

TheMedium

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Letter from the ARLIS/NA President

Dear ARLIS/Texas-Mexico Members,

As ARLIS/NA Vice-President/President Elect this past year and President this year I've heard various concerns from our membership about the state of the Society's chapters. So, it seemed appropriate to share some thoughts on the state of chapters generally and what we might consider specifically to keep us viable for many years to come.

One thing is clear: our chapters vary significantly in their size, activity level, and aspirations for the future. Some chapters number in the hundreds in terms of members and have a wealth of resources, not only financially but also in terms of professional development opportunities, membership base from which to draw on for expertise and new leadership, as well as fundraising potential. Other chapters have numbers that linger in the teens and may have financial concerns, but more critically are faced with challenges in drawing new members and developing new leaders, which threatens their very viability. Our Texas-Mexico chapter seems to fit somewhere in the lower to middle end of the spectrum – with numbers of members hovering in the mid-to upper-thirties for some time. That said, it seems that we should give some thought to ensuring this stability.

It seems prudent to step back and review the elements at play in chapter sustainability levels before launching into any musings on membership retention or growth.

The following elements pose real challenges that are largely tied to economic realities and have resulted in flat or decreasing numbers of positions in the art information field in recent years:

- Down-sizing or closures of visual resources centers due to budgetary crises, especially for those tied to art and art history departments
- Merged positions and/or responsibilities in academic libraries (such as expanding roles to include drama, dance, classics, and so forth, causing membership and travel dollars to be reallocated to other organizations)
- Moves toward generalization in public library services, resulting in diminished fine arts departments, impacting positions and travel dollars
- General decreases in funding by institutions for memberships (if ever funded), conference registrations, and travel expenses.

The question then for us as a chapter is how can we encourage membership retention or even growth when there are a flat or decreasing number of positions in the field? Not an easy question to answer, but here goes nonetheless.

I would suggest we consider some of the following:

- Keep membership fees at a reasonable rate (which I believe we do)
- Further underwrite student membership fees (ours are already quite reasonable)

- Create content and value that will encourage membership and visitation to our chapter site (i.e. dissemination of rich programming through virtual presentations for those unable to attend physical events, interviews with chapter members or luminaries outside the chapter on our site, etc.)
- Leverage the knowledge and experience of other chapters by consulting them about successful methods of retention and growth (i.e. chapter mentoring programs)
- Host joint meetings with other chapters or regional associations to enhance the value for our members and raise awareness for potential members
- Continue to raise awareness for students and faculty in MLS graduate programs in our state by presenting at sessions devoted to library organizations, subscribe to their listservs, and distribute marketing information about the Society and the chapter
- Encourage the usage of Society resources, such as travel awards, special funding opportunities for chapter projects, marketing information, GoToWebinar software for virtual events, etc.

While I'm certain that each of you has suggestions of your own, I'm hopeful that your ideas combined with some of these will bolster a chapter that has been and I believe will remain vital for many, many years to come.

Sincerely,

Jon Evans
Director, Hirsch Library
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

2012 Lois Swan Jones Award Recipient Conference Report

Minneapolis Joint Conference

Thank you for the opportunity to attend the [VRA + ARLIS/NA 2011 2nd Joint Conference](#) in Minneapolis, Minnesota with the Lois Swan Jones Award. Attending the conference helped me to learn more about [ARLIS/NA](#) as an organization and developments in art librarianship across the country. Additionally, I participated in the mentorship program through which I was able to discuss my professional interests and questions with my mentor. I feel fortunate to have had the opportunity to attend the ARLIS/NA conference at this point in my degree program and have already incorporated information from the sessions into my class work and in determining my future courses. I look forward to becoming more active within both the national and regional organizations in the future.

