

# The Observer

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THE OBERLIN COLLEGE FACULTY AND STAFF NEWSPAPER

## Emeritus Mathematics Professor Elbridge Vance Establishes Two Oberlin Scholarships

Elbridge "Fuzzy" Vance's long-time colleague in the math department, George Andrews, says it is "very much in character" for Vance, whom he calls "very generous," to be interested in potential mathematics students and in people who historically have had less opportunity than others to study beyond high school.

Ten years ago Vance, emeritus professor of mathematics, reaffirmed his interest by setting up a 10-year gift annuity trust with Oberlin College. The funds are now ready to support two scholarships for first-year Oberlin students.

Chantal Ross—who graduated last year from Montgomery Blair High School, a science and mathematics magnet school in Silver Spring, Maryland—has won one of the scholarships.

Andrews—Andrew and Pauline Delaney Professor of Mathematics—and Susan Colley, professor of mathematics and department chair, are working with the College of Arts and Sciences Office of Admissions to establish award criteria for the other scholarship and identify the recipient. The admissions office will use that scholarship as a recruitment tool,

awarding it next fall to an entering student who demonstrates interest and ability in mathematics.

### Miss as Good as a Thousand Miles

Ross learned of her good fortune a week ago Monday. An attempt the next day to bring her and Vance together, however, will have to be renewed in the spring. Blame Ohio winters for closing the window of opportunity. Vance and his wife, Jean, former mathematics-department secretary, were packed and preparing to leave for Florida early—very early—Wednesday morning when the invitation to meet with Ross came over the telephone that Tuesday evening. Looking forward to his trip, Vance still took the time to say he was pleased that the scholarships were moving along and receiving attention and sorry that he would be unable to meet Ross before heading south.

Ross says she was disappointed not to meet Vance before he left and plans to write to him in Florida.

### Candy-Store Syndrome

Although she took four years of mathematics in high school, including calculus in her se-

nior year, Ross has no plans to take more math classes at Oberlin. Languages are what interest her the most, but Ross sounds like a kid in a candy store when she talks about subjects she'd like to study.

"I've already had six years of French and two of Spanish, so I might major in French and Spanish, but what about Japanese . . . and Russian. Anything is possible." International politics is a field she plans to look into. Ross was exposed to languages other than English at an early age, having "always" attended multicultural schools and having spent time with her paternal grandmother, who is from the Philippines. "She used to count in Spanish," says Ross, who finds foreign languages "beautiful" and "musical."

Ross says she has wanted to perform music for a long time but never studied an instrument. Now she is taking secondary voice lessons with conservatory senior Abra Bush and will study voice over Winter Term.

Obviously thrilled about being at Oberlin—"the academics, music, culture!"—Ross says she was "scared" nonetheless when she first came to the campus. She found Oberlin's size—smaller than most universities—comforting. "This one was just it," she says. "I fell in love with it. I didn't want to leave after my second visit."

Seeing how free Oberlin students are with their expressions helped Ross choose to come here. "I wanted to learn how to voice my opinions," she says. Although she was silent in some of her high-school classes, at Oberlin she finds "I just talk all the time."

Ross lives in Afrikan Heritage House, and is quick to say that living there does not make her feel isolated. She says she thinks the house can be isolating "only if you want" it to be. "Next year maybe I'll live in Asia House," she adds.

### Taught Variety of Students

Vance demonstrated a special interest in students in many ways before establishing the two Oberlin scholarships. A member of

Oberlin's math department for 39 years, he took leave in 1973 to teach mathematics to high-school students, spending one semester at Glenville, an inner-city school in Cleveland, and one at Phillips Andover, a private school in Massachusetts. He was on the



Vance

Ross

Oberlin school board for eight years in the 1950s, the last three as president, and is a former superintendent of the Sunday School at First Church.

Through his textbooks Vance has touched even more students, "at least 2 million more," according to Carol Ganzel's profile of him in the December 9, 1982, issue of the *Observer*. "More than 1,200,000 copies of the textbooks he has written have been sold new, and it is likely that most of them were later resold at least once," she wrote. Several of the nine books Vance has written have been translated into Spanish, and two have been published in Braille; they have been used by high-school and college students in Japan, Canada, and Central and South America.

Except when he was on leave and during two brief periods when he was acting dean of the college, Vance chaired the mathematics department from 1948 to 1975. He chaired the Central Coordinating Committee on Films and Television of the Mathematical Association of America for a time, and is a former associate editor in charge of film and television reviews for the *American Mathematics Monthly*.

Vance served four years as chair and five as chief reader for the Advanced Placement Program in mathematics of the College Entrance Examination Board. He was a consultant and teacher in a summer institute for high-school and college teachers in Ranchi, India,

*Continued on page 2*

## Andy Evans Paints Oberlin's Financial Picture; Looks for Feedback

More and more Oberlin College employees are learning about Oberlin's finances now that Andy Evans, vice president for finance, is making his way around campus to talk about the subject. The key words in his message are *structural deficit*, a type of imbalance in the budget that will worsen over time unless the budget is reorganized properly. So far, Evans has spoken with the General Faculty, administrative and professional employees, administrative assistants, the General Faculty Planning Committee, the president's staff, and College trustees.

