Columbia Libraries Score Three More Prized Archives

Three archive acquisitions by Columbia’s Rare Book and Manuscript Library will offer long-sought insights into the workings of New York’s social and artistic history in the 20th century:

• Papers of Hubert Henry Harrison (1883–1927), a prominent Harlem writer, public speaker and activist. Editorial archives of BOMB, a quarterly that has been published for almost a quarter century, include taped interviews by Harrison, forthcoming from Columbia’s personal library.

• Papers of Amos Vogel, the avant-garde film critic, curator, educator and historian who cofounded the New York Film Festival in 1963.

The Harrison papers feature manuscripts, scrapbooks, diaries, correspondence, photographs and annotated books from Harrison’s personal library.

Harrison played a seminal role in shaping 20th-century black intellectual thought and social activism, said Jeffrey B. Perry, author of a new biography of Harrison, forthcoming from Columbia University Press.

The archives of BOMB magazine, a cultural quarterly that has been published for almost a quarter century, include taped interviews, original manuscripts, photographs, slides, artwork and correspondences from key contemporary visual artists, writers, performers and critics.

The Amos Vogel collection contains documents related to the radical Cinema 16 movie club Vogel founded in 1947 and to the New York Film Festival. It also features Vogel’s notes and slides for writing his rather unorthodox film history, Film as a Subversive Art (1974), as well as some of his correspondence with leading artists.

Only Engineers Need Apply

In late October, the Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science (SEAS) and the Center for Career Education cohosted the second annual Engineering Outreach & Innovation and the Film and Education Research Academy (FERA), continues to offer students and the public an opportunity to join in free-ranging discussions with leading thinkers like Cornel West and Gloria Steinem. The presentations are often illustrated with film and video clips, to make them even more engaging.

“My goal is to involve the audience as much as possible, to create the sense of being in a classroom—but a different kind of classroom,” says Kelman Sealey, the show’s host and an adjunct lecturer and doctoral candidate at Teachers College. “It’s about making the program entertaining as well as scholarly.”

Losing the Forest for the Trees

Tree diversity seen as “insurance” against ecological swings

With human emissions of carbon dioxide on the rise, interest is growing in protecting the Earth’s natural mechanisms for carbon absorption and storage. Tropical forests are one such natural carbon storehouse; and according to a new study that appeared in this month’s Science magazine, tree diversity is a major factor in determining how much carbon these forests can hold.

The study, led by Daniel Bunker and Shahid Naem of Columbia’s Department of Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Biology and Fabrice DeClerck of the Earth Institute, simulated variations in forest diversity resulting from three types of extinction: biological, such as low growth rate; human causes, such as selective logging; and environmental causes, such as widespread drought.

After running their simulations, the scientists further found that the amount of carbon a forest would be able to store was just one of several characteristics affected by its diversity.

“The more ecosystem functions you look at,” said DeClerck, “the more important diversity becomes.”

“We found that when you have more species, things are more predictable,” said Bunker, the lead author on the study. “It’s like having a diversified investment portfolio. Having many different types of trees lowers overall variability of a forest’s ability to provide crucial services.”

Coiner of Moore’s Law Honored

On Friday, Nov. 4, Columbia’s Marconi Society bestowed its annual Marconi Prize and Lifetime Achievement Award on Intel co-founder Gordon E. Moore.

The panel, made up of other Marconi fellows, congratulated Moore and other experts on the ramifications of his eponymous Moore’s Law, which holds that the number of transistors and resistors on a computer chip doubles every 18 months.

The panel included, among other Marconi fellows, former Venoco president and CEO, and “will probably become its own entity very soon,” says Sealey. For more information go to www.tc.edu/ceoi/fera/citizen.htm.

Multimedia Talk Show Series Resumes

Columbia’s own talk show appears to be hitting its stride. Now in its second season, Project Citizen, cosponsored by the Center for Educational Outreach & Innovation and the Film and Education Research Academy (FERA), continues to offer students and the public an opportun

— By Ellen S. Smith

State Capital Match Program for Independent Colleges and Universities

On Nov. 2, 2005, Columbia hosted the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities (CICU) to learn more about the Higher Education Capital Matching Grant (HeCAP) Program for New York’s independent colleges and universities. Governor Pataki, State Assemblyman Canestrari and State Senator LaValle each provided a spirited discussion to the conference participants indicating their pleasure with the program. (Caestrari and LaValle are, respectively, the Assembly and Senate chairs of the State’s higher education committees.)

The conference, which was organized by cICU President Abraham and his staff, featured speakers from the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York, the NY Counsel’s office, the Department of Labor, and the Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC).

According to Pataki, the Higher Education Capital Matching Grant “will provide $50 million in matching grants enabling a total of $600 million in new capital investments in New York’s independent colleges.”

Institutions (Columbia is one) are eligible to receive funding as long as they can match it on a three-to-one basis. Amounts are based on the number of Tuition Assistance Plan (TAP) recipients, determined through a set formula. Since this program is unique in New York State history, particulars of funding distribution are still being arranged. A three-member board will soon be appointed to approve funding for use toward creating critical academic facilities or starting up, economic development, high technology, and/or urban renewal and historic preservation projects that enhance programmatic offerings, student life, or provide economic development benefits to the neighborhood (Part U, Chapter 65, in the Laws of 2005). The program was authorized by the Dormitory Authority of New York State. Further details will be provided in the coming months.