On Thursday afternoon I attended two special interest group meetings, Artist Files and Materials Libraries. The Artist Files working group addressed concerns raised in a recent article reviewing the group's work, issues with finding vendors to assist in digitizing artist files, and the potential in digital archiving tools such as the Internet Archive and Archive It. The Materials Library group discussed several different materials vendors and libraries across the country and sparked conversations and brainstorming throughout the group. It was interesting to hear the input and perspectives of people who work in a range of institutions and the various strategies that are needed in the variety of libraries. After the meetings I met with my conference mentor, Milan Hughston, former UT library student and Chief of Library and Museum Archives at the Museum of Modern Art. Mr. Hughston served as a wonderful guide throughout the conference, introducing me to his colleagues and recommending sessions related to my interests.

The opening plenary "Works and Fair Use: Can Bridges Be Built Between Educational Users and Copyright Owners?" by Jule Sigall on Friday provided insight on his work with the orphan works legislation and offered suggestions for library professionals. "Beyond the Silos of the LAMs" addressed the changing roles of information professionals brought forth with digital materials and evolving patron expectations. Presenters from Simmons College, the Centre for Arts and Culture at the University of Calgary, and the Minnesota Historical Society discussed the innovative ways these institutions are redefining traditional roles of librarians and archivists. The "New Voices in the Profession" session was especially valuable because I was able to observe the projects other students and new professionals are working on, including image access in film, digitization projects, and research on copyright issues. Additionally, Kathryn Pierce, UT Austin's [iSchool](#) PhD candidate, presented her research on preserving digital architectural records. I, like many others, ended my evening snacking on fancy cheese and desserts at "The Icebreaker."

On Saturday I attended both the VRA and ARLIS/NA Annual Membership meetings where I gained a sense of the general functions of the organizations as well as their upcoming events and goals. The joint lunch was a great opportunity to chat with people about their various libraries and positions and honor Craig Bunch for his research award! The "Engaging New Technologies" presentations overwhelmed me with social networking options, yet sparked an idea for one of my final research papers. I enjoyed wrapping up the day with the TX/MX meeting and hearing about all the projects happening across the state.

Sunday's "Collaborative Ventures, Collaborative Gains" presentations inspired me to think about the potential for libraries and librarians to take more active involvement in course curricula. The Museum Library Division and VRA Museum Visual Resources Group meeting introduced me to new technologies available to assist librarians in physically managing collections and the [ArLiSNAP](#) meeting was an interesting brainstorming session on how to get more involved within the larger organization. After the [ArLiSNAP](#) meeting I quietly picked up my coat from the rack and snuck down the stairs, out the door, across Loring Park, and back to the Walker for the few hours before my flight.

Submitted by Mary Wegmann

Artstream

The [Fine Arts Library](#) was the first library in the country to host the [Artstream Ceramic Cup Library](#).

The collection contains 40 cups from 13 nationally known potters, and all the cups could be checked out for a week by current UT faculty, students, and staff.

We had a reception for the exhibition on Friday, March 4, and Lisa Orr, a local potter and Artstream participant, spoke about the Artstream project. Additionally, Lisa and local potter, Ryan McKerley gave a ceramics demonstration on Monday, March 7th in the Ceramics Studio in the ART Building, room 2.410.

Karen Holt blogged about the exhibition happenings on the [Artstream blog](#), and the cups were on display until March 31st.

We had a total of 50 cup checkouts by 38 patrons.

Submitted by Laura Schwartz

CASETA – Center for the Advancement and Study of Early Texas Art

9th Annual Meeting Dallas, April 15-17, 2011

Approximately two hundred people attended [Caseta](#)'s annual symposium held this year in Dallas. Caseta defines "early Texas art" as that produced in Texas prior to the last forty years, a moving target which excludes current offerings, prevents stagnation, and forestalls arguments about what year "early" ends. Collectors, museum directors, librarians, art appraisers, authors, and just lovers of art attend. You begin to feel that Texas is a small place where everyone knows everyone else when you attend Caseta's meetings.

The event also sponsored an Art Fair at which ten invited dealers had early Texas art for sale. The Art Fair included well-established dealers such as David Dike Fine Art, Kevin Vogel's Valley House Gallery, Heritage Auctions, and William Reaves Fine Art, as well as several well-known dealers who operate without storefronts. An important added attraction this year was a one-day exhibit of Claude Albritton's Texas art collection held at the McKinney Avenue Contemporary (The MAC). This private, but very professional museum and theater was founded by Mr. Albritton who collects extensively in early Texas art.

