



## GELMAN NEWS

### Faculty Authors Signing Reception

by **Teena Bedola**  
*Administration*

**Attachment A** describes Friday, October 4, 2002's Faculty Authors Signing Reception. Featured authors are Henry Nau, Professor of Political Science and International Affairs, and Mark Wallace, Assistant Professorial Lecturer in English.

## GELMAN HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE

### Vacancy Listing

Please see **Attachment B** for The Gelman Library System's Vacancy Listing.

*"Librarian is a service occupation. Gas station attendant of the mind."*

**-Richard Powers-**



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### Gelman Welcomes New Staff Members

#### Building Operations Department

by **Andrea Stewart**  
*Administration*

All of you received a message from Peggy last week announcing the arrival of a new staff member in the Building Operations Department, Jessica Chase. She joins us as the Assistant Building Operations Manager.

Jessica graduated from Howard University with a Bachelor of Architecture degree and has worked in that field since 1986. She was the project architect for the interior build-out of the PEPCO Headquarters spending eight months stationed in the field overseeing the construction and the installation of the furniture and auxiliary systems; she prepared the renovation master plan for the Wall Street Journal editorial offices and managed the construction drawing preparation and the construction administration; she also developed work area standards for various levels of personnel in the Bureau of National Affairs and was the project architect in a team that completed the four-year renovation of their two buildings.

Jessica is also studying for a Project Management degree at GW. Please take a moment to welcome her and to introduce yourself to her as she tours the building with Peggy this week. We look forward to working with her.

## Acquisitions Department

by **Caroline Long**  
*Administration*

I am delighted to announce that Linda Wirth has accepted a permanent (part time) position as Serials Cataloger for the Gelman Library System. As many of you know Linda has been here on a temporary basis since March 2001 cataloging our electronic journals, helping out in many ways in the Serials Unit and, since last spring, serving on the Workflow Implementation Team.

Linda has many years of experience cataloging library materials, much of it in law collections. She has handled books, audio-visual material, special reports, serials, microforms, and electronic resources. At the Washington National Cathedral Rare Book Library Linda inventoried the rare books. When she was at the Petroleum Reference Group she developed a special classification for that organization's materials. With all her expertise many here have come rely on her to tell us when a series is a serial and when it's not!

Knowing Linda's concern for making catalog records as useful as possible for library users, it won't surprise many of you to learn Linda was a reference librarian right after receiving her MLS from the University of Denver.

Now that she is starting in a permanent position, we will be creating an orientation schedule for Linda - some of you will hear more from us about that in the near future.

Linda will remain in her current location in Room 210 in the Serials "wing" of the Acquisitions Department. Please stop by and say, "welcome aboard" to Linda in her new permanent position!

## Mount Vernon Campus Archive

### **“A Diamond in the Rough: The Mount Vernon Campus Archive”**

by **Sonya Tupone**  
*University Archives Graduate  
Student Assistant*

This past summer I had the opportunity to intern for eight weeks in the George Washington University Mount Vernon Seminary and College Archives. For many who don't know about this gem of an archive: it is located on the second floor of the Eckles Memorial Library on the Mount Vernon campus. The purpose of the Archives is to identify and preserve institutional records that have historical value for Mount Vernon as well as the broader community. The Mount Vernon Archives has approximately six hundred linear feet of papers and artifacts that date back to the nineteenth century. More specifically it includes yearbooks, catalogues, photographs, negatives, publications, drawings, maps, sketches, audio and video tapes, correspondence, scrapbooks, and museum pieces.

Before Mount Vernon College was taken over by GW in 1999, it was a 121-year-old women's college founded by Elizabeth Somers. In 1877, when Mrs. Somers officially opened her school it was called Mount Vernon Seminary: a "Family and Day School for Young Ladies" that offered a six-year course, including two post-high school years. Mrs. Somers believed that "While mental brilliancy and high culture are fine things and things earnestly to be striven for, since they so enrich and intensify life-yet a far better thing, and a far finer thing, and the thing most earnestly to be striven for is that strength, dignity, and purity of character which ennobles life." The legacy of Mrs. Somers vision continues to live on in the Mount Vernon Archives.

