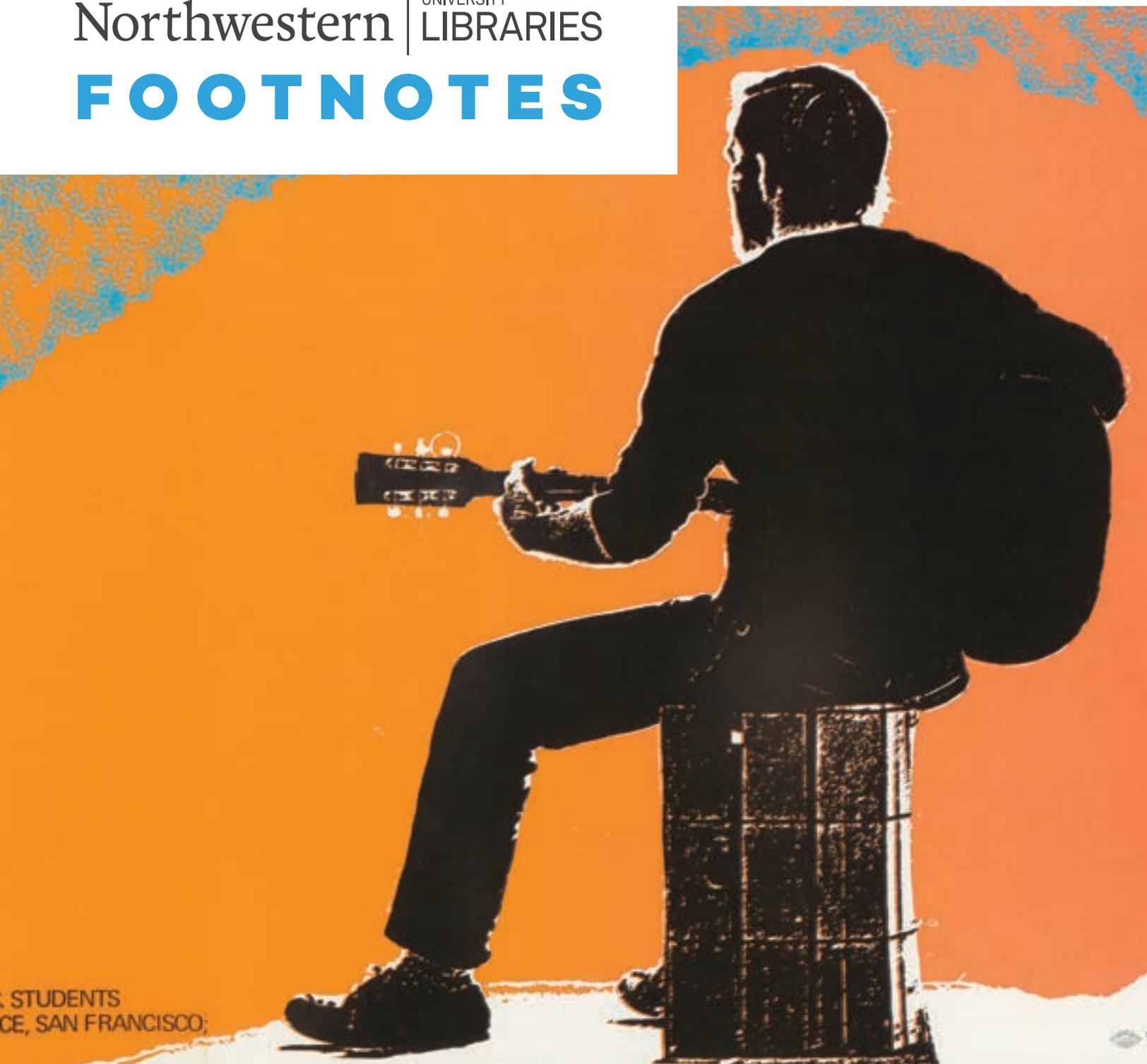


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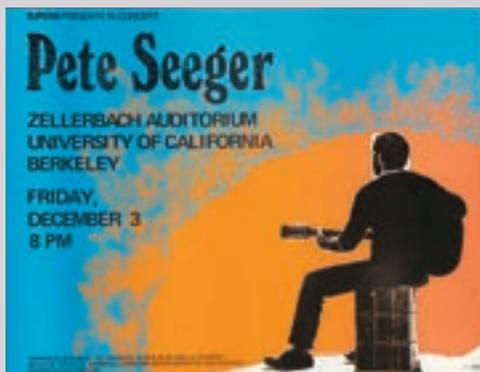
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FALL 2018 VOLUME 43 NUMBER 2