The symposium papers were of high quality and ranged from Kevin Vogel's discussion of three Texas "memory" painters, Clara Williamson, H. O. Kelly, and Velox Ward, to Michael Grauer's (Dictionary of Texas artists, 1800-1945) comments on Texas Impressionism. Susie Kahlil gave a spirited, almost emotional talk on Alexander Hogue whose retrospective is currently circulating at several Texas museums. Howard Taylor, Director of the San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts, whose talk was postponed from Saturday to Sunday due to the wildfires in the region (Texas weather!), discussed an almost forgotten early Texas art colony at Christobal outside of San Angelo which existed in the 1920ies. Mr. Taylor, who moved from the Maritime Museum in Philadelphia to San Angelo, gave a very good answer to a question asked him by a former colleague in the East, i.e. "Is there any art in Texas?" Bill Cheek and Morris Matson, the latter representing the recently deceased A. C. "Ace" Cook, discussed collecting early Texas art, particularly in earlier days. Of particular interest to librarians was the presentation of Cindy Boeke, Southern Methodist University, and Neil Sreenan, Dallas Museum of Art, on digitizing Texas art collections held by these institutions and the Dallas Public Library. It is best explained by accessing the [online site](#). This database is a work in progress and will contain much information of interest to Texas art collectors.

Without going into the details of each talk I'll mention some of the highlights that remained with me.

Keith Vogel's contribution was listed as "Three Early Texas Folk Artists, Clara MacDonald Williamson, H. O. Kelly and Velox Ward." Keith said they were not folk artists, which implied a continuing tradition of doing things; he preferred the term "memory painters." These artists painted an assemblage of memories, not necessarily one event. The view of their pictures is from up above, a bird's eye, or God's eye view.

Aunt Clara Williamson's "Sweet Adeline" shows a barbershop with lots of male activity going on in it as well as a barbershop quartet. She said nice women weren't supposed to look inside a barbershop, but apparently she had looked enough to make an interesting picture of a male dominated space. Velox Ward was named for his mother's sewing machine, a Velox, which advertised that it was "speedy and accurate." "That me! Speedy and

accurate," he said. He accepted any job to make a living and did everything from trap skunks, whose oil he said prevented flu, to preach. He was a successful preacher as long as he preached from the Bible, but said once he went to a seminary his preaching was ruined. H. O. Kelly had an aptitude for painting animals. He devised his own way of figure painting. He painted the naked body first to get it right, then painted clothes on it. All were self taught and painted in a naïf style.

The life of Julian Onderdonk, (1882-1922), Texas' best-known impressionist, almost perfectly brackets the rise and decline of impressionist painting in the United States. By 1900 the three main painters of early Texas art, Emma Richardson Cherry, Robert Onderdonk (Julian's father), and Frank Reaugh, had been exposed to French impressionism in France or other parts of the globe and either practiced or encouraged it in Texas. Frank Reaugh insisted the Dallas Museum of Fine Art (former name) buy its first Childe Hassam.

Three women who taught at what is now Texas Woman's University, in Denton, came up in several contexts. Carlotta Corpron, a groundbreaking photographer, whose work is not as well known as it should be, was reported to have said, "Light is a plastic medium." She taught that photography was painting with light instead of paint. Coreen Spellman, a wonderful modern painter, was mentioned. Toni LaSelle, a pupil of Hans Hoffmann, was given the credit for bringing Moholy-Nagy to Denton during World War II.

The panel on collecting early Texas art yielded many anecdotes. A. C. "Ace" Cook who put together the famous Bullring Collection located at the Ft. Worth Stockyards started as an airline pilot. He was fired for refusing to cross a picket line during a strike. A friend gave him a job in a pawnshop and soon he owned three. He bought a second hand book on Texas art in Austin, read it straight through in one night and was hooked. Ace's grandfather was a horse trader. The pawnshop and the horse trading made him a born art collector. He bought \$100,000's for \$1,000's. When collectors arrived to buy the contents of Kathleen Blackshear's attic they found that Ace had been there before and bought fourteen paintings.