"As we talk about this, people send me all kinds of things," Evans says. One of the helpful things he has received is a three-page list of suggestions relating to the budget that was compiled a few years ago.

To open in-depth campuswide dialog further, Evans will soon begin a series of focus groups: discussions about the deficit and ways to approach it. Between 150 and 200 people from all employee categories will take part in the focus groups.

"The groups—of about 15 people each—will also discuss how change has happened at Oberlin in the past and how people would like to see it happen in the future,"

Evans says. He has asked Elaine Kuttner, a consultant with experience in similar settings, to facilitate the focus groups.

When the results of the focus groups are shared with the entire campus, people's names will be separated from their comments, he says.

"In these focus groups I hope people will feel free to speak openly and honestly about the issues and concerns they may otherwise keep to themselves."



Andy Evans juggles his phone and appointment book to plan more discussion sessions about Oberlin's finances.

## Online Directory in the Works

President Nancy Dye has approved a proposal for an online directory of Oberlin College students and employees. To be part of Oberlin Online, the College's World Wide Web presence on the Internet, the directory is expected to be in place for the 1996-97 school year.

According to the proposal, brought by the Oberlin Online Oversight (OOO) Committee and approved last week, persons who do not wish to be listed in the directory will be able to block online publication of information about themselves just as they now may choose not to be listed in *Fusser's*. The online directory will be accessible off campus as well as on.

Data categories for faculty and staff will be different from those for students, but neither will include off-campus mailing addresses.

Faculty and staff information will be

- name

- position
  - campus address
  - campus phone
  - preferred E-mail address
- Student information will be
- name
  - Oberlin College mail-room address
  - preferred E-mail address

Meanwhile, an abbreviated version of the online directory will be put in place by early spring semester, says Acting Director of Computing Gary Kornblith. It will carry only student names and E-mail addresses, and departmental and office listings with links to departmental and office homepages. Students will soon receive forms in their mailboxes that will allow them to block listing of their information, says Office of Communications project director John Appley, cochair of OOO.

## Trustee Meeting

### Board Changes Plenary-Session Procedures

To eliminate what it considers duplicate effort, the Oberlin College Board of Trustees will no longer summarize issues during its plenary sessions and will use that time for discussion only, board chair William Perlik '48 announced near the beginning of the December 2-meeting plenary session. Background needed for discussion is available as handouts to board members, Perlik said.

Reporting for Investment Committee chair James Pohlman '54, Trustee Daniel Orr '54 said the rate of return on the College endowment between September 1994 and September 1995 was 10.8 percent. The performance was in accord with expectations, he said.

During the Budget and Finance Committee report the board voted its approval of the 1994-95 Annual Financial Report, prepared by Controller Ronald Watts, and the Auditing Subcommittee Report, prepared by Trustee George Bent '52. Budget and Finance Committee chair James Ford '45 noted that the College is \$2.3 million overdrawn in financial aid, but that expenditures will equal the budget for the coming academic year. Trustees approved the 1996-97 facilities-maintenance budget and the second phase of the project that is wiring all residence halls for data, voice, and video transmission. They also authorized the purchase of a new \$236,900 C.B. Fiske organ for Finney Chapel (most of the funds for which are in hand as gifts), and expressed concern that raising funds for the Environmental Studies Center not draw on the financial resources of the College but, in keeping with stated intent, remain independently financed. Professor of Environmental Studies David Orr, who is raising the money for the center, will be invited to address the board directly in the spring, trustees said.

Delia Pitts '72, chair of the Campus Affairs Committee, reported that trustees had discussed several issues with two college senators: recruitment and retention of mi-

nority faculty (a concern), campus safety (improved), an Asian-American studies program (desired). The committee discussed recent changes in the Multicultural Resource Center with Dean of Student Life and Services Charlene Cole '74 and talked about needs the center might address.

In the Development Committee report chair Alan Wurtzel '55 said that 100 percent of the trustees, current and honorary, had contributed money to Oberlin College over the last year, and that the total amount given, \$918,000, was nearly twice that of the previous year. Next year's annual-giving campaign will be "restrategized" to allow greater flexibility in earmarking funds, he said.

Trustees Herbert Kaatz '58 and William Warren '48 retired from the board after this weekend's meetings. Each gave brief remarks at close of the plenary session.

Before the plenary session the board approved promotion of five faculty members from associate to full-professor status: Susan Colley, Department of Mathematics; Paula Richman '74, Department of Religion; Robert Thompson, Department of Chemistry; David Walker '72, Department of English; and Jeffrey Witmer, Department of Mathematics.

The board also approved an Allen Memorial Art Museum art-loan policy.

