The Learning Commons in Falvey: the Vision, the Impact, the Realization

Dedicated on Feb. 17, the Learning Commons in Falvey features a dramatic repurposing of the Library’s second floor, now offering services and facilities in ways that contemporary users prefer. The new space includes Learning Support Services, the Research Center, the Math Learning Resource Center and the Writing Center.

This special issue of News From Falvey describes and explores that endeavor.
Director’s Watch
Re-inventing Library Space for the 21st Century

By Joe Lucia

On a day-to-day basis, we tend to see the spaces we live and work in as static and identified with specific functions and activities. But a time-lapse view of any given interior space would reveal subtle and sometimes radical transformations over time.

During the past 10 to 15 years, the transformation of many traditional academic library spaces has been especially dramatic and exemplifies a broad re-imagination of the nature and purpose of libraries in a digital world. Foremost has been a shift in emphasis away from print warehousing and toward the creation of environments that are designed to support a complex new mix of activities, weighted toward the habits and desires of post-millennial learners.

The first wave of “digital age” re-configuration of library environments, begun in the 1990s, involved freeing up broad swaths of floor space to integrate computing technology into public service environments, as exemplified by dozens or even hundreds of desktop computers clustered together in open work areas, with librarian and technical assistance available nearby.

Evolving technology is only one factor shaping the recent changes. A contemporary pedagogical emphasis on socially-engaged learning, team projects, and formal and informal...
study groups has resulted in the creation of café spaces in many libraries – facilities that encourage long work sessions supported by the availability of snacks and beverages and that foster the integration of academic and social life that is a characteristic of current student behavior. In 2004, we re-configured much of Falvey’s first floor to function in this manner, enlarging the Holy Grounds Café and incorporating small table seating throughout the renovated space by shrinking and relocating the bulk of the print reference and current periodical collections while pushing traditional service desks and staff offices to the margins.

One lesson of the 2004 project is that the “new academic library” must be consciously conceived as a student-oriented learning environment, which ultimately means more than just creating inviting and effective spaces for group work.

Our most recent renovations in Falvey – and our long-term plan for reprogramming and reenergizing the entire building – are designed to fulfill Falvey’s mission as a University commons by providing physical and intellectual resources that serve all segments of our academic community in distinctive but complementary ways. The redesign of the Falvey second floor, completed in January 2012, established a Learning Commons in which students have contiguous access to research librarians, the Writing Center, the Math Learning Resources Center and Learning Support Services. These distinct service units were previously spread around campus and housed in undistinguished facilities. Their new accommodations are sleek, elegant, architecturally coherent and visually connected with each other through the use of modular glass walls and common lighting and furnishing details.

These centers are now housed in a building at the center of campus that maintains an iconic function in academic life. While they remain separate operations, positioned together they form a coherent environment. Their collocation yields a high-impact learning center that opens up new avenues for cooperation among librarians and variously skilled academic support professionals while also providing a single point of connection for students who desire particular types of assistance or support.

More is on the horizon, both in the near term and looking further out. For well over a generation, the Library’s grandest public space, the Old Falvey Reading Room, has moldered as storage space for microform and media collections. We plan to reanimate that space and connect it in dramatic fashion, via an internal atrium, to the adjoining spaces in the Library. This latter project, when realized, will create an exciting new public space that will embody the academic ideals of the University and serve as a site of inspiration, study and engagement for students and faculty. It could become both a favorite retreat and a showcase of the Villanova University Library re-imagined for 21st century learning.

The Historical “Voice of the Student Body” Now Online

By David Burke & Luisa Cywinski

A major digitization project, recently completed, makes available online all issues of the campus newspaper, The Villanovan, published between 1893 and 1995. Prior to this, The Villanovan was available only through print issues or microfilm. Internet Archive, a foundation that offers an online library of public domain documents, performed the digitization.

The event to celebrate this accomplishment, held on Feb. 23, was dedicated to the memory of longtime Villanovan faculty adviser, June Lytel-Murphy.

The program began with remarks by University Librarian Joe Lucia and University President the Rev. Peter M. Donohue, OSA, PhD, ’75 A&S, who characterized the project as a history of “the voice of the student body.” Special Collections and Digital Library Coordinator Michael Foight, Library Technology Development Specialist Demian Katz and Research Support Librarian Susan Ottignon each addressed various aspects of the project.

According to Kendra Davis, a co-editor-in-chief of the newspaper, current issues of The Villanovan have been available online for seven years, and that version has over 9,000 subscribers.

The event concluded with a panel discussion of former editors of The Villanovan: Marianne Lavelle ’80 A&S, Larry Goanos ’84 A&S and Jim DeLorenzo ’84 A&S.