When asked to discuss "the one that got away" the panelists agreed that it might be the Everett Spruces that ended up in an Austin gallery after his death because storage rent wasn't paid. Bill Cheek said he didn't buy modernists and passed them up.

The question came up on how to judge good art? One panelist offered the advice of Ruth Carter Stevenson, daughter of museum founder, Amon Carter, to only look at masterpieces. Then you'll know the junk when you see it.

One speaker made an astonishing suggestion. He said Caseta and other art lovers should exert pressure on The University of Texas to exhibit those Frank Reaugh longhorn pictures, the ones that hung in the Barker History Center before it became the Alexander Architecture Archives, and have been in storage unseen for forty years. So, Longhorns, if you see a group carrying pitchforks and charging up the mall, it's not French Revolution re-enactors, but early Texas art lovers coming after the golden horde.

Submitted by Gwen Dixie

Collection Profile: The Jake and Nancy Hamon Arts Library/ Southern Methodist University

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Jake and Nancy Hamon Arts Library

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REFERENCE COLLECTION AT THE HAMON LIBRARY

Overview

The [Jake and Nancy Hamon Arts Library](#) opened in fall 1990 under the Central University Libraries system at Southern Methodist University. The circulating and reference collection contains over 180,000 items on the visual and performing arts. The Library also has a collection that includes over 300 periodicals and access to more than forty online resources specific to the arts. The art and art history print collection is strong in Iberian, classical, medieval, Renaissance, and nineteenth-century through late twentieth-century art. The Library has two archives, the Jerry Bywaters Special Collections and the G. Williams Jones Film and Video Collection. The Bywaters Special Collections houses the Jerry Bywaters Collection on Art of the Southwest, McCord/Renshaw Collection on the Performing Arts, Greer Garson Collection, and the Paul Van Katwijk Collection on music. The Jones Film and Video Collection, founded in 1970 as the Southwest Film/Video

Archives, contains over 9,000 film prints and negatives in all formats and over 3,000 videotapes stored in a climate-controlled facility. Print materials and antique film equipment are also part of the collection. Among the Collection's moving image holdings are feature films, news film and video, animation classics, documentaries, television series, and student films. Highlights include the [Tyler, Texas, Black Film Collection](#); the Gene Autry collection; the Belo news film collection; the Sulphur Springs pre-nickelodeon films; and Alfred Hitchcock's 1926 feature, *The Pleasure Garden*.

Staff

The Library has an eight member staff including a director, three subject librarians for areas taught in SMU's Meadows School of the Arts: music, art, theater, dance, film, and communications; two curators and one curatorial assistant for the Jerry Bywaters Special Collections. The circulation staff includes a print circulation supervisor and an audio visual supervisor.

OPAC

Most of the circulating and non-circulating collection can be accessed through the [SMU library catalog](#). [SMU's Digital Collections](#) provides access to some images in the Bywaters Special Collections. [Research Guides](#) for subjects and courses in the arts at SMU feature many of the print and online resources available at Central University Libraries.

Submitted by Beverly Mitchell

The St. John's Bible

In 1856, Benedictine monks from Bavaria traveled to Minnesota and built an abbey dedicated to Saint John the Baptist. They brought with them a vision of the future and the role of education that inspired them to found Saint John's University. They also brought a tradition steeped in 1500 years of monastic history. On the last day of the [VRA + ARLIS/NA 2011 2nd Joint Conference](#), I took the opportunity to take a day trip to [St. John's Abbey and University](#) located on 2,500 pristine acres in Collegeville about 75 miles from Minneapolis. The current church was designed by Marcel Breuer (see photo) with impressive stained glass and liturgical objects crafted in the modernist tradition. The University is also home to the [Hill Museum and Manuscript Library](#) (HMML), with its outstanding collections of historic material.



