McGill does it again. Following Amherst, Mass. and Berkeley, CA, Montreal, with McGill University (widely considered the Harvard of Canada) is named among the top five college towns, ahead of Washington, DC and Boston, Mass. Stories like this demonstrate the superb education, cultural and social environment of which we are part (http://encarta.msn.com/encnet/Departments/College/?article=Top5College
towns).

Montreal was certainly very popular in the last week of May. CARL (Canadian Association of Research Libraries) met in Montreal, examined the future of scholarly communication and prepared its new strategic plan. An Indonesian delegation from Aceh was also in Montreal, undertaking a development program under the auspices of the Faculty of Education and Salwa Ferahian, Sara Holder and myself all participated. In addition to this activity was the Spring Convocation with parents, friends and ecstatic graduates making the campus and Montreal a very lively place. The gardens on campus were at their best and we all did our utmost to make visitors and our graduating students feel special. Several of our own library staff graduated and we congratulate them. Rosa Orlandini from the Walter Hitschfeld Geographic Information Centre graduated with an MLIS and Charles Fletcher from the Islamic Studies Library graduated with a Doctor of Philosophy. Our practicum students also graduated – Jessica Lange, Graham Lavender, Janelle Ramsay, Lisa Chieh-Yao Shen, and Ziaohong Yang. Several of our valued student navigators and casual staff also graduated. We congratulate them all and wish them the
very best in the future.

Montreal’s magnetism and magic continued with the choice of venue for the Canadian Library Association’s National Conference and Trade show. Joseph Jones gave a challenging opening address on *Rethinking the Library*. He made various provocative statements including: *“The scholarly monograph is dead – but nobody knows it and the Library is a place for refuge in an information-poisoned world.”* He identified new values required as Collaboration, Participation, Interaction, Connectivity and Connections, Reflection and Play. Many staff attended the CLA conference and several gave presentations. Jill Boruff from our Life Sciences library made a spirited and thoughtful contribution to a panel on *Walking the walk and talking the talk II: an intergenerational conversation about work*. Karen Jensen from Collection Services gave an excellent overview of SACO (*The Subject Authority Component of the PCC*): an introduction and discussion of McGill’s experience and Amy Buckland and I made a short presentation on what’s cool at McGill in a panel session on *Bringing your library’s “cool” to the information community*. McGill Library was well represented by a team of volunteers who helped ensure that the conference ran smoothly. Megan Fitzgibbons, Robin Canuel, Julia Stark, Greg Colley, Stephanie Simard, Dawn McKinnon, Cornelia Penner, Lindsey Sikora and Rebecca Nicholson all lent a hand – thank you to everyone who helped make the Conference a great success. John Hobbins’ leadership of the Nahum Gelber Law Library began in 2003, having been delayed by his departure on sabbatic leave in the previous year. He ceased being Law Librarian in August 2008 and indicated that he would not apply for the new position of Head Librarian, Nahum Gelber Law Library that was then established. John willingly agreed to continue his stewardship during the recruitment period for the new position. It has been a much longer period than first envisaged and we thank him for his continuing commitment in a time of uncertainty. We are all extremely grateful.

John has provided excellent leadership during his time as Law Librarian. He has worked with a great group of people and ensured they became a powerful team providing collections and services of excellence to the Faculty of Law. There has been considerable recognition of the value of the collections and services provided and of the impressive nature of the service model implemented. John has always clearly represented the interests of the Faculty and ensured that their needs were both understood and met within the Library system. John has also articulated the needs of librarians, both within the Law Library and throughout the Library system, and ensured that their interests were represented. We are all the better for his diligence. John leaves the Law Library in a much better place. New technologies have been implemented. Additional collections, particularly electronic ones, have been provided. Innovative services have been implemented. The Nahum Gelber Law Library is a well-organized and client-focused entity which provides an excellent basis for future service to the Faculty of Law and the university community as a whole. Thank you, John!

ENDNOTE


Marika Asimakopulos began working at McGill’s Physical Science & Engineering Library in 1984. Now, 25 years later, PSE is Schulich Library of Science and Engineering and Marika is poised to leave us. In August, Marika will take a well-deserved retirement from McGill.

Marika began as a part-time, sessional librarian, and later joined us full time. She was granted tenure in 1997. She has been the liaison librarian for the Department of Physics since 1989, and liaison to the Department of Mechanical Engineering and the Department of Mathematics and Statistics since 1991.

A high school teacher and a biology laboratory demonstrator before her library life, Marika says she most enjoyed the teaching aspect of being an academic librarian and her interaction with the University’s students and faculty members.

She cites some other highlights of her career at McGill:


• Her participation in the digitization of McGill Engineering Technical Reports <http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/pse/>: Marika was involved with the digitization of the McGill Mechanical Engineering Technical Reports, which launched in December 2000, and later with the McGill Civil Engineering Technical Reports, which launched in 2006.

• Her participation in the creation of the Design Bibliography Database (DBDB) <http://designbibliography.mcgill.ca/>: Marika worked with Prof Angeles of the Department of Mechanical Engineering, and David McKnight, formerly of McGill Library’s Digital Collections Program. The DBDB was launched in February 2007.