### Representatives from 3 Shansi Schools Visit Campus

The Shansi Memorial Association has exchange relationships with four academic institutions in Asia, and officials from three of them visited Oberlin this fall. Wang Xueren, president of China's Yunnan University, was on campus October 10-14 to discuss Oberlin's language course in Yunnan and the faculty-fellow program that allows Yunnan faculty to do research at Oberlin. Makoto Haneda, office manager of the Center for International Studies at Japan's Obirin University, and Bruce Batten, director of the center, were here October 27-28. They came to talk with President Nancy Dye and meet with Oberlin's Japanese-language teacher, Tomoko Takeda, and Oberlin special student Naomi Takeuchi. Prema Michael, principal of Lady Doak College, in south India, was in Oberlin November 16-19 to talk with Oberlin students, fac-

## Affiliates and Associates Enrich Oberlin's Cultural Mix

Roger Binkley is collecting interdisciplinary information about carbohydrates and photochemistry, which he will compile for a series of scholarly books on carbohydrate chemistry. Not a member of the Oberlin faculty, nonetheless Binkley has access to the College libraries and stationary to help his research. What's the deal? Binkley is an Oberlin College affiliate scholar, one of two new affiliate scholars appointed this academic year.

Affiliate scholars and their analogs, research associates—who are tied directly to an academic department—have been enjoying privileges at Oberlin since before 1986, when the College of Arts and Sciences began making affiliate-scholar appointments. The college developed the affiliate-scholar positions, according to the program's guidelines, "to facilitate research activities by unaffiliated members of the Oberlin Community . . . with the hope that this designation will testify to their ability and seriousness of purpose and so assist them with gaining access to libraries and museums, publishing their work, and obtaining grants from external agencies." Affiliate scholars are appointed for three years. The Secretary's Office has been appointing research associates for a longer time, according to College secretary Robert Haslun '67. "Research associates go way back in history—before my

time even!" he says. Haslun has been secretary since 1978.

### More Affiliate Scholars

Stephen Douglass is the other new affiliate scholar. He is continuing research he started at the University of California-Davis under Richard Criddle, investigating optimal growth temperatures of plants by studying respiration processes and caloric output. The project result could be used to make predictions about crop yield, Douglass says.

Reappointed to affiliate-scholar status this year are

- Melissa Ballard, who is researching and writing nonfiction articles and children's books about native-American art and about Mary Peake, who taught freed slaves after the Civil War
- Ricky Clark '54, whose interest is in quilt history and related domestic textiles and material culture. Clark is researching and writing about Swiss Mennonite quilts and a master doll-house maker; compiling a database of Ohio state- and county-fair records; and investigating the aesthetics applied by fair judges toward the domestic textiles they evaluate. Clark's most recent books are *Quilts in Community: Ohio's Traditions* (1991) and *Quilted Gardens: Floral Quilts of the Nineteenth Century* (1994), both published by Rutledge Hill Press.
- Harvey Gittler, who is writing freelance on topics in management
- Mary Haverstock, who is working on the Ohio Artist Project, a biographic dictionary of Ohio artists to 1900. Haverstock is author of the forthcoming book *Art in Ohio, 1787-1900*.
- Nathan "Mike" Haverstock, who is researching and writing about the role of the press during the U.S. intervention in Mexico in 1914. Brassey's recently published his book about the life of Frederick Palmer, *Fifty Years at the Front: The Life of A War Correspondent*, for which reporter Peter Arnet wrote the introduction.
- Marlene Merrill, who is researching and writing about the official 1871 expedition to Yellowstone

Clark, the Haverstocks, and Merrill were four of Oberlin's first affiliate scholars. The *Observer* of February 27, 1986, describes their work in detail in "Scholars Affiliate with Oberlin."

### Research Associates Have Student Contact

Research Associates may have access to a departmental office as well as other departmental resources, and are expected to be available to Oberlin students. Unlike the affiliate-scholar appointees, they have no residency requirement, and the appointment is for one year. The research associates for 1995-96 are

- David Black, associated with the history department. Black is comparing 19th-century travel manuals and physical fitness manuals as related expressions of cultural primitiveness.
- Phyllis Morris, associated with the philosophy department. Morris is working on early Sartre and the issues surrounding the nature of the human subject. A visiting scholar at the University of Michigan, Morris has delivered invited papers on these topics and published articles and book reviews.



Carl Jacobson, Makoto Haneda, and Nancy Dye enjoy a meal together.

PHOTOGRAPH BY PAUL ARNOLD

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POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Oberlin College Development Resources, Bosworth Hall 4, 50 W. Lorain St., Oberlin, OH 44074-1089.

### Who's Where in Student Life and Services

Recent moves of four Student Life and Services offices may have you wondering who is where. The most complicated changes are in the Student Union, where all of the telephone numbers and one of the rooms have changed. See if this table helps.

