A DIVINE DIVINE COMEDY

By Elizabeth Scott, Archivist

A recent addition to our collections is an edition of Dante’s *Divine Comedy* with illustrations by Italian artists collected by Vittorio Alinari (*La Divina commedia novamente illustrata da artisti italiani*). While we have many copies of the work, this edition is particularly noteworthy. Oversized, almost every page includes black and white illustrations, and many full page plates accompany the text. These illustrations are complemented by 35 numbered collotype illustrations. Most are black and white, but a few are tinted. The illustrations come from 30 different artists.

In 1900, Vittorio Alinari, a member of a highly acclaimed Italian photography family, held a contest for illustrations of the Divine Comedy which attracted 20 of the most prominent Italian artists of the time and about 10 more from other European countries. As a result, the collotypes provide examples of a wide variety of artistic styles common at the time.

While this work on its own would be an impressive edition of Dante, the story of the donor also improves this story. The work was donated by Mari-anne (Mig) and Edward Kupic. The book had belonged to Mig’s father, Arthur Mitiguy, who was a lay trustee at Saint Michael’s in the 1960’s. He had a long-term love of Dante that was fostered when he took occasional classes at Saint Michael’s. He purchased the loose pages when he visited Italy and had it bound upon his return.

Mig and her father attended Saint Michael’s at the same time, making them the first father-daughter pair to ever attend Saint Michael’s together. The year was 1949. Wait! Saint Michael’s did not accept women until 1970...how did she attend in 1949? Unbeknownst to many, Saint Michael’s did indeed allow women to take undergraduate classes before they were finally allowed to matriculate in 1970. Some women even earned graduate degrees as early as 1943. In 1949, Saint Michael’s had a well-respected summer session, and it was quite well attended by women, most of whom were nuns.

GLOBAL EYES

For the 14th year, the Library is proud to host the Global Eyes Study Abroad Photo Exhibit in the Dailey Room. The juried competition winners will be celebrated in an award ceremony and reception to be held April 18. Don’t forget to vote for the “people’s choice” category. Ballots will be available in the Dailey Room leading up to the ceremony. —Steve Burks

“Pools of Blue” by Kyle McCarty, Kolkata, India. Winter 2011-12 Category Winner: People and the Human Spirit & Best of Show Award 2012
A TIERED APPROACH TO RESEARCH

By Marilyn Scoville, Instruction Coordinator

Librarians collaborate with faculty to offer students multiple opportunities to develop and hone their research strategies and skills during their four years at Saint Michael’s. We have seen a steady increase in library instruction: over the past five years, faculty requests for research instruction sessions have increased approximately 40%. One of our challenges is to equip students with the capacity to identify and select reliable sources of information through close evaluation and review. To guide students in these efforts, the librarians have forged a tiered approach. All first-year students become acquainted with the process of screening resources through their First-Year Seminar coursework. For the last two years, librarians have engaged with 100% of the first-year seminar classes. At this first level, librarians introduce students to the Library website and to databases covering a broad range of subjects. This provides a jump start for the first years into the realm of academic research. For the 200- and 300-level classes, the librarians tailor instruction to address coursework and introduce subject specific databases and scholarly journal literature. As seniors, students also engage with research specific to their major as they develop a thesis, gather sources, read, digest, and synthesize the information they have gleaned. Librarians assist with research consultations and respond to challenges encountered through these senior projects. Business, history, and education courses make use of library instruction most frequently, although we have seen a steady increase in instruction sessions for a wide range of academic disciplines. For the past two years, faculty have requested 50 instruction sessions for 200- and 300-level courses and 15 each year for 400-level classes. Look for additional information about the library’s tiered approach to research instruction on the Library website.

SAINT MICHAEL’S ALUMNI JOIN LIBRARY STAFF

By Ron Jacobs, Circulation Senior Specialist

Durick Library welcomes two new weekend Circulation Supervisors but neither woman is a stranger to Saint Michael’s College.

Jackie Cain graduated in 2010 with a degree in Journalism and Music. While a student, Jackie worked at the Circulation desk all four years. She currently lives in Burlington and plays French horn in the Vermont Wind Ensemble. Jackie also holds a full-time position as a reporter and production worker at the Milton Independent, an online and print weekly that serves the towns of Milton and Georgia, Vermont. In addition, as former president of Saint Michael’s Knitting Club, Jackie may be able to help you with a dropped stitch.