In her quarter century here, Marika witnessed dramatic changes in the landscape of the library. The “amazing development and dependence on all things electronic fundamentally changed our work and our lives,” she says. “[I] can remember breaking out into a cold sweat every time one had to sit at a computer; rather like my father who was born in the late 1800s and died in 2005 – his lifetime encompassed so much change.”

No longer instilled with fear at the sight of her computer, I am happy to report that Marika has adapted to the twenty-first century library. She will be leaving a very different McGill Library than the one she entered, but she would be missed in either one.

Now, before we say farewell to our colleague and friend and wish her all the best for a long and healthy retirement, let’s get to know her!

Where were you born?
In Toronto of Greek-born parents

What part of town do you live in?
Westmount [in a Percy Nobbs semi-detached]

How long have you worked at the library?
Part-time since 1984; “fuller-time” since 1988

Do you have any pets?
No pets [it’s a law in our home]

What is your favorite place in Montreal?
The Summit Lookout

What is your favorite dessert?
Tiramisu

What are you reading and/or listening to?
John Grisham’s The Runaway Jury and My New Yorkers

What are your other interests?
Clara and Nicholas; gardening (in season); travel (all seasons)

What is your pet peeve?
Impatient clients

What is/are your favorite quote(s)?
“In the long run we’re all dead”, John Maynard Keynes

“What is one thing that people do not know about you?
Where I was when the new millenium arrived.
McGill Library welcomed the Chambre de commerce du Montréal métropolitain to the Cyberthèque on May 5 for an evening of creating professional ties while discovering the Library. In a unique opportunity over 100 individuals from the business milieu came together to enjoy the occasion of eating, drinking and networking in the Library. A presentation was made by Trenholme Director of Libraries Janine Schmidt, helping guests learn more about the Library. They were also given the opportunity to tour Rare Books and Special Collections, discovering some of the Library’s rare and unique treasures.
SEARCH WORDS

What words do people search to find the Library’s web pages? Mostly McGill, university, and library (or variations thereof) if we measure by the number of our clients using the terms. Beyond these, the search logs turn up a vocabulary list as diverse as the McGill community.

Some of the terms used suggest that our clients know what’s offered on the website (“export pdf”, “physics citation style”, “topographic maps quebec”, “bdtq”), while others come as a surprise (“tim hortons swot”, “Montreal postal codes”). And of course the word sex appears a few times— we do offer a course guide for the Anatomy of sex, after all.

Here is a word cloud of search terms logged in February. For artistic purposes, the overly common terms were stripped out (e.g. McGill), and the size of the word reflects not the number of times it was searched, but the number search phrases the word appeared in.

The top 500 search phrases can be seen here: http://wikisites.mcgill.ca/lts/images/e/e3/Feb09_SearchTerms.pdf

Spring comes into Quebec from the west. It is the warm Japan Current that brings the change of season to the east coast of Canada, and then the West Wind picks it up. It comes across the prairies in the breath of the Chinook, waking up the grain and caves of bears. It flows over Ontario like a dream of legislation, and it sneakers into Quebec, into our villages, between our birch trees. In Montreal the cafes, like a bed of tulip bulbs, sprout from their cellars in a display of awnings and chairs. In Montreal spring is like an autopsy. Everyone wants to see the inside of the frozen mammoth. Girls rip off their sleeves and the flesh is sweet and white, like wood under green bark. From the streets a sexual manifesto rises like an inflating tire, “The winter has not killed us again!” Spring comes into Quebec from Japan, and like a prewar Cracker-jack prize it breaks the first day because we play too hard with it. Spring comes into Montreal like an American movie of Riviera Romance, and everyone has to sleep with a foreigner, and suddenly the house lights flare and it’s summer, but we don’t mind because spring is really a little flashy for our taste, a little effeminate, like the furs of Hollywood lavatories. Spring is an exotic import, like rubber love equipment from Hong Kong, we only want it for a special afternoon, and vote tariffs tomorrow if necessary.