Office	Old Location	New Location	Old Phone	New Phone
Dean of Student Life and Services	Biggs, 113	Wilder, 105	x8462	x8462
Multicultural Resource Center	Daub House, upstairs	Biggs, 113	x8802	x8802
Student Union (event planning & room scheduling)	Wilder, 105	Wilder, 105	x8730	x8184
Student Union (building operations)	Wilder, 105	Wilder, 105	x8730	x8105
Student Union (programming, student organizations, international student IDs)	Wilder, 105	Wilder, 111	x8730	x8106
Conference Services	Wilder, 103	Daub House, upstairs	x8730	x8730
Campus Catering	Wilder, 103	D.H., upstairs	x8730	x8420

### Scholarships . . .

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in 1965 under the auspices of Columbia University and the U.S. Agency for International

Development. In 1960-61 he held a National Science Foundation Fellowship for study of numerical analysis at Stanford University. His undergraduate degree is from the College of Wooster, and his Ph.D. from the University of Michigan.

Ganzel's 1982 profile "[E.P. Vance to Retire from Mathematics Department](http://www.oberlin.edu/~observer/obs_issues.html)" is available as a link from this paragraph in the *Observer's* electronic version (see [http://www.oberlin.edu/~observer/obs\\_issues.html](http://www.oberlin.edu/~observer/obs_issues.html).)

## News Notes



**Midge Brittingham** '60, executive director of the Alumni Association, received an award at the NetGALA conference October 14. The Network of Gay and Lesbian Alumni/ae Associations presented her with a certificate of achievement for her "outstanding vision and leadership" in organizing and developing gay and lesbian alumni. Brittingham's program for developing affiliated groups for the Oberlin College Alumni Association has received coverage in two issues of *Currents*, the magazine of the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education. Oberlin's first affiliate group was the Oberlin Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Association (OLGBA), and OLGBA is the first known institutionally sanctioned organization for gay and lesbian alumni. Alumni directors across the country consult Brittingham about setting up affiliate groups for their gay and lesbian alumni, she says. • Professor of Music Theory **Warren Darcy**'s (Class of 1968) article "The World Belongs to Alberich" was published recently in the Covent Garden Royal Opera House's program book for a new production of Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*. Last month Darcy chaired a session on Puccini at the annual meeting of the Society for Music Theory, held in New York City. • An essay that Professor of History **Clayton Koppes** wrote two years ago is being read by public-library patrons and others across Ohio as part of a video-discussion program. His "Communities at

Work" is linked with *The Plough that Broke the Plains*, *Matewan*, *Norma Rae*, and *Roger and Me* in a program the Ohio Humanities Council has organized. So far the program has been shown in libraries in Perrysburg (where Koppes attended a session), Canton, and Ironton, and at the Greater Cincinnati Labor History Society. The *Ironton Tribune* carried the event as a page 1 story in its October 4 issue. • Associate Professor of Religion **James W. Morris** was the featured speaker in the Distinguished Lecturer series at St. John's College, in Santa Fe, New Mexico, November 10. His illustrated presentation and accompanying seminar, "Remembrance and Realization: Qur'anic Metaphysics and Islamic Aesthetics," were on the philosophic dimensions of the Islamic humanities. They focused on lyrical poetry (Hafez and Rumi) and the related arts of sacred music and manuscript illumination. During his visit Morris also spoke with members of the Ibn 'Arabi seminar from the University of New Mexico Philosophy Department. • **Julia Nieves**, formerly the special advisor for Latino students in the Department of Academic Services, is now assistant dean of student life and services. • The *New York Times* magazine section of October 29 quoted Professor of Environmental Studies **David Orr** in the article "The Greening of the Humanities." Orr's was the only name to appear in all three small sidebars to the article: his book *Earth in Mind* was listed as one of six "Read-

ings"; his Environment and Society was listed as one of six "Top Courses"; and he was listed as one of eight "Gurus." Also quoted in the article and named a guru was Lawrence Buell, former professor of English at Oberlin who now teaches at Harvard. Radical Environmentalism, a course Stephanie Kaza '68 teaches at the University of Vermont, made the top-courses list. • Associate Professor of Computer Science **Rhys Price Jones** gave an invited address at the College of Wooster November 28. His talk, "A Reductionist Approach to Computing," covered advanced architectures for parallel computing and described his National Science Foundation-supported research with Associate Professor of Computer Science **Richard Salter** '73 on a parallel implementation of logic programming languages. • Associate Professor of Physics **Dan Stinebring** is talking about pulsars at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History December 14. He plans to make his talk "entertaining and informative for a broad audience," he says. His lecture—"Millisecond Pulsars: The Universe's Best Clocks"—is one in a series called Frontiers of Astronomy that the museum is presenting over the school year. The series is sponsored by the museum, Case Western Reserve University, and the Cleveland Astronomical Society. A flier for the lectures describes millisecond pulsars, which are ultradense cores of massive stars, as "about the size of Cleveland" with "the mass of our Sun."

## Libraries . . .

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and how quickly it can produce materials from distant locations.

We are also beginning more often to assess a library's excellence by the teaching skills of its librarians. Although future libraries will be able to provide more resources for our use, they will be more complex and difficult for us to navigate than past libraries have been. The sheer quantity of information available also makes it essential that we learn new skills for identifying, selecting, and critically assessing the resources we encounter. This means that we need to work very hard to teach ourselves and our students the most effective ways of using the emerging library and information environments. That can be done only if we continue to build close ties between the library and the curriculum, and if the use of the library is carefully integrated into courses in a thoughtful, well-planned way. These developments also mean a new, even more important, role for librarians, who are in the best position to master and convey the skills needed to take best advantage of this new environment. As the electronic revolution continues, the teaching role of librarians will become more important.