Lavelle spoke of how special she felt to be “a small part of something so big.” Goanos described his first reporting assignment on The Villanovan—interviewing Howie Long, now an NFL Hall of Fame player and media commentator, after a football game. DeLorenzo, who covered the dropping of and later renewal of the University’s football program, spoke of his talks with former University President, the Rev. John M. Driscoll, OSA, PhD.

Falvey librarians and staff members Stephen Spatz, Gina McFadden Duffy, Joanne Quinn, David Burke and Foight helped facilitate the event.

The digital full text of The Villanovan is searchable through the library catalog and also through the Digital Library’s Villanovan section.
At the end of June, Bente Løj Polites, Special Collections librarian and subject liaison team leader for Philosophy, Theology and Humanities, retired after 25 years of service to the University community. Under her co-leadership, Polites also helped implement many Digital Library initiatives.

She was born and raised in Denmark, in a small town along the Baltic Sea, and moved to Copenhagen to pursue undergraduate studies in philosophy at the University of Copenhagen. She followed this with a graduate degree at the Royal Danish School of Librarianship.

Polites actually came to Philadelphia for a one-year internship at the Philadelphia Free Library before returning to Denmark to work for several years in public library reference positions there.

Polites then accepted a position as a reference librarian at the European Parliament in Luxemburg where she was responsible for building a collection of Scandinavian materials in politics, social sciences and economics. During this ten-year period, Polites occasionally worked at the European Parliament’s satellite branches in Brussels, Belgium and Strasbourg, France.

With her husband, Polites moved permanently to Philadelphia in the mid-1980s. After a brief stint in reference at the Van Pelt Library, University of Pennsylvania, Polites joined Falvey in 1987 as a reference librarian.

Not long after, Library Director Mary Ann Griffin asked her to manage the Special Collections. These valuable collections were then housed under less than ideal conditions on the fifth floor of Old Falvey. Polites immediately started to conduct an extensive inventory and improve the physical storage of the rare materials.

By 2000, aided by a memorial gift from the John H. Kolmer III family, the Rare Book Room on the second floor was renovated, and Polites oversaw the move of Special Collections materials into a beautiful, climate controlled location with new furniture and shelving. While Polites increased the profile of Falvey’s Special Collections, she also took courses at the Rare Book School at Columbia University and later at the University of Virginia to gain additional theoretical insight into the field of rare book librarianship.

In addition, in 1996, she assumed the Philosophy subject librarian position, with the responsibility of working closely with the Philosophy Department. She was a good fit because of her academic background and excellent language skills. Polites is conversant in German, French and the Scandinavian languages. She was charged with building a doctoral-level collection with a focus on continental philosophy. Based on her exceptional working relationship with faculty, Polites was awarded the Facultas Award in 2004.

Looking back on her library career, Polites notes many changes, such as the demise of the card catalog and the birth of an online system. She remembers the print indexes being partially replaced, first by librarian-mediated searching, then CD-ROM access, and finally web-based databases searchable by patrons in their dorms, offices and homes. She admits that while reference librarians have increased their responsibilities, there is now less interaction with patrons at a central reference desk.

However, through all these changes, she has always enjoyed working with the students, faculty and staff at Villanova University.

Her retirement plans include reading, taking greater advantage of the sights and activities in Philadelphia, and spending more time visiting Denmark and France. She will be missed for her outstanding service to the University community, for her expertise in many areas and for her warmth and her dedication to the needs of the students and faculty.
Calling it a “reaffirmation of my love of Villanova and my work,” Susan Ottignon received the Facultas Award for spring 2012. Amid the clamor of the University’s annual faculty and staff community picnic in May, a “flabbergasted” Ottignon accepted the biannual honor from the Rev. Peter M. Donohue, OSA, PhD, University President, and Thomas Way, PhD, Computing Sciences professor and co-chairperson of the Awards subcommittee of the Committee on Faculty.

The Facultas Award, created in 1995, focuses attention on the “vital, yet often unnoticed, services essential to the smooth and efficient functioning of the Villanova community, especially the academic faculty.”

A Falvey librarian since 1992, Ottignon works closely with the Romance Languages and Literatures faculty, recommending books of interest, soliciting requests, working with foreign language vendors and building a strong collection that supports the graduate and undergraduate curricula.

Ottignon, also a research support librarian, loves being the “good places to start” librarian, as featured on the Library’s Subject Guide pages. As a generalist, she relishes the thrill of the hunt and theorizes that “students are the true specialists: they know what they are looking for. I just lead them to the water.”

University Librarian Joe Lucia says the award is a fitting tribute to Ottignon’s service to faculty over many years at the Library: “Sue is the consummate library professional who is always committed to going the extra mile in supporting students and faculty in their learning and research endeavors.”