Some of Mount Vernon's more famous graduates include Marjorie Merriweather Post and Evalyn Walsh McLean. Post was the heir to the Post Cereal conglomerate and founder of Hillwood Museum and Gardens. Post generously funded and helped design Post Hall in 1956 in memory of her parents. McLean, a 1901 MVS graduate, was the famous owner of the Hope Diamond, which was reportedly cursed. McLean had the stone "blessed by a priest so the curse and the blessing could fight it out." Another student, just as important but not as famous was Laura Pratt James, who vividly recounts in her experiences as an MVS student: "In March 1897, President McKinley was inaugurated. Mrs. Somers rented a balcony on Pennsylvania Avenue for us and it was a truly gala day. We had a wonderful lunch served, for as I recall it, the parade started at ten and we left about four in the afternoon. As the President passed our balcony, we lustily gave our school yell. He responded with a smile, raising his hat." (Excerpt from *Dear Daughters: A History of Mount Vernon Seminary and College*, by Nina Mikhalevsky).

I've come to realize that my short little excursion into an archive that was largely un-organized but rich in history was an experience that I shall never ever forget. My advisor, Nina Mikhalevsky, the Director of the Elizabeth Somers Center and Women's Leadership Programs at Mount Vernon, said that I would be "building an archives from the ground up." But, I must say that it was Nina who accomplished much in organizing materials, searching in basements, and moving boxes long before I was recruited to continue her work.

While interning there, my duties were to organize the materials into collections by boxing and labeling the folders, typing up their respective finding aids, and preserving the many photographs and scrapbooks. This work was quite interesting as there are many documents that have great historical value to anyone interested in women's history, student and college life, Washington D.C. politics, and architecture. For instance, the M-Street Collection (the second residence of Mount

Vernon from 1880-1917) includes the only letter in the Archives written by Mrs. Somers (1884), a photograph of a women's suffrage meeting on the White House lawn during President Wilson's Inauguration in 1913, a circa 19<sup>th</sup> century drawing of the M-Street building, and a Mount Vernon Seminary rules and regulations book from 1902.

The Nebraska Ave. Collection (the third residence of Mount Vernon from 1917-1942) includes seven scrapbooks that were owned by students who attended Mount Vernon Seminary, including Jean Syminton, a 1929 MVS graduate. Syminton's scrapbook offers particular insight into student life, which includes photos of Jean and her friends, programs and plays attended at Mount Vernon, a pamphlet on "A Women's View of Herbert Hoover" and a dinner invitation from Miss Jean Dean Cole (the then President of Mount Vernon). Among many other interesting items in the Nebraska Ave. Collection are "The Cloister Columns" a student run newspaper dating from the mid-1930s, a tourist book of Washington D.C. titled "Guard's Guide to Washington D.C." 1926, the Bible from the Elizabeth Somers Chapel circa 1937, and various photos depicting student athletics, classroom learning, tree decorating, Commencement, and aerial views of the campus. These are just a few examples of the types of materials found in the Mount Vernon Campus, which University Archivist G. David Anderson overseas, in collaboration with Nina Mikhalevsky, the Director. David is currently working on updating the Mount Vernon Archives website by adding 12 new finding aids to collections organized during the internship. For those interested in using the MVS Archives or in helping to organize it further, please contact Nina at 202-242-6697 to schedule an appointment.



**SIMPLE TIPS**

*How to thrive in The Gelman Library System  
(or any other organization)*

**“Learn how to run a meeting well. And learn how to prepare a good agenda”**

by **Jack Siggins**  
University Librarian

**LITERARY HISTORY**

Sept. 29, 1902	In Paris, <b>Emile Zola</b> dies in his sleep from inhaling smoke caused by a clogged chimney at the age of 62.
Sept. 30, 1598	<b>Edmund Spenser</b> is appointed Sheriff of Cork.
Sept. 30, 1868	The first volume of <b>Louisa May Alcott</b> 's <i>Little Women</i> is published.
Oct. 1, 1684	<b>Pierre Corneille</b> , who introduced tragicomedy to the French stage with <i>Le Cid</i> , dies in Paris at the age of 78.
Oct. 1, 1885	<b>Louis Untermeyer</b> is born in New York.
Oct. 2, 1836	<b>Charles Darwin</b> returns from his four and a half year voyage on H.M.S. <i>Beagle</i> .
Oct. 2, 1879	Poet, <b>Wallace Stevens</b> is born in Reading, Pennsylvania.