Finally, I want to emphasize that the library of the future, at least as far as we can envision it now, will reside in a physical space. The library will continue to require a building. Space will be needed both for expanding physical collections and for learning and using new technologies. But the library as a central humanistic institution has never been—and it won't be in the future—simply a place for storing books and journals or for providing the latest electronic equipment. It has been—and always will be—a place for reading, research, reflection, and, equally important, human interaction.

Nancy S. Dye is president of Oberlin College. This article is adapted from a talk she gave to the Friends of the Oberlin College Library November 4.

## Faculty Meeting

### Noon? OK.

On November 21, in the General Faculty meeting that Secretary Robert Haslun calls the "shortest in [the] last couple of years, but not a record" (15 minutes), faculty heard Carol Lasser, associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, read a proposal from the Special Joint EPC-EPPC Subcommittee (combining the conservatory Educational Policy Committee and the college Educational Plans and Policies Committee) on noon classes. After brief discussions about wording and possible dissatisfaction of some students not surveyed on the matter (those who had not taken noon classes during the noon-classes trial period of 1994-95 and 1995-96), faculty voted unanimously to continue allowing noon classes "if multiple sections of the course or alternate course choices are available when the course is a requirement in a major" and for conservatory "applied studies lessons, studio classes and ensemble coaching as necessary." Before the vote Lasser noted that dining-hall lunches were still a problem for some students taking noon classes and said she had recently discussed the issue with Dean of Student Life and Services Charlene Cole, who was looking into improving access to lunch for students with noon classes.

Following one question of clarification, student-organization charters, lying on the table, were considered approved.

## Last Observer until February

The next issue of the *Observer* will be out February 1—after Winter Shutdown and Winter Term.

## Electronic Obie

### Electronic Mudd: The Digital Library at Oberlin

By Linda K. Grashoff

Most of the electronic resources at Mudd and the College's branch libraries are online and CD-ROM indexes to journal articles and books. Most of the indexes (also referred to as databases) are available through the computer in your office—making them especially convenient in winter. But indexes are hardly the stuff of propeller-head dreams.

If you poke around a little in the library resources described in Oberlin Online and in Oberlin's *Library Perspectives* newsletter, you can find more content-rich offerings. Three of them are

- wire-services' news stories on nearly any topic you can imagine
- whole journals, with photos
- a searchable online encyclopedia

All three of these electronic products are accessed through the Internet, but they are not free. They are only available to us because our library has purchased the services. Because the library has taken care of the administrative details, we don't have to worry about securing copyright permissions when we download the files to our disk or print out a copy. (We dare not send the copyrighted publications we download to our colleagues in other institutions, however—that would infringe on the copyright.)

### ClariNet e.News

You can find the day's news stories, including political and nonpolitical cartoons, starting at the [Oberlin College Library Homepage](http://www.oberlin.edu/~library/OCL_homepage.html) on Oberlin Online ([http://www.oberlin.edu/~library/OCL\\_homepage.html](http://www.oberlin.edu/~library/OCL_homepage.html)). Click on the Scholarly Resources on the Internet button and then on the Electronic Periodicals button. Next, click on the first link on the list, ClariNet e.News. Or you can go directly to ClariNet e.News with the URL <http://www.clarinet.com/tree/4star/newstree3.html#News>. Hint: If you're

looking for news about art, music, or books, it's under Living.

You wouldn't get another thing accomplished all day if you read all the news that's a click away from this page, so you might want to set up your Netscape browser to subscribe to a limited number of topics, called newsgroups, that you can check more easily. You can get instructions on how to do this from the Reference Desk staff at Mudd.

### Project Muse

Whole electronic journals—identical in content to their paper counterparts—are also available from the Electronic Periodicals button (see above for how to get to the Electronic Periodicals button, or go right to the web site with <http://muse.jhu.edu/>). Project Muse, second on the Oberlin electronic-periodicals list, is a link to 10 journals:

- *American Imago, Studies in Psychoanalysis and Culture*
- *Callaloo, Journal of African-American Arts and Letters*
- *Configurations, Journal of Literature, Science and Technology*
- *ELH, English Literary History*
- *Human Rights Quarterly, Comparative and International Journal of Social Sciences, Humanities, and the Law*
- *The Lion and the Unicorn, A Critical Journal of Children's Literature*
- *MFS, Modern Fiction Studies*
- *Modernism/Modernity*
- *MLN, Modern Language Notes*
- *Reviews in American History*

These journals are published by the Johns Hopkins University Press, which promises to add about a journal a month to the mix until all 40 of the Johns Hopkins journals are on line. One of the features that make these electronic versions extra-useful is that you can search an entire journal—or all of them at once—for a key word.