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John and Jane Ver Steeg



Cover: Poster for a 1965 performance by Pete Seeger, from the archives of the Berkeley Folk Music Festival. See story on page 4.

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# Maximizing service by managing space

by John Brdecka  
Head of Print Collection Management

My role at Northwestern University Libraries is to manage our use of space. And that means much more than where we put our books.

Space is a complicated issue for us because a library is always changing. The contents of its shelves are never static, and its spaces are put to new and different purposes all the time. When we're doing our jobs right, we are learning all we can about faculty and student needs and then adjusting our services—and our spaces—accordingly.

For example, our world-renowned Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies grew so steadily over the years that eventually it could not be contained in one place; it had to be divided among the towers of University Library, from the fifth floor to the basement. In 2016 we shifted parts of the general collection—hundreds of thousands of volumes—to consolidate the bulk of Herskovits materials in one large area.

As you'll see on page 2, we recently did the same for the Government and Geographic Information Collection. Its shelves and map drawers were scattered among multiple buildings but are now contained in a central University Library location.



We couldn't have done any of this without the Oak Grove Library Center, which opened in 2011 in Waukegan, Illinois. The 19,000-square-foot climate-controlled, high-density facility gives the Libraries the flexibility to move and store materials in response to constant change. When Mudd Library underwent renovations in 2017, for instance, OGLC made it possible to relocate three floors of books in a short time. The facility is also used to store items that circulate infrequently, giving us more options for the library spaces on campus.

Over many years, we have transformed static areas of the library into dynamic

spaces that accommodate collaborative study, research consulting, and other services supporting the way 21st-century scholars work. Much of modern academic life centers on interdisciplinary research, and we've responded to facilitate that in our buildings.

We have an extensive array of spaces—both on and off campus—and it's my honor to help make sure each square foot is providing Northwestern with the maximum value.

### Kaplan fellowships explore poetry, experimental music

Digital scholarship librarian John Honn has completed his year as the Libraries' faculty fellow with the Alice Kaplan Institute for the Humanities. His research project "See How Tall a Shadow You Can Make" explores the life of Ross D. Brown, an early 20th-century African American socialist, activist, and inventor. Few records of Brown survive, and he left no archive. Honn's research attempts to fill in some of the gaps about this eclectic thinker.

Music librarian Greg MacAyeal holds the fellowship for the 2018–19 academic year. He is pursuing research on composers John Cage and Glenn Branca (both of whose archives are housed in the Music Library) and the 1982 New Music America Festival.



MacAyeal

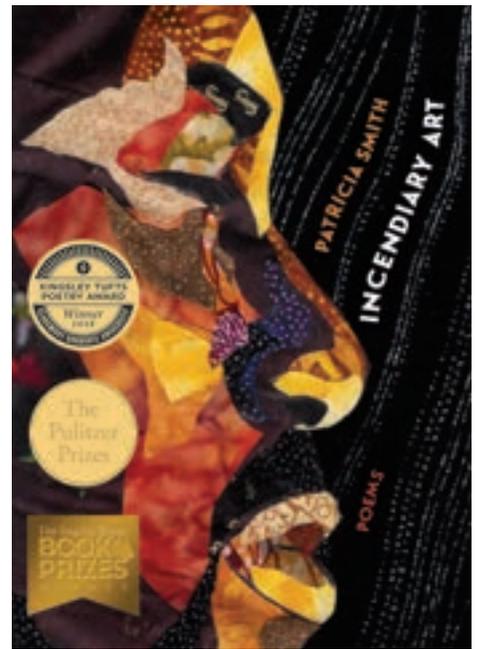


Honn

### Government collection move improves access

After two years of planning, five months of construction, and four weeks of moving, the Government and Geographic Information Collection at University Libraries was relocated from its longtime space on the first level of Deering Library to its new home, B190 on the basement level of University Library.