When asked what she said to Father Peter that elicited such a large laugh from the University President while he was presenting her plaque and gift certificate, Ottignon said, “I have no inkling what I said. But it was a joyful, sweet moment!”

Ottignon, a Hackensack, N.J., native, received her master’s degree in library science from Drexel University and holds a graduate degree in history and an undergraduate degree in Spanish language and literature. She credits the support of the library staff, particularly the Interlibrary Loan and Resource Management departments, for her success. Ottignon also serves on Falvey’s Digital Library and Assessment teams.

She enjoys reading Christian romance novels and historical biographies – in English – after a long day of multilingual academic rigor.

Ottignon shares a proud legacy of service with other Falvey Facultas recipients, which include the late Therese Dougherty (1996), Bente Polites (2004), Phylis Wright (2006), Domenick Liberato (2007) and Barbara Quintiliano (2008).

Three junior librarians, Laura Bang, Robin Bowles and Kristyna Carroll, were recently promoted from Librarian I to Librarian II, University Librarian Joe Lucia announced. “They have each made a substantial contribution to the success of the Library, and all of them have been engaged professionally at a national level in advancing new ideas or promoting new initiatives that will help shape the future of academic libraries.”

Laura Bang, curatorial assistant in Special and Digital Collections, came to Falvey in 2010. Bang hires, trains and supervises students and staff in the Digital Library. She also develops and mounts the Special Collections online and physical exhibits, and she catalogs Special Collections acquisitions. She has a master’s degree in library science from the University of Maryland, and her undergraduate degree is in comparative literature from Bryn Mawr College.

Robin Bowles, Nursing/Life Sciences librarian, was appoint-
Special Report:

An engaging, state-of-the-art center for learning and inquiry, integrating in a single physical setting the access to key academic services

The jewel in the crown of Falvey’s recent renovations is the Learning Commons in Falvey, an innovative new space on the second floor uniting essential services in a high-energy, learning-centered environment. Besides the Research Center, Learning Support Services, the Math Learning Resource Center and the Writing Center, the Learning Commons also houses multipurpose conference and presentation rooms, the print reference collection, an open lounge area, and various much-needed study spaces. In fact, as workmen were assembling the new furniture, students quickly encamped with their laptops, books and papers.

The Centers’ glass walls provide daylight and views throughout the interior spaces, and each Center has office and work spaces that open onto a central corridor. Touch screens at either end of the corridor display interactive maps, staff directories, announcements and library catalog searching.

Before the Learning Commons in Falvey could be realized, however, much planning and behind-the-scenes activity had to take place. Moving the almost 130,000 volumes and the heavy tables and carrels from the second floor to make room for the Learning Commons involved strategies resembling a game of dominoes that actually began years ago.

Changing environments

For decades, Falvey Memorial Library has embraced its mission to support scholarship and learning. University-wide surveys consistently acknowledge the Library’s service environment, from the visible user service points to backstage materials processing and computer systems development. Teaching undergraduates research strategies through a variety of collaborative
The Learning Commons in Falvey

endeavors is but one example of Falvey’s long tradition of supporting the University’s strong educational mission.

As information packaging moved away from print toward digital formats, Falvey anticipated how users’ needs were changing. As early as 2004, Falvey repurposed sites in the physical facility to achieve a revised vision of the Library as a center for cultural and intellectual exchange. Library operations, collections and offices moved from the main floor, transforming that space by expanding access to technology, increasing group and after-hours study spaces, relocating the coffee shop, building a new instruction room and establishing and enlarging cultural event areas.

In the spring, the research consultation librarians traveled with the pared-down print reference collection to their second floor site, the Research Center. Now, in that vacated first floor corner, modular furniture can transform the journal browsing space into an events area.

The architect’s rendering above shows the conceptualization of the Learning Commons in Falvey’s corridor, linking the learning spaces and providing inviting seating (BLT Architects).
Q&A with new Learning Commons Residents

Learning Support Center Director

Nancy Mott

Why is the new Learning Commons site a good fit for LSS?
The one-stop shopping for students eases access and sends a message to students that they show strength in seeking support. When the LSS location was isolated, the students felt disconnected. Now, as part of the Learning Commons, students experience a holistic approach to education and academic support. This enforces the idea of lifelong learning.

What do you like about the new space?
We have unique needs in the LSS office and require a setting that affords privacy for one-on-one work with students. The new space ensures that confidentiality is maintained. We now have adequate space required for proctoring tests that is conveniently located near our main office. Also, our new, consolidated space has improved communication within our own department.

What happens in the LSS? Who do you serve? Who works here?
When Learning Support Services started it was solely for students with diagnosed learning disabilities. Now only 50% have this diagnosis. Some of our clients have no diagnoses, some are presidential scholars and some are just struggling. We help students achieve their potential. We provide one-on-one meetings that emphasize study skills, time management, organizational skills, problem solving and setting priorities. We also communicate with students’ professors to make sure they receive appropriate accommodation.

