “is a very early-riser, accomplishing much before most of us get out of bed.” Anyone who has worked with Karen on one of her many projects, including video-taping interviews with...
some noted Rice alumni, will readily attest to her energy, intellect and boundless enthusiasm, as well as her modest and unassuming demeanor.

The Rice Engineering Alumni president, David Archer '72, presented the Outstanding Engineering Alumnus Award to K. Terry Koonce for his service to industry, community and the University. Terry joined the Exxon organization in 1963 after receiving a Ph.D. in chemical engineering from Rice. In 1985, he was named president and chief executive officer of ESSO Resources Canada Limited and in 1988 he became senior vice president of EXXON Company USA. He and his wife, Beverly Montgomery '60, moved back to Houston when he was tapped for president and CEO of EXXON Ventures, Inc., headquartered jointly in Houston and Moscow, Russia.

Terry served as a member of the Advisory Council of the George R. Brown School of Engineering. He has served on the Board of Regents of Pepperdine University and on the Board of Trustees of Stevens Institute of Technology in New Jersey. He is a member of the American Petroleum Institute and is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Institute for Christian Studies in Austin, as well as numerous other civic and business organizations.

The final presentation was awarded by Archer to William White '86 as Outstanding Young Engineering Alumnus. Bill received a bachelor of science degree in electrical engineering and is president of BP Microsystems, Inc., a company he founded in his senior year at Rice. This young company now has sales and support personnel in 25 countries. Until 1992, Bill designed all of BP's hardware and continues to act as chief designer and architect of new systems. He and his wife, Susan Schrakamp '86 live in the Rice area.

This year's award winners typify the dynamic achievements of Rice alumni in their community, and they set an exemplary course for others to follow.
Old Books, Old Friends:
Agonies of a Preservation Librarian

by Rita M. Marsales

A rare and unexpected windfall — extra binding funds to be spent — enabled me to undertake a special project this spring. I have been including a dozen or so old monographs which needed rebinding in each semimonthly bindery shipment. Now I would have an opportunity to send a thousand volumes or more — if I could select and prepare those volumes in a six-week period (in addition to my other duties). I asked our collection development librarians to tell me if they had any recommendations, but they were already busy trying to spend funds on new books before the end of the fiscal year. A few friends volunteered to help but I realized that the task would be largely up to me.

I arbitrarily decided to begin work in literature since I know that material is heavily used. I started with the PR's — English literature — and PS's — American literature. I progressed systematically through the stacks, scanning the volumes on the shelves. It became quite an emotional experience. So many books in need of help and I could only take a few. With sagging spines, worn covers, and well-thumbed pages, the old books seemed to call out: “Pick me! Pick me!” But I had to be hard-hearted and try to determine which were the most worthy. This decision was not easily ascertained. Old date-slips are not removed when a new one is needed, so they become layered like geological strata, sometimes six deep. Three date-slips or more indicate a well-read book, perhaps. Other factors must be considered also. Was the book consecutively charged to the same carrel? Was it on reserve? Was it checked out a lot ten years ago and not all recently? I didn’t have to open all the books to check the date-slips. The well-used books are easily spotted, and of course well-known titles are usually heavily used. It stands to reason that books which have been consistently heavily used will continue to be used in the future, so they are “worthy” of rebinding. I tried to choose only books which had over ten circulations. Many had twenty or thirty, some over fifty circulations. Think of that...fifty pairs of hands cradled this spine, fifty pairs of eyes scanned these pages, fifty minds were touched by the thoughts of the author. But now the book cover is filthy, damaged, and unappealing. I have the power of making it suitable for another two dozen circulations at least, at a cost of less than six dollars.

Frequency of use was easily ascertained. Old date-slips are not removed when a new one is needed, so they become layered like geological strata, sometimes six deep. Three date-slips or more indicate a well-read book, perhaps. Other factors must be considered also. Was the book consecutively charged to the same carrel? Was it on reserve? Was it checked out a lot ten years ago and not all recently? I didn’t have to open all the books to check the date-slips. The well-used books are easily spotted, and of course well-known titles are usually heavily used. It stands to reason that books which have been consistently heavily used will continue to be used in the future, so they are “worthy” of rebinding. I tried to choose only books which had over ten circulations. Many had twenty or thirty, some over fifty circulations. Think of that...fifty pairs of hands cradled this spine, fifty pairs of eyes scanned these pages, fifty minds were touched by the thoughts of the author. But now the book cover is filthy, damaged, and unappealing. I have the power of making it suitable for another two dozen circulations at least, at a cost of less than six dollars.

Secondly, I had to determine if a book was physically sound enough for rebinding. Rebinding can do a lot for a book but it is not a cure-all. Pages are trimmed and encased in a bright, clean, sturdy new cover. Little tears can be mended, pencil marks erased (not ink and highlighting), and missing pages may be replaced with photocopies. However, a frightening number of books cannot be rebound because the paper is too fragile.