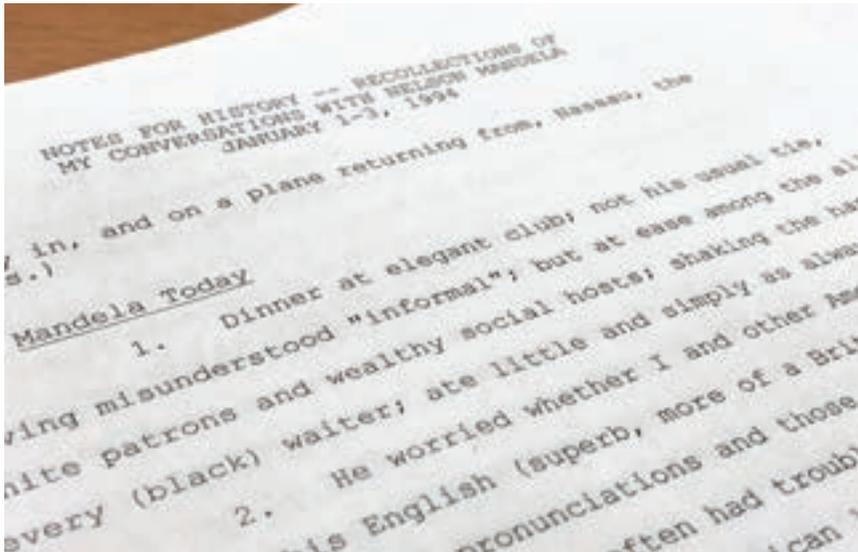
The move greatly enhances access to the collection, which includes materials produced by the US government, the state of Illinois, the city of Chicago, and several international intergovernmental agencies. The new location allows consolidation of maps, atlases, posters, microfiche, and other materials previously shelved across multiple locations.



### Poetry book racks up more awards

Patricia Smith's poetry volume *Incendiary Art*, published by Northwestern University Press in 2017, was named a finalist for the 2018 Pulitzer Prize in Poetry. Noting Smith's "sophistication and savvy linguistic play," the Pulitzer committee called the book "a searing portrait of the violence exacted against the bodies of African American men in America and the grief of the women who mourn them."

*Incendiary Art* has garnered a record number of awards for a University Press book, including the NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Literary Work (Poetry), the Black Caucus of the American Library Association's Best Poetry Award, the Abel Meeropol Social Justice Writing Award (named for the composer of the Billie Holiday tune "Strange Fruit"), and the \$100,000 Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award.



## Library acquires essential avant-garde archive

A preeminent photographer of the 1960s avant-garde scene, Peter Moore documented many major theater, music, and dance performances, including happenings by Fluxus movement artists and cellist Charlotte Moorman. The acquisition of his photographic archive, comprising thousands of negatives, contact sheets, and color slides, augments the Charles Deering McCormick Library of Special Collections's existing strengths in the 1960s art scene.

The archive is being transferred to Northwestern over a four-year period and will be accessible to the public after processing is complete.



## Law professor donates rare notes on Mandela meeting

Juliet S. Sorensen, associate professor in the Pritzker School of Law, donated a rare document to the Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies. Typed by her father in 1994, the document recounts three days spent in the company of Nelson Mandela, who was soon to become South Africa's president. Ted Sorensen, a lawyer and former adviser to President John F. Kennedy, had spearheaded creation of the South Africa Free Elections Fund to promote democratic elections in the country.

The eight-page document recounts the two men's meetings and conversations, providing rare glimpses of Mandela, the African National Congress leaders they discussed, and life in South Africa. Juliet Sorensen donated her father's document on July 18, the 100th anniversary of Mandela's birth.