Lela Kretzer also graduated in 2010 and then traveled the United States. Her experiences during that time were just more to add on to the months she spent in Mongolia as an exchange student. Although a Vermonter, she’s lived in New Orleans and California. Besides her job here at Saint Michael’s, Lela is also a tour guide at the Magic Hat Brewery in South Burlington, VT. A lover of languages, she enjoys music and East Asian television dramas.
What does the Merrill Cemetery have to do with the Durick Library? If your answer is that they are both located on Saint Michael’s College campus, you would be right. However, that is not the most interesting connection they have. Last fall, my American Society and Culture (ASC) students focused on the Merrill Cemetery as their semester-long project, and Durick Library became ground zero for their work. The Library housed (and linked to) assets that were vital to our endeavor; archival and database resources ignited our interest and deepened our knowledge of this little-known corner of the campus. The physical collection provided us with documentary evidence in the form of maps, photographs, and other primary documents, but one of the most useful resources was the Ancestry database provided through the Library’s website. Most people think of this database as a vehicle for genealogists interested in building a family tree, but for the students of ASC, Ancestry became a tool that yielded far more than just names and dates. As the students began to craft their specific contributions to the project, their Ancestry searches unearthed census data, agricultural, military, municipal and private collection documents.

For example, one student, Josh McConnell, decided to look for any military history that might be revealed from among the stories of individuals interred in the burying ground. As Josh mined the database for information on specific individuals, he discovered that the site was linked to federal and state military records, as well as family histories. He was able to document veterans from nearly every war in American history, and to tell something of their personal story. Another student, Denise Groll, became interested in the development of the cemetery as an expression of the surrounding community. Denise was able to trace the movement of families, the development of the physical landscape, and their business interests through her demographic reconstruction of the neighborhood over time. Again, Ancestry provided important information about the spatial organization of the neighborhood as well as the racial and ethnic mixtures of people who lived there. The experiences of these students became the foundation for a public presentation of their findings at the end of the semester, which was attended by people from within and outside of the campus community.

RESOURCE HIGHLIGHTS

Naxos Music Library
Online streaming music library of more than 80,000 CDs from the catalog of Naxos. While its greatest strength is classical, there is also world, folk, jazz, contemporary, relaxation, spoken word, pop and country.

Picture Book Database
For children’s book aficionados—information on author, illustrator, subjects, artistic styles, characters & genres.

Govistics
View, track and compare data showing revenue, spending, employment and payroll information for 39,000 state and local governments and spending and revenue for 15,000 school districts nationwide.

Ancestry Library Edition
That genealogy database that everyone talks about.

Local Market Audience Analyst
Find demographic, market potential, and lifestyle characteristics of specific locations and counties.

PsycTESTS
A collection of psychological tests, measures, scales & surveys. A pretty serious collection…but do try the keyword search—you can find the “Sense of Humor Test” and the “Boring Behaviors Measures.”

CREDO Reference Religion Collection
Additional reference titles in religion.

ATLA Historical Monographs
More than 29,000 titles focusing on religion and theology from the 13th century to 1923 from the American Theological Library Association.

Encyclopaedia of Islam
An extensive reference database on topics in Middle Eastern and Islamic studies.

JSTOR Arts & Sciences X and XI added to JSTOR holdings
More quality journals from JSTOR….

London Low Life
An excellent name for this primary source database of rare books, posters, maps, cartoons, broadsides, penny fiction and guides to London prostitution, gambling and drinking dens showing the Victorian underworld of 19th century and early 20th century London.

-Laura Crain
Students and faculty could order those books at the point they are placed a "Request This Book" button in the library catalog so that 4,500 book titles that the Library has not yet purchased. And we have loaded the library catalog with some 60/40—sixty percent print, and forty percent ebooks. The virtual library is here. Maybe that shouldn't have come as a surprise. After all, that happened to the journal collection back around the turn of the century. 

Now the online journal collection constitutes 99% of total journal holdings, the print collection about 1%. Does that mean that in 2026 we'll have 100 ebooks for every paper book? Don't know. Maybe. Why not?

Of course, the virtual library isn't just text. The library website delivers art (ArtStor), classical music (Naxos Music Library), and streaming video (American History in Video, Education in Video), not to mention 10,000 photographs from the Archives.

The future has arrived.

Faculty and librarians have always focused book selections for the Library in subject areas and topics for which we predicted there would be student interest. Yet, while we can easily determine which academic disciplines have high book circulation rates, we have not had consistent success in knowing exactly which book titles would actually be used by our students. As we refine our book purchasing strategy, our approach is to expose students to a larger selection of books, while at the same time reducing the number of books we purchase that never get checked out.

In Fall 2012, the Library launched a pilot “order-on-demand” program for print books. We have loaded the library catalog with some 4,500 book titles that the Library has not yet purchased. And we placed a “Request This Book” button in the library catalog so that students and faculty could order those books at the point they are ready to use them. We have made a commitment to have these books ready for check out within 3 working days from the time they are requested.

Though we have not received many requests this way, 90% of what we have purchased through “order-on-demand” has been checked out by the student, staff or faculty member who requested it. As this program matures we will add more and more “order-on-demand” titles in a variety of disciplines to the library catalog.

The goal of this type of library collection building is two-fold: to make a much larger universe of content available for students and faculty to discover and select from; and to increase the cost-effectiveness of purchasing by buying books that students and faculty are ready to use. -Laura Crain