

Alma College Library News

Winter 2017 Volume 12, Issue 2

From the Director

by Carol Zeile

We are quickly approaching the halfway point of Winter Term 2017. Commencement is just around the corner, as is the end of the first academic year with our record-sized class of students. So far, mid-Michigan has enjoyed an unseasonably warm winter, but we know that we are not out-of-the-woods yet!

In the library, the main change that we made to help accommodate this large class was to revise the way that we orient the new students. For many years, our focus during the first weeks of the Fall Term was to reach as many new students as possible by working with the First Year Seminar (FYS) instructors. Each FYS was encouraged to come to the library as a class and we would customize instruction based on the course requirements. Because of the differences between FYS courses, not all instructors brought their class to the library, primarily because they did not have assignments specifically related to library resources.

In the fall of 2016, we piloted a new procedure for working with the First Year Seminars. On the evaluation forms we give to the majority of our instruction sessions, the students most often asked for help to learn how to find books in the library. To respond to this need, we created a couple of videos for students to watch before coming to the library and a 30 minute session to do together with the help of a librarian.

Using this new method, we saw all First Year Seminars and all students had an introduction to the library book stacks and the call number system. Student evaluations were favorable overall. We will make a few improvements for next year and try again.

During Winter Term we are looking forward to an external review of library services. The College implemented a program to review all academic departments on a rotating basis. The library will be reviewed by two library professionals who will provide us with feedback on our programs. Their feedback will provide us with guidance as we plan for the next few years in the library. We are grateful to the provost for providing the support for this review.

Carol Zeile



Alma College Library provides services, resources and instruction to support the mission of the College. By creating an environment conducive to learning, exploration and group interaction, the Library strives to foster intellectual curiosity and academic excellence, to be responsive to changes in the delivery of information and to champion life-long learning.

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Hamilton Commons Time Capsule

by Viki Everhart, Acquisitions and Special Collection Specialist

How do you capture a moment in time to be revealed decades later?

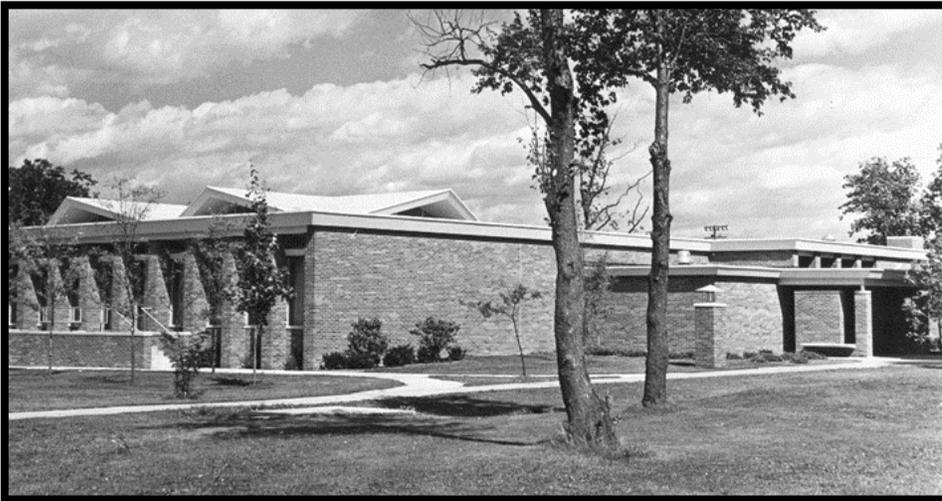
When the new food services building was to be constructed on the Alma College campus in the mid-1960's the decision was made to name it after Alma College's 6th President. Dr. Roy W. Hamilton made a large impact on the campus in many ways. Previous to taking over the reigns as President in 1943, he taught English Language and Literature for almost 20 years. He also served as Acting President from 1938-1943; was Secretary to the Faculty; Acting Dean; and Vice President. In 1919 he organized the first Student Council and became the faculty advisor for this group. The words and music of the Alma College Alma Mater were written by Dr. Hamilton in 1922. In the 1940's when the college was struggling financially, he helped bring the Navy V-12 program to campus. After his Presidency, Dr. Hamilton continued to teach English at Alma College until his death in 1952.