We have three learning specialists on staff with similar backgrounds. All have been teachers and are certified in special education. We also have one administrative assistant. This year we also had two interns from the Psychology department and work study students who perform clerical duties.

Math Learning Resource Center Director

Melissa Ferreira

Why is the Learning Commons site a good fit for the Math Center?
It is more concentrated for students because it is connected to other services. The space is more functional, more comfortable and inviting.

What do you especially like about the new space?
It was designed with our needs in mind. I was able to work with the architects to plan the space, which was very exciting. We are better able to serve students here.

What happens in the Math Center? Who are your clients and who staffs your center?
We focus primarily on tutoring, either individuals or in groups. The center has 13 computers for student use, and these stations are loaded with various math programs. We serve freshmen and sophomores. Our tutors are both undergraduate and graduate students. Sixteen are undergraduates, primarily math and engineering majors, while the eight graduate student tutors specialize in math and statistics.

Other comments?
The tutors and students seem happier here. The layout provides a better space for communicating, and the tutors stay longer: They come before their shifts and stay after their shifts.

A moving experience
Back in 2010, when the Villanova Law Library vacated Garey Hall, stacks space there became available to house the Falvey print and microform journals collection, necessitating carting 100,000 volumes from the bound stacks in the Old Falvey annex to remote storage in Garey Hall. Working with Susan Markley and the Resource Management team, Access Services staff developed intricate procedures for journal retrieval and article scanning to satisfy user needs for those scholarly materials, now stored offsite. These days, Ann Stango, Phil Mairs, other Access Services staff and campus mailroom personnel trek over to Garey Hall for needed volumes.

Go West
The vacated Old Falvey stack space, renamed Falvey West, was cleaned, repaired, painted and brought up to fire code, while new signage, lighting and computers aided visitors. The former Reading Room, which had contained nonprint media and assorted storage, was emptied and refurbished, becoming temporary office space for the library administration and Outreach teams.

For this to happen though, Falvey staff carted 28,000 reels of microfilm and 4000 videotapes from the Reading Room/Media Room to the Falvey West upper floors during a week-long intense effort. Phylis Wright assembled volunteers from all library departments, and others helped with weeding items as well. Hundreds of metal shelves were adjusted to hold these media...
Why is the new Learning Commons site a good fit for the Research Center?
Everything is in one place. Students can visit the Learning Support, Writing or Math Centers and then stop in for some research help. We also have easy access to print reference books. It’s a cool environment.

Favorite aspects of the new space?
The furniture, the touch screens, the location. We like being located close to the other centers, making it easier to plan joint projects. It’s quiet and more private – better for helping students. It’s nice to have the conference rooms close by if more consultation space is needed.

What happens in the Research Center? Who do you serve? Who works here?
The Research Center provides research appointments, plus space for holding team meetings and working on projects. We also perform behind-the-scenes work like creating websites, ordering books and identifying access problems. Research librarians are now mainly in one place and are available via email, chat, phone and in person. Students and all those needing research help are welcome to walk in or schedule an appointment. We serve the entire University community, as well as local residents. The Research Center is comprised of two teams, Academic Integration and Information & Research Assistance, which includes many of the librarians and some support staff.

Is there an unexpected plus for you?
Tours don’t end on the first floor anymore. It is a pleasure to watch a tour guide show the group how to look up a book using the touch screen.

Why is the new Learning Commons site a good fit for the Writing Center?
It is the trend in universities now to incorporate these centers into the library. Villanova is recognizing the success of other universities and following suit. Students are using the library in different ways, and it creates a new “synergy” to bring all the centers into one space.

What do you especially like about the new space?
We love the light, the view and the usability of the new furniture. Everything is on wheels! Tables and chairs can be easily moved to accommodate various needs. The Writing Center is a fluid space.

What happens here? Who are your clients? Who is your staff?
We serve everyone who is affiliated with the University. Tutoring sessions are usually a 50 minute, one-on-one experience. Students may ask for help with anything from class papers to personal statements for graduate school to letters to the editor. Tutors will also provide help with personal writing endeavors. The Center has approximately 50 tutors spanning three tiers: professional tutors, graduate students and undergraduate students from all disciplines. The Writing Center saw 5,372 visits during the 2011/2012 academic year.

Any bonuses?
Students will come back to celebrate the good work they did. Their lives revolve around writing, and those who knew the old Writing Center couldn’t contain themselves when they saw the new. This feeling of camaraderie sets the whole tone for tutorial. It’s a new day here.