A book printed in 1840 will probably be in better condition than one printed in 1940. After the middle of the nineteenth century, the cotton and linen used in making paper was replaced by groundwood pulp, making paper production cheaper, but the quality significantly declined. Lignin, an acidic organic substance found in wood pulp, together with the sizing used to enable the paper to hold ink, causes the paper to become acidic over time and literally self-destruct. In an historic study commissioned by the Council on Library Resources in the late 1950s, William Barrow,
conservator at the Virginia Historical Society, predicted that ninety percent of the books printed in the mid-twentieth century would be unusable by the year 2000 due to their physical deterioration. It is only in the last thirty years or so that librarians have realized that all the books “of a certain age” in all the libraries of all the world are simultaneously crumbling, and began trying to do something about it. Some publishers have been persuaded to use “acid-free” paper. Some old books are being republished. Many are being microfilmed. There are projects being mounted for digital scanning, even though the digital format is itself indeterminate stability. There is a newly developed process for treating books which have acidic paper, provided the paper has not yet become brittle. The acid in the paper is neutralized, slowing the deterioration and significantly prolonging the life of the paper. In "mass deacidification," quantities of books can be treated at one time at a reasonable cost.

I mustn't dream of such things now. I just have to rebind a few hundred books in as objective and systematic manner as possible. I have to select the heartiest — those which could most benefit by rebinding. Never mind that this book is a classic with illustrations by a well known engraver — the paper is too brittle to be saved. Now here is an older book with gold-leaf edged pages and fine tooled leather cover but the hinges are broken and it can only be repaired by a conservator at great expense. The paper shows some foxing but it is still strong. Should I rebind it, loosing the gold-leaf edges and leather cover? No, for now I'll just put it in an acid-free box. Here is a book from the 1980's which has only circulated about eight times but it has suffered water damage and the cover is badly warped and mildewed. Rebinding is really needed in this instance. Oh, here is a novel I remember my mother reading. A copy of this scholarly work was on my grandfather's bookshelf. This is the poet I loved so when I was in college. I remember the summer I spent reading all of the works of this author. I can't do anything for these old friends — they are too far gone. Look on your own bookshelves. There is an old textbook you haven't opened in years. The paper is yellowing and brittle, the spine is warped, the pages loosening. It wasn't like that the last time you used it! Well, have you ever run into an old school chum and wondered how he could have aged so much? On our shelves, I encountered many books which had never been "popular" but had nonetheless aged beyond aid.

It's strange how people think that once a library acquires a book that it is a permanent part of the collection. The on-line catalog says that it is "on the shelf" so we can rest assured that our library can offer access to this work. Our library has a policy of generally keeping only one copy of any edition. Books may not be stolen or mutilated or abused, but just sitting quietly on the shelves they are slowing dying. Books are made of organic matter and thus decay. The "great" books and the "popular" books will be republished in newer editions and thus will continue to be available. The real danger is for the more obscure but nonetheless valuable works which are not being reproduced in any format. They may not be great literature, but they are part of our cultural history, reflecting the era in which they were written. When they are gone, they will really gone, and mankind's storehouse of knowledge will be diminished.

I must get on with my work. It is painful for me to examine some of these poor books. I am happy that they have been used but sad that they have not much life left. Perhaps it will be easier for me when I move on to other areas of our collection. I may not personally be as moved by a damaged book of mathematics as by a damaged book of verse, but there are important old books in every field. Preservationists are by nature nurturing—treasuring old things. In the midst of the information explosion we still appreciate books as physical objects. I must use this little extra money I have to save as many books as possible. So little money is available to save the old things. What will the future be like when they are gone?
In discussing this edition of the Flyleaf it occurred to us that the Friends might be interested in knowing what their fellow members are reading. In the process of developing that list of books we also learned about a few, of what we assume are many, of the book discussion groups our members have organized. Book clubs, like most of the associations Americans are keen to make, serve a variety of functions, social and intellectual of course, but often political and economic as well. Thus it is in a democracy.

Susie Glasscock and her coterie of young mothers began their book club in 1970, meeting one morning each month while their toddlers were in pre-school. Like many young college-educated women of that time they were determined to keep up their intellectual faculties while honing their parenting skills. Since most of them were on a limited budget, their choices needed to be available in paperback, but beyond that there were no limitations.

As the school days lengthened for their children, these friends began to linger over brown bag lunches and over the years this evolved into slightly more substantial reading and more elaborate luncheons prepared by the hostess of the month. The book selections are eclectic, balancing fiction with non-fiction, best-sellers with classics. The reviewing and discussion remain informal and sometimes get set aside altogether as a personal crisis grips one of their members and requires their concern and support.

What Our Friends Are

by Texas Anderson

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| Halberstam, David | The Fifties | Remembering Babylon "...a dazzling fable of human hopes and imperfections."
| Hawking, Stephen | A Brief History of Time | New York Times |
| Hazzard, Shirley | The Transit of Venus | Love in the Time of Cholera |
| Heaney, Seamus | Selected Poems | The Crossing |
| Hoving, Thomas | Making the Mummies | Mutant Messages Down Under |
| Ishiguro, Kazuo | Dance | Beloved: a Novel |
| Ketchum, Richard M. | Artist of the Floating World | The Following Story |
| | The Winter Soldiers | A Personal Matter "...very close to the perfect contemporary novel." New York Times "...a deep perception of the contradictions within the human heart." Christian Science Monitor |
| | | Fima |
| | | The Shipping News |
| | | Imaginary Homelands "A wonderful collection...passionate, resonating, and often brilliant...shows its author's intellect and moral fearlessness." Cleveland Plain Dealer |
Each May they get together for dinner and plan the next year’s reading program and once or twice a year they invite husbands and significant others for a social evening without books.