When Hamilton Commons was renovated in 2013, the removal of the cornerstone from 1967 revealed a metal time capsule. The box was discovered previous to a dinner honoring donors to the college. It seemed appropriate to open the container at this dinner in front of those who have had an impact on the college. Several items were placed in this time capsule over 4 decades earlier. The contents of the box contained the following items: The Alma Mater (music and words written by Roy Hamilton); 33 1/3 rpm recording of the Sounds of Alma (AC Choir and Kiltie Band); 1966-67 Alma College catalog; Alma College Perspective magazine from winter 1967; Saga menu for the week of May 12, 1967; The Almanian May 11, 1967; The Record (Alma) May 4, 1967; a cigar and matches; and biographical information of Dr. Roy W. Hamilton. The box and contents from the time capsule now reside in the Alma College Archives courtesy of the Communication and Marketing Office.

Should Alma College put a new time capsule somewhere on campus? If so, what items should be included to depict campus life in 2017?



Contents of the Hamilton Commons time capsule discovered in 2013



Hamilton, built in 1967



Dr. Hamilton's widow, Mrs. Francis Smith Hamilton places the first trowel of mortar during the Hamilton Commons cornerstone ceremony (note the time capsule in front)



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Hamilton, renovated in 2013

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Dr. Roy W Hamilton
6th President of Alma College



Hamilton, 2017

Graduating Library Student Assistants of 2017

by Melissa Hovey, Circulation Desk Manager

Even though the days are cold and dreary, our thoughts are already turning to sunny spring days as we start to plan for this year's student assistant graduations. Alma College Library will see four amazing women graduate in 2017.

Erika Brown is graduating with a degree in Psychology and Political Science. Erika is looking forward to graduating as she has already been successful in landing a job at a marketing firm in Troy. She is from Midland, MI. Erika started working at Alma College Library doing some special projects in the college archives and later on also worked in the Circulation Department. Erika also worked over the summer. Special projects are undertaken during this time and she was able to assist in the unlikely assignment of refinishing some library furniture.

Annamarie Williams is another graduating senior from Midland, MI. Anna began working for Alma College Library when she was a first year student. We consider ourselves lucky that she came to work for us. She is an amazing artist and we have put her talents to good use on countless displays, signs, brochures and decorations. She and some fellow art students even created an installation artwork in the library using vintage newspaper. Anna is making plans to attend grad school to train to help children with Art Therapy.

Alegra Platte is from Mt. Pleasant, MI and is graduating with a degree in Elementary and Special Education. Ally worked in the Circulation Department. She also worked at the library over several summers and undertook many special projects. We will miss her meticulous sign making skills. Ally is completing her student teaching and is looking forward to finding a job after graduation and working with special needs students.

Our Fourth graduate is **Samantha Sims** from Shepherd, MI. Sam will be graduating with an education degree. Sams plans on teaching upper level students. (She says she is happy to leave the little ones to Aly's care.) Sam is very skilled in the time management area as she has worked in the Circulation Department as well as an additional part time job throughout her years at Alma College Library.

It has been a pleasure to watch these young women grow and develop, becoming more confident and outgoing. We hope that we have helped in some way as they advanced their education and experience and now are ready to move on to the next adventure in their lives.



Annual Hilson Poetry Slam

by Angie Kelleher, Access Services Librarian

On Thursday, January 19, the library hosted the annual Hilson Poetry Slam. This event began in February 2006, by Alma student Calvin Hilson, to celebrate the power of words for Martin Luther King Day. Calvin graduated in April 2006, and became a minister and a police officer. The event continued until 2012. "For Calvin, King's legacy was in part about the ways words mattered," said Laura von Wallmenich, associate professor of English. "The right words could have the power to move hearts and minds. Words, King's words, led people to commit to change and to action." Unfortunately, Hilson was killed by a drunk driver in 2016. VonWallmenich decided to revive the Poetry Slam, in honor of Calvin, his love of words and love of life.

The event was co-hosted by the English Department and the Theta Chi fraternity. Theta Chi hosts a monthly Open Mic nights at their house, so they provided an MC to help direct the flow of poets.