ABBEY ARCHITECT MARCEL BREUER

The HMML is one of the world's leading cultural preservation institutions. Its mission is to identify, digitally photograph, catalog, and archive the contents of endangered manuscripts belonging to threatened communities, and then to make these unique cultural resources available to users around the world. HMML has photographically preserved more than 115,000 manuscript books dating from the ancient to early modern eras, totaling some 40,000,000 handwritten pages.

The founding impetus for HMML in the 1960s was to safeguard western monastic manuscript collections in countries on the front line of the Cold War, beginning with Austria. This focus soon grew to include general manuscript collections throughout Europe, and then in Ethiopia as well. The HMML broadened its focus in 2003 to include manuscripts from the many other eastern Christian traditions: Armenian, Syriac, Christian Arabic, and Slavonic.

An illuminated, handwritten Bible was commissioned by Saint John's Abbey at the turn of the millennium. This contemporary Bible is at once old and new: a present-day masterpiece of the ancient crafts of calligraphy and illumination. It is being created by professional scribes in a scriptorium in Wales, under the direction of Donald Jackson (born in 1938 in Lancashire, England), who is the official scribe and calligrapher to Queen Elizabeth II and the Crown Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Jackson has created a new script specifically for the project.



DONALD JACKSON, 'VISION OF ISAIAH, ISAIAH 6: 1-13', 2005.

Because of the large amount of text, the writing has to be small. A good clear script in a two-column format was finally chosen. It is easy to read to the modern eye and has a strong enough texture to work with powerful illuminations.

The first task for the calligraphers that joined the project was to learn the new script. They began by making a detailed examination of its style and texture, producing dozens of practice sheets. Once underway, it takes the calligraphers between seven and a half and thirteen hours to complete the 108 lines on each page. To ensure that each page matches the one facing it, care is taken that the two pages are written by the same calligrapher. The vellum pages pass through many hands before completion. Footnotes, book headings, chapter numbers, capitals and Hebrew text are added at different stages by different calligraphers.

The creators of The Saint John's Bible use a mixture of techniques used in the creation of ancient illuminated manuscripts (hand writing with quills on calf-skin vellum, gold and platinum leaf plus hand-ground pigments, and Chinese stick ink) and modern technology (computers are used to plan the layout of the Bible, and line-breaks for the text).

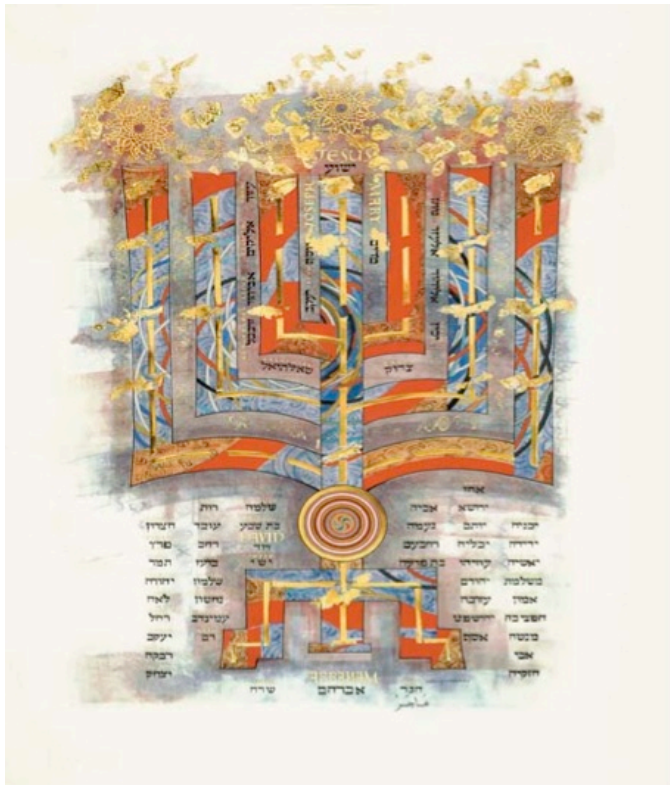
It is a collaborative effort, involving many persons in both Wales and the United States. The Committee on Illumination and Text (CIT) at Saint John's selects the passages to be illuminated in each volume. The version of the Bible used is the New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition (NRSV-CE). The CIT sends Jackson a set of briefs discussing the proposed illuminations and the theological content the committee feels each illumination should express. As the initial sketches are developed, Jackson and project coordinator, Rebecca Cherry, send digital images and explanations to the CIT by e-mail. The committee members review the

sketches for theological content and send back their observations. When the CIT formally approves a sketch, Jackson and team proceed with the illumination.