Materials.
Participants included Trisha Kemp, Becky Whidden, Ann Stango, Bill Greene, the Rev. Dennis Gallagher, Michael Foight, Darren Poley, Gina McFadden, Jeff Eisenberg, Raamaan McBride, Margaret Duffy, Gerald Dierkes, Donna Chadderton, Mimi DiLenge, Anne Ford, Sarah Hidding, Krishna Bethambhatla, Bala Guduru, June Jiang, Chris Altonji, Hatem Manosrah, Eric Ulmer, Eric Wagner, FeiFei Yang and Luisa Cywinski.
Open for Business during Major Construction

By midsummer 2011, Falvey’s second floor was gutted, and the transformation to Learning Commons began. The Special Collections reading room closed for months, sealed off from construction to protect those valuable items from dust. Second floor books were prepped for their relocation to the refurbished Falvey West. Domenick Liberato, stacks manager, Barbara Haas and other staff prepared for the move by measuring and labeling large stacks sections. Early one morning, 20 movers arrived to transfer the books: they worked throughout the floor, using both elevators, ramps and specially designed carts. During this time, patrons needing books in philosophy, theology and world and European history contacted the front desk staff who retrieved the books for them.

The moving and storage crew dismantled the second floor shelving, taking it down to the nuts and bolts, stripped away the old carpeting and ceiling tiles, and calculated how many additional electrical and telecommunication lines would be needed. During construction, second floor offices shifted to other areas in the building. Demolition and infrastructure work, including marble slab removal, took place over the next few weeks with noisier work occurring between midnight and 6:00 a.m. “Scheduling work this way minimized the impact of construction noise on the library study and work environment,” said University Librarian Joe Lucia.

Many library users inquired about the project and the construction. Luisa Cywinski provided ongoing online updates, in instances posting photographs of the construction. As Cywinski noted, “As always, library staff can be called upon for assistance and information. Our aim is to provide a comfortable, accessible work and study space throughout construction.”

The Future

Joanne Quinn, design specialist, and Kristyna Carroll, research librarian, created and mounted a large display that answered those inquiries as well, featuring blueprints, architectural drawings and future phases of the project which are designed to transform and unite both Falvey buildings. A cross-sectional drawing of the two buildings, Old Falvey and Falvey Memorial Library, reveals how an atrium will link the two, dramatically connecting the modern with the traditional, while infusing the space with natural light.

Future plans for Old Falvey include opening the large Reading Room for quiet study and special events, a graduate student lounge and study space, library teams’ office space, and a computer aided virtual environment.

Dedication Ceremony

The Learning Commons in Falvey was officially dedicated on Feb. 17 when planners, architects, designers, faculty, staff, students and visitors gathered to celebrate the new home of the Research Center, Learning Support Services (LSS), the Math Learning Resource Center (MLRC) and the Writing Center.

Distinguished guests included University President the Rev. Peter M. Donohue, OSA, PhD, ’75 A&S, Vice President for Academic Affairs the Rev. Kail C. Ellis, OSA, PhD, academic deans, administrators and retired librarians.

University Librarian Joe Lucia asked guests to celebrate the “realization of our dream.” The Rev. Dennis Gallagher, OSA, PhD, then offered a prayer for “our academic community and all who use this transformed space.” Father Ellis complimented the aesthetics and remarked on the ease of access to offices in the Commons.
Father Donohue recounted the long process that led to the Learning Commons project's realization, remembering the original locations of the Writing Center, the MLRC and the LSS as “places where no one else would want to go.”

According to Mary Beth Simmons, Writing Center director, the move to the new space was like “checking into the Ritz.” Melissa Ferreira, MLRC director, noted that “in just the few weeks we have been open” she has noticed the “positive impact on students.” Nancy Mott, EdD, LSS director, also commented on their move from a space-challenged location to their new “home” in Falvey.

Jutta Seibert, Falvey Academic Integration team leader and Research Center co-coordinator, conveyed her hope that this new “inspirational space” will lead to the completion of the project’s future phases, notably the proposed atrium that will open up the space between Old Falvey and Falvey Memorial Library, creating another “uplifting experience” for students and scholars.

In his remarks, Lucia acknowledged the contributions of Ken Valosky, University vice president for Administration and Finance; BLT Architects, Philadelphia; Jim Matthews, Facilities project manager; Florence Reif, Facilities designer; Margaret Duffy, Falvey Business & Administration team leader; Judy Olsen, Falvey Communication & Publications team leader; Joanne Quinn, Falvey design specialist; Luisa Cywinski, Falvey Access Services team leader; and the many other library and centers staff members whose assistance, patience and good humor were invaluable.
Uncovering the Causes of Schizophrenia

Bernard J. Gallagher III, PhD, began the spring Scholarship@Villanova lecture series on Feb. 6 with a talk entitled “Schizophrenia: Groups at Risk and Recently Discovered Causes.”

