About the cover:

Our cover depicts the spine of a 1482 treatise on canon law, *Supplementum Summæ Pisaneillae*, revealing the exposed “gatherings.” In this case, “gatherings” refers to an assemblage of sheets of folded paper, sewn together to make the sequential pages of a book. This technique was an important innovation in the history of bookmaking. Today, “gatherings” holds another meaning for students and librarians—Alden Library has become the campus gathering place for students to complete collaborative assignments and projects.
This year, the staff at the Ohio University Libraries will celebrate the 40th anniversary of the opening of the Vernon R. Alden Library. Although the University Libraries have been housed in many buildings on campus, none have had the presence or capacity of Alden. Another important milestone in the Libraries’ 190-year history also occurs in 2009 with the acquisition of our three-millionth volume. This is truly a testament to our rich and growing collections.

In the nearly two centuries it took to acquire three million volumes, and especially over the last forty years, the Libraries have undergone extraordinary change. We have moved from a print world in which information was scarce and highly organized to a networked world in which information is ubiquitous and uncontrolled. The way we access knowledge and information has also changed, and Ohio University Libraries have adapted to these changes. Book collections remain important, but electronic journals and databases now comprise well over half of our acquisitions. Though quiet study spaces still remain in Alden Library, our most heavily used areas are those for group study and collaborative work. Librarians still staff the reference desk but, increasingly, questions come through Skype, instant messaging, e-mail, and Facebook.

As the new Dean of Ohio University Libraries, I am proud to join a library with such rich traditions, librarians so focused on the future, and students who regard Alden Library as a center for academic and social support. We look forward to celebrating our 40th anniversary and adding our three-millionth volume. Equally important, though, we look forward to continuing to offer resources for discovery, a virtual hub, a late-night place to study, and countless other resources students, faculty, and the community use at Alden Library. In the future, we will continue to adapt and evolve to meet the needs of the Ohio University community, while maintaining a reputation for dedicated staff and innovative services.

Scott Seaman, Dean of Ohio University Libraries
LEARNING
Around the Clock
By Sherri Saines

Ohio University student Abby Shoaf poses on the floor of the Learning Commons at Vernon R. Alden Library. It is not uncommon for Shoaf to take cat naps at the library while studying and working on her computer until the wee hours of the morning.
Sleep isn’t necessarily the highest thing on my priority list,” says one of Alden’s late-night regulars, senior Abby Shoaf. A transfer student from Pickerington, Ohio, Abby discovered the Learning Commons, the library’s second floor hub filled with computers, study rooms and cozy corners for studying, soon after beginning her studies as a social work major at Ohio University. As a night owl, it was a “huge relief” to find a place open and inviting 24 hours a day, five days a week. She calls the second floor her safe haven, the place where she “doesn’t fall asleep.” It’s free, it’s quiet enough, and it offers minimal distractions with a pleasant buzz of community.

“I can say I’m going to study in my room, but I just get distracted,” says Abby, so she comes to Alden many nights, usually from about 11:30 to about 2 am – if not all night – to get her work done.

She thinks the set-up here “shows attention to what the young adult community needs,” calling the Commons surprisingly “functional and open.” She doesn’t have a printer at home, or a really comfortable chair, and those things are here in abundance. Because she is a transfer student on a five-year plan, she has used several other college libraries. She says Alden is the biggest, most functional and most accessible library in which she has worked. The others “haven’t tried as hard to work with the students” to make a library all it could be.

The Café Bibliotech is also a big draw for this coffee lover. The fact that the coffee is Fair Trade is a bonus, not to mention that it is cheaper than at other cafés.

Abby notes the Commons staff has been extremely kind and helpful. They showed her how to use the catalog to find a book of Spanish verb conjugations, for example. Derek Malone, overnight supervisor, even helped her figure out how to use the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

“As many times as I bug him, he’s always nice to me,” she says. The overnight staff does get to know the late nighters; it seems owls flock together and a community evolves. Abby even confesses that some of those all-nighters were more about socializing than studying.

The library fills many niches for many different student needs, and the overnight world of the Learning Commons is its own comfortable place for some Ohio University students with nocturnal leanings. Like many students, Abby acknowledges how important Alden Library is to her. Abby’s only suggestion for improvement is to have more floors open all night!
LEARNING COMMONS
A Study in Success

The Learning Commons has never been empty. “Fall quarter 2007, finals week: at 1 a.m., there were 400 students sitting at 108 computers, 29 study tables, 52 sofa seats, 70 group study room chairs, 49 café seats, 47 extra chairs—and 45 huddled around their laptops and books on the floor!”

—Cathy Sitko, Reference Dept.