### Britannica Online

Billed as "an information service from the editors of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*," the Britannica Online web site includes a searchable *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, Tenth Edition. Get there from the [Scholarly Resources on the Internet](#) button (see above for how to get that far), then the Reference Sources button, then the first bulleted item on the list of reference sources. Or use the URL <http://www.eb.com:180/> to go there directly.

Britannica Online will even respond to questions you type in a search window. When I asked, "Why is the sky blue?" I received—in a second—a list of 120 articles that the search machine thought were relevant to my query. (I could have requested as few as 10 articles or as many as 500.) The second item was about John Tyndall, "British physicist who demonstrated why the sky is blue." Bingo.

This site has a link called Random Article, "for when you don't yet know what you want to know." You see a different article with each click. If you ever need to bring your kids to the office at a time when you don't need to be on your machine at the same time, this web site alone might keep them entertained for hours.

### Those Indexes

While online and CD-ROM indexes may not provide the entertainment of these other electronic resources, they can be handy when paired with an Inter-Library Loan (ILL) request. If you can identify an article you want, chances are the library can get the article with ILL.

Just as nothing substitutes for running wild in the physical library (when's the last time you did that?), this "Electronic Obie" piece can't substitute for surfing the library's Oberlin Online web pages or CD-ROMs. Take these remarks as a teaser to get your mouse clicking, but look out: you can lose track of time surfing, and unlike the physical library, the Internet never closes.

## Observations

# Reading and the Future of Libraries

By Nancy S. Dye

What will academic libraries be like in the future? The public's confusion about the answer to this question creates serious problems for colleges and universities as we try to maintain and build the kinds of library facilities and resources that our students and faculty will need in the next few decades and beyond.

The source of the confusion lies in our expectations about computing and related information and networking technologies that are rapidly changing not only libraries, but also many other aspects of the academy and of the broader society, including aspects of daily life as fundamental as the ways in which we formulate and communicate our thoughts.

Many people believe, some quite fervently, that the library of the not-too-distant future will provide in electronic form virtually all the information and all the texts its users will need. One can find considerable support for the idea that libraries will soon be utterly digitized, but of late a considerable literature of protest has begun to emerge. I think most readily of Sven Bikerts' recent book, *The Gutenberg Elegies; The Fate of Reading in an Electronic Age*, which laments, in rather Whitmanesque fashion, the "wholesale wiring of America."

Bikerts envisions a grim new world, with "ever more complex and efficient technological systems being interposed between the individual and the harsh constraints of nature. This electronic mesh is already," says Bikerts, "changing absolutely the way we deal with information. In fact, it is changing our whole idea of what information is. . . . The medium shapes the message. If it can't be rendered digitally, it can't be much good. . . . We will all . . . spend more and more of our time in the cybersphere producing, sending, receiving, and responding, and necessarily less time interacting in a hands-on way with the old material order."

### Desirability of the Revolution

What is interesting about such laments is that they do not challenge the inevitability and totality of the new information revolution, only the desirability of it. So it is little wonder that many well-informed people no longer question the ideas implied in the electronic-library concept.

Take a feature article that appeared last January in *Newsweek*, "Wiring the Ivory Tower," which began like this:

"When California State University administrators drew up plans for their newest campus, scheduled to open this fall at the old Fort Ord site in Monterey Bay, one building was conspicuously absent from their blueprints: the library. But as Barry Munitz, chancellor of the eleven-year old campus system, sees it, why bother wasting all that money on bricks and mortar and expensive tomes when it could be better spent on technology for getting information via computer? 'You simply don't have to build a traditional library these days,' Munitz says."

Another example: Last year the *New York Times* reported that the Library of Congress would soon announce plans to digitize its collections and make them accessible over the Internet, thereby creating a "national digital library." The article gave the impression that the most important collections of the Library of Congress would soon be on line. A reader could hardly help but conclude, as some Oberlin College readers did, that if the riches of the Library of Congress were available through electronic networks, there would be little need to continue to build library collections anywhere.

### Reality behind the News

In both instances the reality behind the news stories was quite different from the conclusions many readers drew from them. The new California campus described in *Newsweek* will have a "learning resource center" that contains books, journals, and newspapers. It will rely heavily on interlibrary loans from other libraries, and it will also take maximum advantage of electronic information resources. It won't be a "traditional library," as the chancellor said, but it will be a library nonetheless. The emphasis of the Library of Congress digitization projects will be on materials not covered by copyright, primarily photographic and archival collections. The project will not make accessible the books and journals that make up the vast majority of materials added to college and university library collections each year.

These examples help explain some of the public perceptions of academic libraries that I encounter frequently as Oberlin's president. My favorite stories in this regard come from the legal profession. Many of the lawyers I know firmly believe that libraries will soon be fully electronic and that colleges just won't need new library buildings in the future. Their views go something like this: "What? You want money for a library? You've got to be kidding! It'll all be electronic. You won't even need books and journals, let alone a building." Lawyers probably have this view because they have come to rely so heavily on electronic services such as Lexis/Nexis and WestLaw that provide most of the legal information they need in their day-to-day work. It could also be that the nature of the reading done by lawyers in their work also helps explain why they think that electronic access to information is sufficient.