Schizophrenia is a dangerous disease — “like a death sentence,” Dr. Gallagher, professor of Psychiatric Sociology in the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice, explained. For over 20 years, Dr. Gallagher and his Villanova University research team have sought to uncover the hidden causes of schizophrenia. “The causes of the disease have traditionally been elusive,” he said. “But recent findings have uncovered intriguing patterns that change the way we understand schizophrenia’s origins.”

Combing through the records of 2,000 schizophrenia patients, Dr. Gallagher and his team worked to put together patterns in the data. They found that patients with a certain subset of the disease were more likely to have been conceived in January and born into impoverished households. These two factors meant their mothers had a higher risk of contracting influenza while pregnant. This information, Dr. Gallagher explained, suggests that some cases of schizophrenia may stem from a prenatal illness and that influenza vaccination of pregnant women may be an important method of preventing some cases of this devastating mental illness.

His lecture included an explanation of schizophrenia in addition to his recent research. Dr. Gallagher imparted a greater understanding of the disease as well as “greater compassion for the mentally ill.” In addition he stressed that, for pregnant women, “good prenatal care is key.”

Women and Religion in the African Diaspora

Africana Studies and Falvey Memorial Library cosponsored a Women’s History Month lecture by Tracey E. Hucks, PhD, associate professor of Religious Studies at Haverford College. Dr. Hucks spoke on her forthcoming book, Yoruba Traditions and African-American Religious Nationalism, on Mar. 15.

Dr. Hucks discussed women and religion in the African diaspora. She has previously published an article on the topic, entitled “I smoothed the way, I opened doors: Women in the Yoruba-Orisha Tradition of Trinidad,” in Women and Religion in the African Diaspora: Knowledge, Power, and Performance (Johns Hopkins, 2006).

At the lecture, Dr. Hucks acknowledged the broad nature of her topic, explaining that the first draft of her book was about 700 pages long. She talked about the process of narrowing her explorations. In her talk she focused primarily on the United States, detailing the ways that alternate spiritualities coexist with Christianity in the lives of African Americans.

Lent and the Wisdom of Pope John Paul II

This year’s Pope John Paul II Legacy Lecture featured John V. Kruse, PhD. Dr. Kruse, assistant professor in the Theological Studies Department at Neumann University in Aston, Pa., gave a talk entitled “John Paul II: Companion on Our Lenten Journey,” on April 2.

As Dr. Kruse explained, the lecture looked to “the inspiring writings of Pope John Paul II to lead to deep reflection on life and faith.”
during the Lenten season. He drew on material from his book, *Lent and Easter Wisdom from Pope John Paul II*. The book features the late pope's thought-provoking words, leading readers through a journey of conversion throughout the season.

Since Pope John Paul II’s death in April 2005, Falvey Memorial Library has invited a speaker to campus each spring to discuss an aspect of the impact of the second-longest documented pontificate.

**How Spacetime is Like Italian Food: Robert Jantzen on General Relativity and Pasta**

Robert Jantzen, PhD, the recipient of Villanova’s 2011 Outstanding Faculty Research Award and a professor in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics, spoke as part of the Scholarship@Villanova lecture series on April 19. His lecture, “General Relativity, Cosmology and Pasta: A Life of USA-Italy Academic Commuting,” touched on his more than three decades of research, which garnered him this prestigious award.

To explain the Italy connection, Dr. Jantzen explained that Einstein may have been the father of general relativity, but a pair of Italian mathematicians helped make it possible. “The geometry of the cavatappi pasta surface thus seems a fitting metaphor for how curved spacetime makes particles move and the importance of symmetry in studying solutions of the equations which govern their motion, both of which are also key in the mathematical cosmology made possible by the geometry explored by another Italian mathematician.”

He was inspired by a “whimsical coffee table book” relating pasta shapes to architecture. “The cavatappi shape is among the most mathematically pleasing of these shapes and was a simple extension of the donut geometry I had already thoroughly studied, but even more whimsical and certainly more complicated. The light bulb went on: this would make an interesting way of describing spacetime curvature in a familiar setting, while connecting the mathematical techniques to its Italian origins.”

“It does not hurt that I am a big pasta fan,” he added.

“High historical drama”: Michael Tomko on Catholic Emancipation and the British Romantics

At his Scholarship@Villanova lecture on April 23, Michael Tomko, PhD, examined one of the Romantic Period’s most controversial issues, Catholic Emancipation, and described how this period in history not only caused political and cultural conflicts but also provoked some of the most exceptional writings of the time. Dr. Tomko is an associate professor of Literature in the Humanities Department.

As he explained, “Any student of Romanticism knows that understanding the British reaction to the French Revolution is integral to understanding Romantic literature. But what if, I asked, an understanding of Britain’s relationship to its Catholic past is integral to understanding not only the French Revolution but to many other major political events?”