A typical afternoon in the Learning Commons.

Scott Ketner, 20, a sophomore, studies German Language and Culture inside the Learning Commons of Alden Library.
Classes offered about library resources in 2008: 1,159

Reference questions answered since 2004: 269,163

Media Library items borrowed last year in 2008: 87,331

Times that all 50 laptops were loaned during fall quarter 2008: 9,470

Writing Center sessions held in 2008: 4,284

Shannon Lee (left), 21, and a junior, studies accounting with freshman Jermain Onye, 19 inside the Learning Commons of the Alden Library.

Caylee Heiremans eats at Café Bibliotech while studying for her upcoming class.
Chad Boeninger holds his Webcam camera, which is one way he transfers information and instruction to those seeking troubleshooting, tutorials and reference services. Boeninger is a Reference & Instruction Librarian, web manager and Business & Economics Bibliographer at Vernon R. Alden Library.
Thus begins another reference transaction between a librarian and a patron via instant messaging (IM). Since 2005, the Alden Library Reference Department has answered more than 13,000 questions through its instant messaging service.

The department started the service in July 2005 to make librarians more available to patrons. As many college students prefer instant messaging as a means of communication, offering the option for reference service proved to be a no-brainer. Along with the services at the reference desk, over the phone, and via email, the IM service allows students instant contact with a librarian. The service is booming, largely because librarians are available during every hour the Learning Commons is open.

“We’re proud of the fact that we have one of the most active virtual reference programs in the state, perhaps in the country,” boasts Reference Department Head Wanda Weinberg. “Because we staff the service 134 hours a week, we often have more questions at night than during the day.”

Students appreciate this service because they can talk to a librarian anonymously, they don’t have to approach what can be an imposing desk, and they don’t have to leave the computer station where they are working. No matter if students are on the 6th floor of Alden, at their parents’ house in Cleveland, or studying abroad in Italy, the service instantly connects them with an expert who is able to help them with research. 

Kristin Heinichen
The E.W. Scripps Papers

By Janet Carleton
Edward Willis Scripps (1854 – 1926) was one of America’s pioneering newspaper publishers, a man with the “heart of a dirt farmer, the soul of a poet and the flaming brain of a crusading newspaper publisher,” according to Vance Trimble, who penned *The Astonishing Mr. Scripps: The Turbulent Life of America’s Penny Press Lord*. Despite being a respected correspondent to high-ranking political and intellectual figures, Scripps preferred to keep a low public profile, relying instead upon his newspapers to speak for him.

In 1988, Charles E. Scripps donated his grandfather E.W. Scripps’ personal and business papers, as well as other documents received by Scripps from family, friends, business associates, and employees to Ohio University Libraries. Over the next two years, library staff spent an enormous amount of time processing and making the collection available, celebrating its public opening in 1990. Recently, the library has undertaken the task of digitizing the collection to make it available for future generations. Thanks to these efforts, the legacy of E.W. Scripps—whose work changed American journalism—can now live on into the new digital age.

**Availability**

Scripps had many interests beyond newspapers, and his correspondence offers a rich glimpse into the issues of the time. Housed in the Robert E. and Jean R. Mahn Center for Archives and Special Collections on the fifth floor of Alden Library, the E.W. Scripps Papers contain his correspondence on topics from politics to science to projects for the public good, such as charities, parks and preserves, roads, and public works. Although the Scripps Papers provide a rich treasure trove of information for researchers, faculty and students, it became apparent after their acquisition that the fragile nature of the paper, along with increased usage, was causing wear and tear. To meet these challenges, Alden Library began charting a course of action to ensure protection of this invaluable resource for future generations by establishing a digitization program.

The term digitization, in this instance, describes a multi-faceted process which includes selecting materials, securing funding, conducting background research, ensuring copyright clearance, capturing images, managing files, creating user interfaces, and doing outreach.

The digitization of cultural heritage materials is a labor-intensive business. Capturing high-quality images from fragile materials handled in a secure environment requires skill and an eye for color to replicate, as closely as possible, the experience of viewing the original document. The most challenging, and arguably the most important piece of the puzzle, is creating the “metadata,” the descriptive terms that enable users to locate and sort through specific online material.

Digitization is becoming increasingly important in libraries across the country.

“It is my belief that the greatest assistance is rendered society by that business organization of publicity which is called the daily paper.”

— E. W. Scripps
“Cultural heritage institutions always try to balance the needs of our users with the needs of the collections,” says Laurie Gemmill, digital manager at the regional library network PALINET. “However, our users are no longer asking whether our collections are available online, they [are] simply presuming the collections are available to them online 24/7… Many users want to use the materials in person but many more… only find and use materials if they are online.”