Such ideas stem also from our direct experience of the power of electronic information technologies and a sense of how pervasive they are becoming in our lives. Consider that it takes only seconds to receive the electronic version of a journal article—with footnotes, graphs, and color images at high resolution—that is physically located on a distant computer. A good example is Project Muse, the Johns Hopkins University undertaking that publishes journals in electronic as well as print format. This service, which our library recently made available, provides immediate access from campus-networked computers to electronic versions of articles in journals published by the Johns Hopkins University Press. The electronic form of these articles is in all significant respects identical to the print version. Articles that are downloaded and printed on laser printers are fully comparable to photocopies of the printed journal articles.

Given the prevalence of text in electronic form, and the speed and power with which it can be transmitted to any location that is appropriately equipped, it is not hard to see why the vision of the electronic library is so seductive. There are no technical barriers to capturing, storing, and accessing virtually all library resources in electronic form.

You'll note that I said that there are no technical barriers to prevent the electronic library from becoming the norm. But there are other serious problems. These include questions of copyright, the economics of publishing, the nature of scholarly communication, and the challenge of organizing and coordinating access to electronic resources not owned or controlled locally. I can't do justice to any of these complex issues, but I do want to touch on two matters briefly.



PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN SEYFRIED

Libraries and their buildings will persist, President Nancy Dye recently told the Friends of the Oberlin College Library.

### Electronic Media Not Archival

The first point is that electronic media are not, by nature, archival. Information in electronic form is fragile; the very base on which the information resides can be wiped away when a new and more powerful version of the technology emerges, requiring the transfer of the information to new systems. The technologies for storing and accessing such information are going through extraordinarily rapid change. This scenario does not augur well for preserving information and making it readily available over time, which is an essential part of what libraries do.

Well-made books don't have that problem. Many volumes printed more than 500 years ago are almost as readable today as they were when first produced. They illustrate beautifully that much of the content of academic libraries is here not only for today, but for tomorrow and for the decades, even the centuries, ahead. As libraries convert information to digital form, they will succeed only if they also devise methods for maintaining access to that information into the indefinite future.

But there is another, more important, reason to be cautious in adopting the vision of the all-electronic library. That reason relates to the nature of reading, and especially to the kind of reading that is most central to a liberal arts education.

Much of the reading we do is sometimes called condensed or abbreviated reading. It is reading of brief duration, done primarily to gain specific information. Bibliographic research and reference reading are two examples. It is now common to find and read information of this kind in computerized form in our libraries. One need only think of bibliographic databases, which now provide enormously improved access to the scholarly literature of virtually all fields; the online systems that have replaced card catalogs; and electronic reference works, such as Lexis/Nexis, dictionaries, and encyclopedias. Given its brief duration, this kind of reading is well suited to the computer screen.

### Sustained Reading

Another kind of reading is what is sometimes called sustained reading: reading novels, books, and long journal articles. Reading of this kind is of longer duration and is not currently done very easily in front of a computer. Much of the reading that students and faculty do in a liberal arts college falls into this category.

Much of it involves engagement with the

ideas and information presented in a text. Reflection is an essential component of this kind of reading. We read extensively to learn about and imagine some new aspect of reality. If our critical assessment of what we have read leads us to believe that it is valid, we begin to think about the implications and associations that flow from the text, and we adjust our perceptions of reality accordingly. If we think that what we have read is not valid, we engage in a similar process of thinking about why what we have read is not correct. It's through this kind of reading, critical thinking, and reflection that much of what constitutes a liberal arts education happens. Reading of this kind is best done, now and, I would predict, for a good time into the future, from a printed text. In other words, extensive reading and those things we call books go very well together.

I suspect, too, that the printed book will continue to be a major format in libraries for many years to come. This is not to say that electronic sources won't be central, that they will not continue to proliferate, or that libraries will not continue to go through truly revolutionary changes. Since electronic information technologies provide the option for accessing documents anywhere virtually on demand, it's likely that libraries will rely more and more on electronic forms of access, particularly for journal articles and reference materials.

But our future libraries, rather than being entirely electronic, are more likely to be an eclectic mix of media, including printed books and journals; electronic journals and reference sources; electronic books, journals, and newspapers; and multimedia materials. This emerging library environment will vastly increase the quantity of resources readily available for scholarly work. That's because the new electronic technologies will make easily available extraordinary resources that previously were inaccessible, or accessible only to the scholar willing to expend significant time and effort.

### An Excellent Library

All of this suggests that the standards of excellence in libraries will continue to change dramatically. We used to assess a library's excellence by the size of its holdings and the breadth and depth of its collections. Now we are more likely to assess a library's excellence by its ability to make information it does not hold in its collections immediately accessible to its users: in short, we ask how well a library is networked to other libraries

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# E.P. Vance to Retire from Mathematics Department

The *Review* of 16 November 1934, in a brief article on a soccer game that Oberlin lost to the College of Wooster by a score of 0 to 3, said "All three of the visitors' goals were what might be termed flukes." Wooster's paper had a different account: all three goals were scored by one skilled player—Wooster junior Elbridge Vance. Neither paper mentioned that the game was the occasion of Vance's first trip to Oberlin, and no one predicted that he would be back nine years later to teach math. Elbridge Putnam Vance will retire as professor of mathematics at the end of this semester.