The scribes require quills that are both strong and supple. The best ones come from mature turkeys, swans, and geese. Before they can be used for writing, the quills must be cured, cut, and trimmed. In every illumination, gold is the first design element placed on the page. Three types of gilding are used: powdered gold, acrylic medium, and gesso. Gesso gilding is the most technically demanding and produces the most spectacular results.

The Bible is separated into seven volumes. This was done for practical reasons—each completed, bound volume will weigh as much as 35 pounds, with a combined weight of more than 165 pounds. This also produced interesting artistic results. While images and motifs repeat across volumes, each collection of Biblical books takes on its own character. I recommend viewing the 2003 documentary *The Illuminator and the Bible for the 21st Century* that shows the work in progress and many of the technical aspects in wonderful detail.

The Heritage Edition of *The Saint John's Bible* is the full-size fine art facsimile of the original. Measuring two feet tall by three feet wide when open, each volume is signed by Donald Jackson. The edition is limited to 360 signed and numbered sets with the same seven volumes as the original. In addition, an eighth volume of commentary places *The St. John's Bible* in historical context and describes several of the illuminations. Each facsimile is currently available through subscription for \$150,000.00



DONALD JACKSON, ARTIST AND SCRIBE
MATTHEW FRONTISPIECE: THE GENEALOGY OF CHRIST

Submitted by Edward Lukasek

UT Fine Arts Library bridge project

As part of a campus-wide initiative to bring all "assembly occupancy" areas into compliance with the National Fire Protection Agency's Life-Safety Code, the UT Fire Marshal's office identified level 4 of the [Fine Arts Library](#) as needing attention. Because level 4 is a mezzanine-type floor with a balcony that overlooks level 3 (the entrance level of the library and the location of much of the public art, audio-visual materials, and computers) only one of the building's 3-hour rated fire stairs (in the north-east corner) was accessible. The Fire Marshal called for the construction of a bridge from the balcony edge to the fire stair in the south-west corner that, as originally designed and constructed in the 1970s, served levels 3 and 5, with the fire exit on level 2. The fire egress route across the new bridge that links the south end of level 4 with the south-west fire stair not only is a striking piece of artistic engineering and essential should there be an emergency but also is available for normal passage.

Several alternatives were considered before the final plan was agreed during the summer of 2010. Even such non-traditional solutions as slides and chutes were discussed. An early plan that would have involved installing a thick steel column on level 3 to support a bridge was dismissed. With encouragement from Fred Heath, Vice Provost for [University of Texas Libraries](#), the idea of maintaining as much natural light as possible led to the incorporation of glass. The construction period was only 3 weeks, with most of the work taking place between Christmas and the first day of classes of the Spring Semester (Jan. 18).

Architectural Engineers Collaborative (Austin, TX) elegantly utilized the efficient form of a steel tube and the equally efficient principle of the cantilever to support graceful plate steel fins that mimic the rhythm of the original structural mullions of the windows while supporting a refractive structural glass floor. The obscure bottom layer of the tempered, laminated triple-plate glass also, unexpectedly, reflects the activity of the life below the bridge. The 5-ton structure appears to float through the space though it is securely welded at both ends to plates bolted to the poured-in-place original concrete structure. A finite element analysis program was used to determine bolt placement following the identification of rebar by ground penetrating radar. Side rails and top rails are bolted to the substructure using acorn nuts. The steel is painted white to match surrounding elements and the milky whiteness of the luminous glass.

Though initiated as a functional solution for a fire protection requirement, the bridge has not only fulfilled that need but created a unique, beautiful and possibly inspiring complement to the library space dedicated to supporting fine arts higher education.

Submitted by Laura Schwartz