- from Leonard Cohen’s Beautiful Losers
McGill University Library has bought at auction a rare manuscript notebook of English novelist Fanny Burney (1752-1840) containing the drafts of some 40 letters in French addressed to various friends from 1809-1811. Burney was a prolific writer and diarist whose work directly influenced her successors, such as Jane Austen and William Makepeace Thackeray. Her first novel, Evelina, was published in 1778 and became an international bestseller. Today, there are more than 60 lifetime editions in seven different languages. The novel arguably created a new school of fiction, one in which women in 18th century English society “were portrayed in realistic, contemporary circumstances,” satirizing their social pretensions and personal foibles, while exploring the politics of female identity. The unpublished notebook was part of the collection of Georgian literature formed by the late Paula Peyraud and recently came to light at Bloomsbury Auctions in New York. Its purchase on May 6 was made possible by funding from the B. H. Breslauer Foundation. “The Library is extremely grateful that in these challenging financial times, such a purchase was made possible by the generous support of the Foundation,” said Janine Schmidt, Trenholme Director of Libraries at McGill University. The B. H. Breslauer Foundation of New York was established and endowed by the late Dr. Bernard H. Breslauer (1918-2004), with the main purpose of giving grants to libraries that collect rare books and manuscripts in the United States and to the US affiliates of libraries elsewhere. While it is unclear if the 40 letters in the notebook represent actual letters or simply exercises in autobiographical epistolary form, the notebook presents information about Fanny Burney at the time she developed breast cancer and her ensuing mastectomy - a period from which relatively few of her letters exist. The notebook will be housed in the Library’s Rare Books and Special Collections, where Dr. Richard Virr, Head and Curator of Manuscripts, described the price of acquiring the manuscript as “considerably lower than our estimates, and a modest sum to acquire such a unique treasure which will support the work of McGill University’s Burney Centre” (http://burneycentre.mcgill.ca/). The Burney Centre, which welcomes scholars from around the world, was created in 1960 to rescue this unjustly forgotten literary pioneer from obscurity. McGill Library also acquired a number of other manuscript letters by and to Fanny Burney as well as a significant number of early editions of her novels and other printed material. Also purchased was a manuscript of novels, plays and poems by Burney’s niece Sophia Elizabeth Burney that is unknown to scholars. Rare Books and Special Collections is one of the McGill Library’s 13 branches and houses many of the McGill University Library’s most important research collections including art and architecture, Canadiana, history, literature, philosophy (including an outstanding David Hume Collection), travel and exploration, and the history of the book. Gifts and purchases have formed the present holdings of more than 280,000 printed books, 12,000 prints, 6,000 maps, 1,000 manuscripts and 500 linear metres of archives and private papers. It is a true discovery library, actively supporting the teaching, learning and research needs of McGill students and faculty from all disciplines, as well as the wider scholarly community.

COME HEAR WHAT IT’S ALL ABOUT!
The wonderful multimedia exhibition Hearing Visions Sonores continues on all three floors of the Marvin Duchow Music Library. This exhibit presents graphic scores from nine Quebec-based composers, featuring over-sized display panels of each score and audiovisual display stations allowing visitors to hear recordings of the music and composer interviews. Don’t miss it! You can also check out the comprehensive website, www.improvcommunity.ca/hvs.
McGill University Library is pleased to announce a partnership with Kirtas Technologies and its Canadian partner Ristech, which will allow students, faculty and the general public to request to have books scanned and made available through the new Digitize on Demand program. “It’s an exciting time for the Library as we embark on a new era of services. With this innovative technology we can reveal our collections through user-driven digitization and distribution,” Janine Schmidt, Trenholme Director of Libraries at McGill, said. “The partnership with Kirtas advances the Library’s interest in improving scholarly access to its collections.”

The program will offer books that are difficult to find, because they are generally out of print. They are also in the public domain, meaning that there are no copyright restrictions.

Using existing information from the Library’s catalogue records, Kirtas will make the books available through its retail site, www.kirtasbooks.com. Customers can search for a desired title and place a request to have it digitized. The book is then digitized at very high-quality using Kirtas’s innovative automatic page-turning scanner that was purchased by the Library in 2008. What also makes this approach unique is that the books can be offered before they are ever digitized, so there is no up-front printing, production or storage cost.

Kirtas currently has 12 partnerships with universities and public libraries to make special collections available for sale online, with McGill University the first to participate in Canada. Virtually any library with a modern records database can participate in the Digitize on Demand program. Distribution rights are non-exclusive so the books can also be made available through other distribution channels at a library’s request. McGill University Library will also make a digital copy of each scanned item available through its catalogue.

“McGill was an early adopter in book digitizing, so it’s only fitting that they would be the first Canadian content partner on Kirtasbooks.com,” said Kirtas Founder and CEO Lotfi Belkhir. “Digitize on Demand is a unique and innovative way for libraries to digitize content, and we’re thrilled to have McGill University Library as a partner in this initiative.”
lovers of the eclectic style that dominated international design from 1925 to the early 1950s were in Montreal on May 24 for the 10th World Congress on Art Deco. In celebration of this event, on May 26 the McGill Library welcomed visitors to re-discover the magic of a period that defined an era with an extremely successful exhibition opening and reception. The Library hosted more than 100 Art Deco enthusiasts for an evening that Richard Virr, Head of Rare Books and Special Collections described as “one of the Library’s greatest successes.”

The exhibition, which is being displayed in several locations, will continue until August so please do join us and see what all the fuss is about! Items on display explore lithographs alive with the energy and excitement of the twenties, uncover the unique fashion and accessories of the period in the pages of the Gazette du bon ton: art, modes et frivolités, highlight the distinctive book design infused by the colourful and energetic spirit of the times, walk us through life in Montreal in the period and offer insight into the ongoing influence on modern design with a display of recent publications on all aspects of Art Deco.

Join us as we uncover these wonderful treasures from the holdings of McGill Library’s Rare Books and Special Collections and Blackader-Lauterman Library of Architecture and Art. The exhibit debuts on the main floor lobby of the McLennan Library Building and continues on the fourth floor lobby and Reading Room and the Blackader-Lauterman Library of Architecture and Art on the third floor of the Redpath Library Building.