# SURVIVAL OF A FOLK REVIVAL

It takes a village of librarians to preserve the iconic Berkeley festival

In the wood-paneled grandeur of the Joseph Spear Beck Angling Room, graduate student worker Joyy Norris '18 MFA removed a slightly wrinkled piece of paper from a folder and passed it gingerly to conservator Tonia Grafakos.

"A small tear in the upper left corner," Norris announced, and Grafakos drew the paper closer for inspection.

A group of library specialists, including McCormick Library curator Scott Krafft, sat in silence as Grafakos, the Marie A. Quinlan Director of Preservation, held her gaze on the tear for 5 seconds. Then 10. Then 15.

"The tension is mounting," Krafft joked at last, and the attendees laughed.

Unruffled, Grafakos pronounced her judgment: "OK, we'll fix it."

Not every torn paper in the Libraries warrants such intense consideration. But this august gathering in the Beck Room



10TH ANNUAL  
**BERKELEY**  
FOLK MUSIC FESTIVAL  
**4th OF JULY WEEK**  
JUNE 30 TO JULY 4th · UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION



Joy Norris '18 MFA (left) and Special Collections library assistant Kolter Campbell '03, '11 MA, '14 PhD comb through the archive, identifying items that need special conservation.

was dedicated to the single biggest digitization project ever undertaken by Northwestern Libraries—the archives of the Berkeley Folk Music Festival—and the key team members were taking nothing for granted. After all, this was a legendary segment of American cultural history.

Last year the Libraries received a \$297,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to digitize the festival archive, acquired by the Charles Deering McCormick Library of Special Collections in 1974. The NEH's Humanities Collections and Reference Resources implementation grant will allow this hallmark festival's files to be fully searchable online, making it possible for

scholars across the humanities—regardless of their proximity to Evanston—to explore aspects of race, class, gender, and politics as expressed in festival performances.

The festival ran from 1957 to 1970 in Berkeley, California, an epicenter of the mid-20th century's folk music revival. The archive comprises more than 70,000 items, including photographs, posters, recordings, and copious business records centered on a festival that hosted more than 200 folk musicians, including Joan Baez, Pete Seeger, and Howlin' Wolf. (Those business records provide a thorough look at the operations of a major festival, down to a receipt for three doughnuts. Total: 50 cents.)

**JAL**  
**EY**  
**STIVAL**  
**KEND**  
OCIATED STUDENTS



Tonia Grafakos, the Marie A. Quinlan Director of Preservation, prepares an original handbill for digitization.



With that kind of size and scope, the festival project requires dozens of team members from across the Libraries. “It isn’t enough to simply run every document through a scanner,” said Nicole Finzer, digital curation librarian and project manager. “There are steps well before and after that we have to address. It’s an enormous process.”

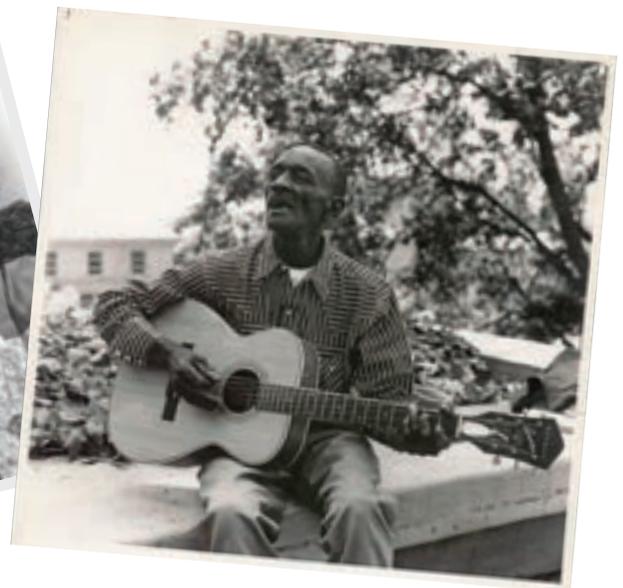
It begins with team members like Norris examining folder after folder of items, tracking them in spreadsheets and identifying those that need special handling before scanning. Then Grafakos can begin to determine what needs repair. As a relatively modern collection, the festival archive was already in what Grafakos considers good condition; even so, everyday imperfections like brittle paper, tears, folds, and yellowed, decaying tape can complicate the digitization process.