Around 100 people attended, with approximately 25 students and faculty performing their own poetry, or the work of another poet. Prizes for the best original poetry were given to students Najelle (Jelly) Gilmore, and Demetri Christian. We are so pleased to provide a space for events like this, which celebrate the creativity and diversity of our campus community.



Students participating in the Poetry Slam event, 2017



What Happened to the VHS Tapes

by Steven Vest, Head Reference/Instruction

During last summer the library rearranged some materials on the main floor of the library to provide the students with additional carrel and study space. This necessitated relocating some materials to other parts of the library. One of the most visible changes is the DVD and VHS recordings are no longer located on shelves outside the stacks entrance.

Where Did the DVDs go?

The DVD recordings were moved to the northeast corner of the main floor near the browsing collection. We have added significantly to this collection recently, especially in foreign and classic films.

What Happened to the VHS Tapes?

During the fall many of our patrons noticed that the VHS tapes were moved from their traditional space and replaced by study space. These tapes were not discarded (as some feared) but were moved into shelves in the new closed section on the first floor of the stacks. This allowed the library to free-up some much needed study areas and to add a number of study carrels (which are always in high demand) to the first floor.



What Are the Library's Long Term Plans for VHS?

There was a time when viewing a documentary or film in class always involved video tape. During the 80's and 90's the library purchased thousands of films on VHS as part of our regular collection development efforts. The tapes added to the collection included Hollywood films, but also foreign films and hundreds of documentaries and instructional videos. These tapes are beginning to show their age. Many of these tapes are still part of our collection and two problems arise in their use; most students no longer have access to a VHS player and the tapes are beginning to deteriorate. Most experts agree that the shelf life of a VHS is 8-12 years. Many of our current tapes are more than twice that old and they frequently fail when patrons attempt to use them. Over the last year Alma librarians have embarked on a project to systematically replace existing VHS copies with DVD. Beginning last summer, each VHS tape is checked and if an exact DVD copy existed the disc is purchased and added to the collection. The VHS copy is then removed from the collection. This was only done when an exact copy was available. In those cases where a DVD is not available the VHS copy is retained until a DVD copy is available.



How Do I Get Access to the VHS?

The VHS tapes are still visible in the catalog and they may still be checked out at any time. Patrons who wish to access them can contact the desk for access to their shelving area.

What Happened to the VHS Tapes continued

Why Not Blu-Ray?

Patrons have asked why we're replacing our VHS with DVD instead of Blu-Ray. While Blu-Ray does tend to be higher quality most classrooms do not have Blu-Ray players and few laptops are able to work with Blu-Ray discs. DVDs are still widely available, are generally durable and will work with a wide range of players. After researching the topic we feel that the next step the library will take will be to move to streaming services.

What About Streaming?

At the present there is no single, stable source for streaming a wide range of products. Switching to streaming at this point would involve subscribing to dozens of different services that would still not provide for all of our needs. Many of the popular services (such as Netflix) will remove items from their collection with little notice. There are a number of dedicated streaming services for libraries coming on-line but at the present none of them can meet our needs. While we do possibly see streaming in our future we are waiting for this technology to mature and become more ubiquitous before we commit resources to these products.

The library is always trying to provide the best materials in the most accessible formats to our patrons. With the constantly changing media environment we frequently evaluate our collection to make our holdings as useful as possible. Remember that you can always contact the library if you need a resource and we will work to obtain it for you as quickly as possible.

Library Textbook Award & Endowment

Through the generosity of library staff members, our alumni and friends of the library, we were able to achieve the Library Textbook Endowment goal in March of 2015. We will continue to support our student assistants by contributing to this endowed fund so that it can grow and allow us to help even more students. Thank you to all of you who have contributed and continue to do so.

Stay Connected

Facebook is a great way to keep in touch and keep up with what is going on at Alma College Library. Upcoming events, new resources and new additions are being posted all the time. Log on and leave us a message and let us know what you are thinking. We would love to hear from you



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Thank you! If you have any questions, please call Carol Zeile @ 989-463-7342 or email: zeile@alma.edu

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