Oct. 3, 1895	<b>Stephen Crane</b> 's <i>The Red Badge of Courage</i> is published in book form.
Oct. 4, 1974	American poet, <b>Anne Sexton</b> dies, a suicide.
Oct. 5, 1829	The Comédie-Français accepts <b>Victor Hugo</b> 's <i>Hernani</i> .
Oct. 6, 1930	<b>William Faulkner</b> 's novel <i>As I Lay Dying</i> is published.
Oct. 7, 1719	A pirated installment of <b>Daniel Defoe</b> 's <i>Robinson Crusoe</i> appears in <i>The Original London Post</i> , the first novel to be serialized.
Oct. 8, 1779	<b>William Blake</b> begins his studies at the Royal Academy.
Oct. 8, 1943	<b>Robert L. Stine</b> is born on this day and will become the most popular author of several scary books.
Oct. 9, 1950	Poet <b>Edna St. Vincent Millay</b> dies at the age of 58 in Austerlitz, New York.
Oct. 10, 1930	Playwright <b>Harold Pinter</b> is born in London.
Oct. 11, 1917	In her diary <b>Virginia Woolf</b> notes her first impression of <b>Katherine Mansfield</b> : "I'm a little shocked by her commonness at first sight; lines so hard and cheap. However, when this diminishes, she is so intelligent and inscrutable that she replays friendship."

Oct. 12, 1903	<b>Anton Chekhov</b> completes work on <i>The Cherry Tree</i> .
Oct. 12, 1908	African-American novelist, journalist, and biographer, <b>Ann Petry</b> is born in Old Saybrook, Connecticut.
Oct. 12, 1924	<b>Anatole France</b> dies at 80 in La Bécherrie, near Tours. His funeral is the first national one accorded a writer since that of <b>Victor Hugo</b> in 1885.

## Something to Talk About



### Was the Mayan Empire the Most Advanced Early Civilization?

In some regards, the Mayas were more advanced than other civilizations. Their development preceded that of the other agrarian civilizations in Central and South America – principally the Aztec and the Inca.

The Mayas were an agricultural people who originated about 1000 B.C. in the Yucatan Peninsula (Central America) and eastern Mexico. There they developed a civilization that was highly advanced: Not only did the Mayas produce remarkable architecture (including the flat-topped pyramids that are visited by tourists) and art, but also developed their own writing system – probably the first in the Western Hemisphere. They used this system to record time, astronomical events, their history, and religion (they believed in more than 160 gods). They also developed an advanced mathematics as well as 365-day calendar believed by some to be even more accurate than the Gregorian calendar in use today.

At its peak, the Mayan population numbered some fourteen million. Their history is divided into three periods: the Pre-Classic period began about the time they originated (roughly 1000 B.C.) and extended into A.D. 300; this was the group's formative period. During the Classic period 300-900, Mayan culture spread throughout the area and they developed city-centers at Copán (Honduras), Palenque and Uxmal (Mexico), and Piedras Negras, Uaxactún, and Tikal (Guatemala). Scholars believe Tikal was home to some fifty thousand people and was not only a center for government, education, economics, and science, but it was also a spiritual mecca for the Maya. It was in the second half of the Classic period that the Maya made their greatest accomplishments in art and science: Europe would not produce a superior system of mathematics for centuries to come. During the Post-Classic period (900 - 1546), they were invaded by the Toltecs. However the Maya absorbed these people rather than being conquered by them. Nevertheless, by the time the Spanish arrived in the mid-1500s, the Mayan civilization was in decline. Some historians attribute this to widespread famine or disease while others believe the decline was due to a rebellion of the people against the harsh government. Though they were conquered by the Spaniards and became assimilated into the larger culture that developed in the region, Maya Indians still survive in Mexico and Central America today.

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#### RENAISSANCE TIMES

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**Isabella Montgomery**, Editor  
*The Renaissance Times*  
 The Melvin Gelman Library  
 2130 H Street, NW - Room 201  
 Washington, DC 20052

Voice (202) 994-6455  
 Fax (202) 463-6205  
 E-mail isabella@gwu.edu