The lecture focused on his book, *British Romanticism and the Catholic Question: Religion, History, and National Identity, 1778-1829*. Dr. Tomko said that he found the research for the book “oddly exciting,” focusing as it did on “a major cultural event that has received little scholarly attention.” He recounted, “at the Bodleian Library in Oxford or at libraries such as the Catholic Seminary of Ushaw College in Durham, I was constantly digging up fascinating writers and personal histories of unknown but important English Catholics or hearing prominent public figures in England such as William Pitt intervening in issues of Catholic theology in order to gain political traction. Seeing how this world intersected with the lives of figures I knew so well, such as William Wordsworth or Percy Bysshe Shelley, made for high historical drama, at least in my mind.”

Videos of most of these events can be viewed on the University YouTube account (http://www.youtube.com/user/villanovauniversity).
Noteworthy

Villanova University Department of Computing Sciences hosted a colloquium by University Librarian Joe Lucia on March 26 in the Mendel Science Center. The presentation, “Not Fade Away: The Work of Libraries in the Age of Digital Transformation,” addressed the cultural function of libraries, namely how this function can be separated from media-dependency to fulfill a critical social and cultural mission as we face the inexorable waning of the print era. At the center of Lucia’s argument is the construct of the commons, and in particular the “intellectual commons,” as an essential public good.

Luisa Cywinski, Access Services team leader, has been appointed to leadership positions in the Pennsylvania Academic Library Consortium (PALCI). She joined the PALCI E-ZBorrow Advisory Council last fall. The E-ZBorrow system makes it easier for users to obtain books from other libraries. The council consists of ten members who develop E-ZBorrow policies and procedures.

Demian Katz, Technology Development specialist, co-authored “Content Integration: Creating a Scalable Common Platform for Information Resources,” published in the March 2012 issue of Computers in Libraries. Co-author Max Berenstein is a product manager at Elsevier, a publisher of scientific, technical and medical information. In their article, Berenstein and Katz discuss solutions, such as SciVerse Applications, developed at Elsevier, and VuFind, developed at Villanova University, which can be used “to help institutions better aggregate, manage and expose licensed and in-house content.”

Alexandra Edwards won the English Department’s Margaret Powell Esmonde Memorial Award 2012 for Best Graduate Essay. Alex, a recent graduate and the Falvey Publications and Outreach teams’ graduate assistant wrote her winning essay, “Like Some Monstrous Stealthy Cat: Queerness and Felineomorphism in Charles Brockden Brown, Henry James, and H.P. Lovecraft” for Dr. Michael Berthold’s American Gothic class during the fall 2011 semester. This fall, Alex will begin a PhD program in English at the University of Georgia.

Joanne Quinn, graphic designer, received the Certificate of Graduate Study in Advertising and Media Production, granted by the Office of Graduate Studies, Department of Communication, in May.

David Uspal, Technology Development specialist, gave a lightning talk, “Project Grab Bag,” on Feb. 9 at the 2012 Code4lib annual conference in Seattle, Wash. His presentation highlighted three projects he and the other Technology Development team members (David Lacy and Demian Katz) are currently working on: the URL management system, the Digital Library historical-campus-tour app and the interactive-library-map system.

The URL management system is now used to “drive the content of our subject, course and topic guides.” They plan to publish it as a module that can be used by other libraries to manage their own guides. The historical campus tour will be released in the near future. Uspal noted that the interactive library map of Falvey is live and will be included on the touch screen monitors in the new Learning Commons.

Code4lib is an organization of “hackers, designers, architects, curators, catalogers, artists and instigators … who work for and with libraries, archives and museums on technology ‘stuff.’ ”

Judith Olsen, subject librarian for English and Theatre, joined a panel discussion for high school juniors on “What Colleges Want You to Know about Research” at the Baldwin School, Bryn Mawr, Pa., on May 2. Other panelists included Crystal Lucky, PhD, associate professor, English Department, Villanova University, and Mary Weatherup, a student at Villanova and parent of two Baldwin students. Kelly Grimmert, the head librarian at the Baldwin School, organized the event.

Kimberley Bugg, Information and Research Assistance team leader, presented a paper, “Fade 2 Black Popular Culture Index,” at the Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association annual conference in Boston, April 11-14. Bugg’s paper “detailed the electronic annotated index with audible auto commentary on black popular culture.” Her presentation was part of the roundtable, “Embracing Engagement: Popular Technology and Academic Library Information Portals.” Her project was partially funded by an award from the American Library Association (ALA) Carnegie-Whitney Grant.