The Importance of the Collection
Maintaining a digital online presence for the Scripps Papers fills dual responsibilities: access and preservation. In addition to the convenience, online digitization offers accessibility for remote researchers through a simple web search, with an added bonus to the user to “zoom in” on an image for up-close details. Online digital presence also preserves the fragile collection by decreasing the wear and tear on documents caused by multiple handlings.

“Having the digital resources available to access all of Scripps’ information is helpful for everything from understanding what’s going on in the news media today to what the Scripps organization is doing,” said undergraduate journalism major Chelsea E. Toy.

“It’s important to be able to access this type of correspondence for our day-to-day work.”

Currently, there are 1,200 documents online, primarily letters and memos penned by Scripps, but this only represents a small portion of the print collection—many thousand remain to be digitized. A small number of photographs of the Scripps family have been added for visual interest.

The E.W. Scripps Papers is thought to be the only publicly-accessible archive documenting the inner workings of a major newspaper publishing business. His papers are significant for more than journalistic purposes, though: Scripps was an innovator who influenced public policy, funded scientific research and emerged as a champion of the working man. The collection stands as a treasury from one of America’s pioneering public figures. Providing digital online access to this collection, though a great challenge for Ohio University Libraries, is an important one. Perhaps Scripps, himself a man who devoted his life to the business of information, would be humbled to see his illustrious work surviving into the digital age.

To view the online collection visit: http://media.library.ohiou.edu/scripps
When I was first asked to write a profile on Dr. Greg Kremer, President of the Friends of the Libraries, I envisioned him flying by on his early morning bike commute from his Coolville Ridge home. He rides for fun too, and when he does, like on his memorable trip to the Continental Divide, Dr. Kremer likes to hop on his mountain bike and ride for hours.

“The overall experience is what excites me,” he said. “The way you ride a trail is not to look at the obstacles, but focus on the best path through them.”

Off the trail, Dr. Kremer is a global and local community builder. He is an active member of the Green Build Committee for Habitat for Humanity and an Executive Committee member of the Sierra Club, as well as the President of the Friends—libraries being one of his passions.

With a chuckle, Dr. Kremer fondly recalls how as a young boy, he and his mom went to the library for “our weekly jaunt to the city to grab a bag of books,” he said. “I still love to wander into the Fine Arts section to open my perspective.” In his next breath, he links the past with the present, speaking about the importance of libraries and his involvement today as the president of the organization.

“(Our) most important role is one of advocacy and awareness-building,” he said. “(We) do whatever we can to engage others to become a Friend of the Libraries.”

This, however, is only a small glimpse inside the life of Dr. Kremer, chair of the Department of Mechanical Engineering and the department’s car specialist. I discovered that Greg really loves cars, which inspired him to become a mechanical engineer.

“I grew up with vehicles of all kinds, first bikes which I took apart and put back together,” he said, “and as I got up to the level of cars, I learned how to fix them. A lot of us guys like things that go fast.” Dr. Kremer is currently working with graduate student Todd Steigerwalt on a prototype ammonia-fueled vehicle.

Whether in the classroom or on the trail, Dr. Kremer seeks awe-inspiring journeys. In 2006, while mentoring Ohio University students participating in Engineers Without Borders, Dr. Kremer and his contingent spent three weeks in Ghana building duplex housing to attract new teachers to the region, and in 1992, he and his cousin Matt took a hiking trip to Long’s Run Peak in Colorado. One photo from the trip on his website has a caption that reads, “All work and no play is not good at all.” It seems to be a motto by which Dr. Greg Kremer lives.
In 2005, Ohio University Libraries purchased the private library collection of Cornell University historian David K. Wyatt. Consisting of roughly 15,000 volumes, about half of which are written in Thai, the collection includes standard works on Thailand and Southeast Asia, Thai royal chronicles, the diaries and letters of beloved monarch King Chulalongkorn (1868-1910), and an extensive array of monographs, memoirs, and cremation volumes. The Wyatt Collection is a vast treasure-trove of rare books and historical documents on Thailand.

‘Atsatronomi (1875), part of the collection, is among the rarest of Thai books, one of only three known copies in existence. It is a Thai translation of a work on astronomy.