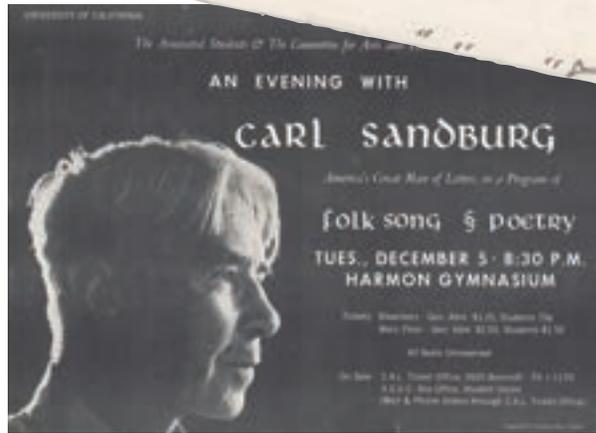
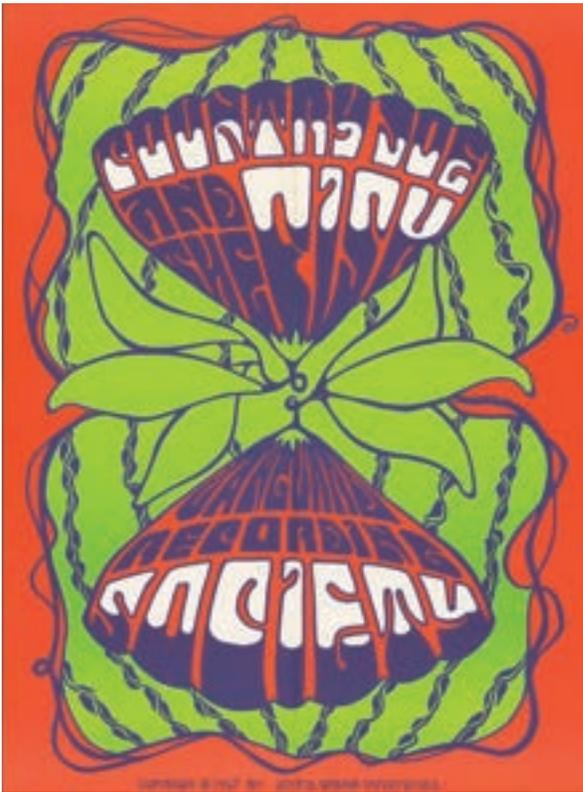
“Every item needs to be assessed so we can get the best image,” said Finzer. “What warrants further treatment? What special considerations govern our handling of this item or that?”

Many posters in the archive, for example, were folded or rolled and had to be humidified and flattened before being scanned. The pages of

some letters, with their accompanying envelopes, had once been helpfully stapled together, but the staples obscured material that needed to be scanned. Conservators had to remove staples and repair precarious tears to make the papers safe for handling.

“It’s always a discussion about how far we’re going to go,” said





To read more about the festival items seen here, visit [libraries.nu/BFMF](http://libraries.nu/BFMF).

Grafakos. “Not everything needs to be repaired. If items can be safely digitized, we may not need to get involved.”

A project of this size requires outsourcing a large volume of materials to a third-party vendor for scanning. But some large and hard-to-ship materials were digitized in the Libraries’ repository and digital curation department, using leading-edge scanners designed for preserving the world’s cultural heritage. With colors calibrated to Library of Congress standards, these scanners provide high-resolution files so accurate that the digital version can be considered a surrogate for the physical object.

All documents must be scanned on the front (“recto”) and the back (“verso”), effectively doubling the number of scans to be performed. Preserving both sides means that a scholar studying a photo of a

particular performance, for example, can flip it over to see if festival management stamped a date or wrote notes on the reverse.