Bugg serves as the ALA Popular Culture convenor for a discussion group that focuses on “hot topics.” She is the outgoing ALA Film and Broadcast librarian convenor. In the last two years the group has sponsored talks on ethical and legal issues related to Netflix and streaming video and copyright cases involving Georgia State University.
Falvey Memorial Library staff members were honored at the University’s service recognition dinner on April 26: **Donna Chadderton**, Access Services team information services specialist, 20 years of service; **Laura Hutelmyer**, electronic resources and special acquisitions coordinator, Resource Management team, 15 years of service, **Phylis Wright**, manager of access desk services, Access Services team, 15 years of service, and **Jeannine Ahern**, Budget and Administration Services specialist, 10 years of service.

**Laura Bang**, Digital and Special Collections curatorial assistant, and **Michael Foight**, Special Collections and Digital Library coordinator, organized Villanova University’s recent table exhibit at the Public Library Association (PLA) 2012 Conference held in Philadelphia, Pa., March 13-17. They promoted two open-source software projects developed at Falvey Memorial Library: VuFind, a library resource portal, and VuDL, a digital library content management system. The biennial PLA Conference is the largest conference devoted to public library professionals in the United States. Bang and Foight were joined by **Diane Biunno**, **David Burke**, **Alexandra Edwards**, **Chris Hallberg**, **Demian Katz**, **David Lacy**, **Brian McDonald** and **David Uspal**.

**Brian McDonald**, a graduate student in the “Fast-Track” Master of Library and Information Science program at the University of Pittsburgh, was the Digital Library intern for the 2012 spring semester. He is enrolled in the Archives, Preservation and Records Management (APRM) specialization. McDonald holds a doctorate in English literature from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland. He has a master’s degree from Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John’s, Newfoundland, Canada. McDonald earned his honors bachelor’s degree from the University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, Canada.

**Matthew Ainslie** joined Falvey in a newly created position, Research Center intern, working in research support, instructional design and collection development for the 2012 spring and summer months. He is enrolled in Drexel University’s Master of Library and Information Science program. Ainslie has a bachelor’s degree in archaeology from Washington University in St. Louis, Mo.

**Diane Biunno**, enrolled in Drexel University’s Master of Library and Information Science program, was the Digital Library intern for the summer semester. As part of her internship, Biunno created an online exhibit, “an illustrated journey” about Dante and medieval literature, using materials from Special Collections.

Librarians **Alfred Fry, Barbara Quintiliano** and **Robin Bowles** were among the presenters for Teaching and Learning Strategies at Villanova 2012 on May 17, an event sponsored by the Villanova Institute for Teaching and Learning (VITAL) and the University’s Center for Instructional Technologies (CIT).

Fry, coordinator for Sciences/Engineering subject liaison team, and Leslie McCarthy, PhD, PE, presented “Transportation Engineering: Beyond the Classroom.” Dr. McCarthy is an assistant professor of civil and environmental engineering. Dr. McCarthy and Fry received a VITAL “minigrant” for this project, designed to incorporate active learning into the transportation facilities design course.

Fry also participated in the workshop “Information Literacy: A Field Guide Along the Path of Lifelong Learning,” with Andrea Welker, PhD, PE, an associate professor of civil and environmental engineering, and John Komlos, PhD, an assistant professor of civil and environmental engineering.

Barbara Quintiliano, coordinator for the Nursing/Life Sciences subject liaison team and Instructional Services librarian, and Robin Bowles, Nursing/Life Sciences librarian, presented “Really Simple, Really Mobile, Really Cool.” Their session examined using a browser as a personal news service to deliver podcasts, tables of contents and RSS feeds to a laptop or mobile device.

Outreach Librarian **Darren G. Poley** addressed the Delaware Valley Chapter of the Association of Colleges and Research Libraries (ACRL-DVC) meeting on April 20 at the University of Delaware’s Goodstay Center in Wilmington, Del. In his talk, “How Else Do We Engage the Community? The Value of Scholarly Outreach,” he talked about the path Falvey Memorial Library chose in the effort to do outreach in the university setting. Poley discussed the scholarly communication-related projects Falvey’s Outreach team works on and how the team serves both the Library and Villanova University by reaching out to the scholarly community.
Attn: Ms. Mary Heyman
800 Lancaster Avenue
Villanova, Pennsylvania 19085

Historical photograph courtesy of the University Archives; photograph by Alice Bampton

Soon to return to its former glory

Until Falvey Memorial Library was built in 1968, Falvey Hall, now the Old Falvey annex, housed the collection and all library services. This archival photograph depicts the Reference/Reading Room in 1960. The two-story Reading Room, recently used for storage and non-print collections (inset), will be renovated into a multipurpose quiet study and events reception area, while the old Circulation lobby area, recently the Math Learning Center, will be transformed into a much needed graduate student study area and lounge.