The David Wyatt Collection is housed in the Hwa-Wei Lee Center for International Collections on the first floor of Alden Library.
of the text *Elements of Astronomy* (1867). What is most striking about ‘Atsatronomi’ is not its sophistication, or the accuracy of its translation, but what it reveals about the intellect of the Siamese ruler, King Mongkut, who commissioned its translation. Mongkut was anything but the self-important and uncultured monarch portrayed in Rodgers and Hammerstein’s flight of fancy, *The King and I*. Mongkut was a consummate man of letters, who was not only a gifted linguist, philosopher, and astrologer, but also an astronomer. In the words of one visitor, Mongkut possessed all the scientific “instruments which might be found in the study or library of an opulent philosopher in Europe.” In fact, it was King Mongkut who predicted with astonishing precision the solar eclipse of 1868, much to the chagrin of the visiting delegation of European astronomers, who hoped, no doubt, to prove the King wrong.

Also part of the Wyatt Collection is the commemoration volume *Chotmāibēt ruāng rap Phrayā Sawētkunchon*. Originally penned in 1812 on dried palm leaves, as was formerly the custom, this volume chronicles the capture of the first white elephant during the reign of King Phutthālōtēlā (1809-1824). The Asian elephant has occupied a central position in Thai culture for centuries, regarded as a noble creature and a symbol of strength, virility and wisdom. The rare white (albino) elephant is of a higher order still. According to Buddhist beliefs, a white elephant, being the preferred abode of transmigrating souls, is sacred. Possession of a white elephant was considered a badge of distinction, and historically, only the Siamese King, the highest of the earth-bound celestial beings, could lay claim to one. King Phutthālōtēlā is believed to have possessed six white elephants, and his most prized elephant, Phraya Sawētkunchon, the subject of this book, was given a royal title and served with all the pomp and magnificence befitting such a majestic beast.

These are just two of the many treasures to be found in the Wyatt Collection, housed on the first floor of Alden Library. Many more riches await scholars and students of Thailand, all thanks to the late David K. Wyatt who entrusted us to care for and preserve his extraordinary collection.
Student Writing Center Success Story
By Paul Shovlin and Don Dudding

In the fall of 2006, Ohio University graduate student Talinn Philips and the two of us, Paul Shovlin and Don Dudding, completed our doctoral exams and suddenly found ourselves confronted with the same problem: writing our dissertations. Fortunately for us, we were able to take advantage of a graduate student writing group, one of Alden Library’s programs through the Student Writing Center, and began to meet regularly, both in person and virtually, to pound out each chapter.

The Student Writing Center has been organizing student writing groups for the last five years. There are usually three to five groups per year, although groups routinely shift and change. Our particular group formed because the three of us were familiar with each other, both personally and professionally, from our work in the Rhetoric and Composition program in the English Department. Other groups consist of students from different disciplines.

Over the next few months, the group changed, as some members left and others were added, but it eventually solidified and kept the same membership for two years. The rules for the writing group were simple. On a rotating basis, each member of the group agreed to take a turn submitting writing, whether it was a page or an entire chapter. Each week the group would focus on the latest submission and offer helpful comments concerning anything from basic style to key disciplinary issues. Talinn was working on an ethnographic study of international students’ use of the Student Writing Center’s tutoring services. Don focused his work on classical rhetoric and theorized a pedagogy that put students first. Paul developed a critical pedagogy essentially...
based on the integration of advanced technologies in writing classes.

Perhaps even more important than the writing feedback was the sense of community that developed among the group members. Knowing that people were struggling with the same issues of juggling work, family, personal and professional obligations helped make a difficult process bearable.

“Of course it was valuable to have other intelligent and competent writers looking over our work,” explains Don. “But the feeling that we were sharing our lives with a group of people that we could be open with enabled us to be completely frank about the changes we suggested for each other.”

For Paul, writing for the group helped him to be more productive. He says, “The writing process for a dissertation can drag on and on. Sometimes, it can feel like you are so far removed from your audience that you lose touch. Writing for people that were going to meet with me and discuss what I was writing caused me to become more engaged with the process.”

Opportunities offered by the online writing environment, where students can meet virtually and work on their writing, were vital to this group’s success. Don says, “I work 45 minutes south of the Athens campus, and another group member had to drive in from Columbus. So, if we didn’t have this electronic alternative, it would have been nearly impossible for us to meet and submit as often as we did.”

In the spring of 2008, Talinn became the first member of the group to finish her dissertation and her degree. Since then, the group has remained socially connected and continues to offer each member support, but is no longer meeting on a weekly basis. Don and Paul plan on finishing their degrees before June 2009.

The road to completing a dissertation can be a bumpy one. But having good companions and support from the Student Writing Center makes the trip a little easier.