For scholars around the world, of course, these digital files can be reviewed without fear of damage to the originals. But high-resolution images are useless if they lack context or can’t be easily found, which is where traditional librarianship comes in. The NEH grant provided for the hiring of two metadata specialists to research, identify, and describe each digital object. Metadata is what allows a scholar to conduct a faceted search for information about, say, Dr. Humbead’s New Tranquility String Band and Medicine Show (a bluegrass ensemble at the festival) or to dig deeper to discover related documents, subjects, formats, and artists. (Faceted searches help users filter extensive results by applying specific criteria,

something possible only through metadata.)

Digitization of all materials will be complete by early 2019, followed by another year of metadata work and the final “ingestion”—a vivid information-science term for the software process that ensures the public can find and view these items for years to come. In this case, that ends with uploading the archive to the Libraries’ media repository for long-term storage. The grant also provides for a digital exhibition showcasing the collection once the work is concluded.

“This is the biggest digitization project we’ve ever undertaken,” said Finzer. “But we know the value to the research community is going to be just as big.” ■





From a facsimile of Codex Tro-Cortesianus (ADEVA, 1967), a pre-Columbian Maya almanac and astrological manual. Charles Deering McCormick Library of Special Collections.



# HERE TO HELP: EXAM RELIEF

Once University and Mudd Libraries open their doors on the Monday morning before finals week, they don't close them until all final exams are over, almost two weeks later. The all-hours library access gives students a quiet place to focus or a comfortable, collaborative space to gather—whenever they need either.

The librarians of the academic engagement department take deliberate steps not just to support these students in their exam preparation but also to improve their sense of well-being. A host of activities in the Libraries allow students to blow off steam, take a mental break, or just forget about academic pressures for a moment.

"We are about serving the whole student, not just their academic needs," said librarian Chris Davidson, who leads the exam relief efforts. "Even though wellness is emphasized on this campus, it is difficult for some students to make time for self-care."

During exams, it's common to see small groups of students in public spaces huddled around a giant

monitor to play the Nintendo racing game Mario Kart, or sitting at tables working away at 1,000-piece jigsaw puzzles. Librarians set out poster-size coloring-book pages with sets of colored pencils; during exam season, collaborative artistic works are created that are both beautiful and bizarre (see page 12). Free postcards allow students to contact loved ones the old-fashioned way—with free postage to boot.

Then there are the outreach efforts that more directly address student health. Every quarter, Davidson schedules a visit from a team of therapy dogs, who draw a long line of students eager to lose themselves in a few minutes of canine cuddling. Licensed massage therapists provide five-minute massages.

Perhaps the most impactful outreach is the after-midnight "Magical Snack Trolley of Happiness," a fixture for late-night library regulars. Davidson regularly pilots a coffee cart around University Library towers in the wee hours, doling out caffeinated boosts, healthy snacks, and words of encouragement. Many students look forward to seeing him year after year.



**“He was just a friendly face to remind you there’s a light ahead, that everyone’s in the same boat.”** – *Emily Roney '18*

In December 2014, Emily Roney '18 was in her first quarter as a chemical engineering major on a premed track. Ensnared in the library late at night, she was feeling a rising sense of panic. Then the trolley rolled up. All Davidson did was ask how she was faring.

“Just by talking for a few minutes, he made it feel like this wasn’t the worst thing,” she said. “He was just a friendly face to remind you there’s a light ahead, that everyone’s in the same boat.”

Roney graduated this year, but she still credits that moment of respite as critical to her eventual success at Northwestern. “It mattered to have someone show up in the middle of all that who was trying to help my life,” she said. “Everybody looks forward to him and that cart.” Plus, she added, for some students the cart’s

apples and granola bars might be the healthiest thing they eat all day.

“I tell students that sleep is the most underrated part of finals,” Davidson said. “But some of them are going to be here until 8 a.m. no matter what. We’re looking out for them.”

Davidson keeps a tally of librarians’ one-on-one interactions during exam season, from handing out popcorn to a personal conversation. Each quarter’s tally regularly numbers in the thousands, proving that the library is providing vital services beyond research and reading material.