A Friend associated with the Baylor College of Medicine Book Club reported that their group has always included men and women, faculty and wives at first, and as times changed for women in medicine, faculty and husbands as well. Starting as a dinner group with faculty spouses sharing host responsibilities, the group now places greater focus on the books, limiting refreshments to dessert and coffee.

Francis Catlin, one of the original members, has detected certain reading patterns among the members. Many read the book cover to cover, some even make notes and come prepared as though they will be tested after dessert. Others read the first chapter and the last, letting the discussion fill in the gaps they missed. Some merely skim through gleaning the gist, little interested in style and aesthetics but eager to discuss aspects of particular interest. The member who recommends the book usually leads the discussion and makes a concerted effort to include everyone in the discussion. Tact becomes a requisite when the discussion leader must balance the opinions of the chairman of his department with the soft-spoken and often insightful comments of a spouse or a new member of the faculty!

Although most of the selections are current novels, the year’s list may include biographies and other non-fiction and occasionally a book of poetry. The group meets five times a year from September to June.

Three years ago a new member of the Friends organized a book club that meets one afternoon a month over tea and cookies. That may sound a bit light-weight but the discussion is anything but frivolous. Opinions are strong and discussion, lively. Book selections are offered, debated and chosen in an informal process and may be altered if some new publication seems of interest. There is no formal leader, although a member may be assigned or may volunteer for an especially lengthy selection. Someone usually brings a published review, and newspaper articles are shared when one of the authors wins a prestigious award or incurs the wrath of a religious zealot or a political group.

Some book clubs are more formally organized than the three we have mentioned; some focus strictly on the classics or on books of science. One book club, by design or lack of it, discusses the works of a geographically diverse group of contemporary novelists including: Chinua Achebe (Africa), Kazuo Ishiguro (Japan), Isabel Allende (Chile), Carol Shields (Canada), and Ivo Andric (Serbia).

We hope you will encounter some of your favorites in the book list and be tempted by some titles that are unfamiliar to you. Most of these books are available at Fondren Library. Let us hear from you; tell us what you are reading, and let us share the stories of your own book discussion group with the Friends.

---

**Reading**

| Rybakov, Anatoli | Children of the Arbat |
| Schiff, Stacey | Saint Exupery: a Biography |
| Shasa, D. & C. Lazere | Out of Their Minds |
| Shelden, Michael | Graham Greene: the Man Within |
| Shields, Carol | The Stone Diaries |
| Sidhwa, Bapsi | Cracking India |
| Softic, Elma | Sarajevo Days, Sarajevo Nights |
| Sontag, Susan | The Volcano Lover: a Romance |
| Thomas, Lewis | The Fragile Species |
| Valledao, Alfredo G.A. | The Twenty-First Century Will Be American |
| Weiner, Jonathan | The Beak of the Finch |
| Will, George F. | Restoration |
| Wilson, A.N. | Tolstoy |
| Wilson, Robert, (ed.) | Character Above All "Ten superb and expert writers address this issue in terms of the past ten presidents," including Pulitzer Prize winners Dorris Kearns Goodwin (on FDR) and David McCullough (on HST). |
| Wolf, Christine | Patterns of Childhood |
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June 1, 1996 - September 30, 1996

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- Sponsor $100
- Patron $250
- Benefactor $500
- Library Fellow $1,000

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Fondren News....

• **Tsang Donation Reception** Mrs. Helen Wu Yun Tsang donated over 1,500 Chinese books to the library. A reception was held on November 13 to honor Mrs. Tsang.

• **Smithsonian Lectures** The *Smithsonian Voices of Discovery*, a series of free public lectures and workshops will be presented throughout Houston, January 6-17, in celebration of the Smithsonian Institution's 150th anniversary. Fondren Library has been chosen as a venue for three of the lectures which will take place in the Kyle Morrow Room on the third floor.
  - Wednesday, January 8, 1997, 11 a.m. Edith Mayo
    *From Parlor to Politics: Women and Reform in America 1890-1925*
  - Wednesday, January 15, 1997, 4 p.m. Steven Newsome
    *The African American Church and Community History*
  - Thursday, January 16, 1997, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Spencer Crew, Olivia Cadaval, Steven Newsome
    *Minorities and Identity in American Culture*

• **New PBS Collection** Fondren Library has acquired the research materials compiled for the PBS series *With God on Our Side: the Rise of the Religious Right in America*. The collection includes books, literature produced by the religious groups, and an extensive collection of taped interviews and broadcast materials. The library is grateful to Dr. William Martin and Lumiere Productions, New York, for their assistance.

**Exhibits in the library:**
- December: Showcases the creative talents of the library staff
- January: Rice University Authors

If you need further information concerning these events call, the Friends' office at 713-285-5157.