Don Dudding and Paul Shovlin in Alden’s Faculty Commons.
OHIO UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
thanks its 2008 donors for their extraordinary support:

A & G Media Group LLC     Gerard Raymond Ackerman     Akron Association of O. U. Women     Dr. George W. Bain & Dr. Nancy R. Bain
Janice M. Baskey Mark C. Baughman Ann J. Baxter Nancy Beres
Shirley Baxter Berndsen Janet Betcher Bruce Alan Bindas & Keely Jeanne Bindas Sheppard
Christine R. Bogar Dr. Adam Bors & Ada L. Smalley Bors Kenneth L. Brier Dr. Catherine L. Brown
Sydney E. Buck & Sonya D. Buck Dr. Karen G. Burch James R. Burkhard & Phyllis A. Burkhard
Marcy Libman Chaney Dr. Anthony G. Chila & Helen Chila Dr. Francine C. Childs Lora J. Clapp
Columbus Foundation (HQ) Peter Colwell Margaret M. Condon Michael Coppola Glenn E. Corlett & Bonnilyn Corlett
Helen Corns Donald Cox John A Cramer & Karen S. Cramer Donna M. Daniel Judith A. Daso Gerry Davidson David Lancelot
Dean Dr. David N. Descutner Charles B. DeVinney Gloria I. Devol Dr. Howard D. Dewald &
Elaine F. Saulinskas Mary Dobbins-Bucklad Rita Doran Ms. Joyce A. Douglas Dr. Gifford B.
Doxsee Dr. Jean Drevenstedt Janet S. Duerr Ruth Anna Duff Clifford C. Dukes Janice L.
Dunmford Darby H. Duncan Holly Duncan Dr. Richard R. Duncan Jeffery A Eberlein Richard
A.C. Fearn Jeffrey Lee Ferrier & Lisbeth Ferrier Estate of David A. Fieler, Sr. Jean Fair Fieler
Robert A Fischer Carol Fisco Maribeth Fisher John R. Fleeman C. Howard Fokes & Dr. Schuyler
E. Cone Barbara L. Foraker Theodore S. Foster & Katharina K. Foster Robert G. Frasch Martha
Gale Frew Larry D. Frey & Ann Frey Leonard I Frielings Friends of Mabel Latham Friends of
the Library Dr. Richard M. Fulks & Annabelle B. Fulks Dr. John C. Fuller Beverly Gage Estate
of David A. Gardiner David R. Gedeon & Diana L. Gedeon John E. Geist & Cecilia Geist Christian
S. Gerig & Kristina B. Gerig M. B. Gerig & Carin E. Gerig Paul J. Gerig & Lois H. Gerig Ismail A.
Ghazalah John R. Gilliom & Amy A. King Judge L. Alan Goldsberry & Stephanie K. Goldsberry
William S. Gorup Dorothy Nething Griffith Robert E. Guinn & Mildred F. Guinn Caryl Gustavson
William Hafner Paula R. Haggard David R Hall Dr. Alonzo L. Hamby & Dr. Joyce Litton Hamby
Gregory E. Hammer Timothy Harmon Dr. Frederick Y. Harris & Kazuko Harris Paula S. Harsch
James C. Hart & Elizabeth F. Hart Dr. David J. Hartline Dr. Timothy P. Hartman & Kathy Hartman
Dr. David G. Hendrickere Michael J. Henry Jr. Kenneth B. Higbie & Dorothy J. Higbie Jennifer Ann
Hill Anne E. Hinton Dr. John W. Hollow & Elizabeth P. Hollow Roberta W. Holzer Dr. Scott L.
Hooper Elizabeth Ann Huber Sharon A. Huge Chenesssa L. Hursey Ruth T. Ingham Dr. Anita
C. James Ellen Pappas Jones Donald A. Jordan & Mary K. Jordan Mr. William J. Kaiser Patricia
G. Kantner Dr. John L. Keifer & Dr. Mary C. Keifer Ted King & Cynthia K. King Laura E. Kinner
Dr. George R. Klare Pamela S. Klein Michael Kleinman & Ann Kleinman Mary J. Kline Don B.
Knapp II & Patricia Knapp Dr. Earl A. Knies & Elizabeth R. Knies Christine B. Knisely Gregory
Gerard Kremer David Bryan Kurz & Helen J. Kurz Peter T. Lalich Jr. Dr. David Alan Lavine Cora
A. Layao Dr. Hwa-Wei Lee & Mary F Lee Sarah B. Levinson Dr. Carolyn B. Lewis LMNO
Engineering, Research and Software Joyce Ann Martin Long Cynthia Wallace Love Dr. Thomas

For more information please contact Doug Partusch, Director of Development at 740-593-2683 or partusch@ohio.edu
How We Stacked up for 2008

Contact Information
Gatherings is a publication of the Friends of the Ohio University Libraries. For more information, please contact: Kate Mason, 512 Alden Library, Athens, Ohio 45701
740.593.2702