“These students are here working hard in the library,” he said, “so we should make sure we’re taking care of them.” ■

# HONOR ROLL OF DONORS 2018

Northwestern University Libraries appreciate the generosity of our donors during the period from September 1, 2017, to August 31, 2018. This report reflects giving from this time period.

Please send any corrections to Jennifer Mullman, Director of Development, Libraries, Press, and University Archives, Northwestern University, 1201 Davis Street, Evanston, Illinois 60208-4410; phone 847-467-7278; [jmullman@northwestern.edu](mailto:jmullman@northwestern.edu).

Thank you for your support of the University and the Libraries.

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Poster colored by Northwestern students at the Libraries (see page 10).

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## DONOR SPOTLIGHT

### John and Jane Ver Steeg

John Ver Steeg grew up with Northwestern Libraries on his mind.

He was a student at Evanston Township High School in the 1960s when his father, Northwestern history professor Clarence Ver Steeg, was chairing the committee that planned the construction of University Library.

“I heard about it at the dinner table, I saw the models, I watched meetings about it take place at our house,” he said. “By osmosis, I was following Northwestern Libraries.”

In 2009 John joined the Libraries Board of Governors, and last spring he and his wife, Jane, received the 2018 Deering Family Award, honoring the time and resources they have donated to the Libraries.

Though steeped in Northwestern tradition, John Ver Steeg earned his undergraduate degree at Harvard and his law degree at Stanford. He has spent his career as a founder and team member of early-stage, venture-backed enterprises in technology and healthcare.

So why did his philanthropy bring him back to Northwestern? It began with a fellowship established by his parents: the Dorothy Ann and Clarence L. Ver Steeg Distinguished Research Fellow award. Since 2006, said John, it has honored “professors who demonstrate a high proclivity for first-class scholarship.” He and Jane contributed to that fellowship’s funding and have admired how the University has sustained it.

“Northwestern handled that gift very well and very responsibly,” said Ver Steeg. “The University takes seriously what’s to be done with gifts.”

The fellowship gave the Ver Steegs “an anchor” at Northwestern, and they decided to look further into supporting a university whose academic rigor impressed them. In a meeting with then-provost Dan Linzer, they asked how Northwestern planned to strengthen “the reputation and reality” of its academics. The three agreed that a strong library system was a crucial element of the academic ecosystem.



As a Board of Governors member, Ver Steeg was impressed with dean of Libraries Sarah Pritchard and her team. “When it came time to consider our estate plan,” he said, “we decided to make the Libraries one of our concentrations of giving.” He and Jane designated that their funds go to the upkeep of the Ver Steeg Faculty Lounge, to the programming held in it, and to the purchase of distinctive collections.

Ver Steeg said the work of the board is to act not as experts about the Libraries but as observers, cheerleaders, and “a marketplace test of how you’re doing.”

“We might make a suggestion or two, but really we’re there to see if we can be persuaded by the ideas the Libraries put forward,” he said. “None of us is easily persuaded, so we bring the right perspective.”

And from Ver Steeg’s perspective, have the Libraries been persuasive?

“We’re very happy with Northwestern, very impressed,” he said. “We like the place—the University in general and the Libraries in particular.” ■

# FOOTNOTES

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## A royal wedding tea party with a serious message

The day before Megan Markle '03 married the United Kingdom's Prince Harry last May, local ABC, CBS, NBC, and Univision TV affiliates reported from a tea party hosted by the Libraries in honor of the alumna. Charla Wilson, Northwestern's archivist for the black experience, mounted a display of more than 80 commemorative wedding items, while students nibbled biscuits and wrote notes to Markle.

Despite the festive air, the tea party had a serious purpose, Wilson said. As the wedding approached, many had questioned Markle's racial identity and whether she was truly black. As a mixed race woman, Markle "represents the need to fully encompass all that is the black experience at this University," according to Wilson.

"Recently, a mixed race student approached me to ask that experiences such as hers not be excluded in the work I do," said Wilson. "And rightly so, because the black experience is not monolithic—it's multifaceted."