After graduating from Wooster, earning his MA and PhD at the University of Michigan, and teaching there and at the University of Nevada, Vance was one of thirty or forty people hired by Oberlin to teach servicemen in the wartime V-12 program. His staying here after the war might have seemed a "fluke" to some, because he was the only V-12 visiting lecturer to get a regular Oberlin appointment. In 1948 he was made acting chair of the mathematics department and, eventually, chairman for an indefinite term, a post he held, with interruptions for leaves and stints in the dean's office, until 1975. He was the last of the "permanent" chairs; the office is now a rotating one in all departments.

Vance was born in Cincinnati and grew up in Pittsburgh. Like his colleague John Baum, emeritus professor of mathematics, he attended Shadyside School there. He spent a year at Haverford before transferring to the College of Wooster where, besides playing soccer, he acquired his nickname, "Fuzz." It had nothing to do with his appearance at the time but rather with that of his uncle, who was dean of men and head of the religion department at Wooster and who, because of his full beard, was known as "Fuzz."

## Teaching All Ages

Since he came to Oberlin, Vance has published articles on specialized mathematics topics, such as topology. Subjects he has taught include statistics, analysis, topology, geometry, calculus, and pre-calculus. When he talks of his career, however, he talks not of any one specialized subject but of his success in spreading an understanding of mathematics. "I've had all kinds of people sitting in my classes," Vance says—with some pride.

Although Oberlin no longer offers teacher certification, Vance has continued his class in secondary school teaching, which had sixteen "good, enthusiastic students" last year. Vance's knowledge of such teaching is more than theoretical: on leave during the calendar year of 1973, he got temporary certification in order to teach at Glenville High School on St. Clair Avenue in Cleveland—a "rough neighborhood." For the spring semester he taught eight classes, each with twenty-five to thirty students, in plane geometry, general and shop mathematics, and other topics. He says he had no discipline problems with his Glenville students, but it was sometimes hard to get them to participate in the class.

The following fall he again taught high school students, but in a different setting: Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts. His teaching experience includes younger children, too: for one semester he took time out every afternoon to teach third and fourth graders in the Oberlin public schools. Other places Vance has taught include Ranchi, India, where he spent the summer of 1965 at an institute for high school and

college teachers. For several years he headed the summer institutes at Oberlin that the National Science Foundation sponsored for high school teachers.

## Textbooks

But Vance has taught mathematics to more people than he has seen in his classrooms—to at least 2 million more. More than 1,200,000 copies of the textbooks he has written have been sold new, and it is likely that most of them were later resold at least once. It seems safe to call these texts, as Vance does, "a reasonably worthwhile contribution to mathematics." In addition, he admits, "It's fun to make a little money."



"Fuzz" Vance's office in King is decorated with some photographs he has taken, including one of a pair of golden retrievers named "Addison" and "Wesley," after the publisher of Vance's nine textbooks.

The nine texts that Vance has written, which include titles such as *Unified Algebra and Trigonometry* and *Fundamentals of Mathematics*, have been used by high school and college students in Japan, Canada, and Central and South America, as well as in this country; currently their foreign sales exceed their US sales. Four have been translated into Spanish (three in bilingual editions), and two have been published in Braille. All but one is still in print. All these texts were published between 1954 and 1975 by one company, AddisonWesley. Its name was bestowed on a pair of Vance family dogs—golden retrievers.

Vance has used film as well as books to teach mathematics; students in his Oberlin classes are encouraged to supplement in-class explanations with those on videotapes. As an active member of the Mathematical Association of America, Vance was chair of the coordinating committee on films and televi-

sion, and he served as associate editor in charge of film and television reviews for the *American Mathematics Monthly*.

Other professional activities outside of Oberlin include four years as chair and five years as chief reader for the Advanced Placement Program in mathematics of the College Entrance Examination Board. Vance is a member of Phi Beta Kappa and Sigma Xi and is listed in *Who's Who in America*.

## Acting Dean

Vance has been involved in college governance and, he says, "controversy" during his Oberlin career: until 1970 he was regularly elected to the college faculty council; he was

"institutional stand" against the war. In February 1969 a forum on the proper reaction of an academic institution to political controversy was sponsored by the committee on social and political concerns, of which Vance was chair: Sidney Hook and Noam Chomsky came to Finney Chapel, where they were joined by a student-faculty panel. This forum was one of many positive responses that Oberlin made to the political problems of that time, and Vance thinks the positive responses outweighed the negative. "Looking back," he says, "I think this college did a helluva good job compared to other places."

He was acting dean for the second time during the first semester of 1970-71, the beginning of Robert Fuller's presidency. Vance holds what he says is a minority view of Fuller's administration—that its net effect was good for Oberlin. "He came when Oberlin needed to be shaken up. He knew when to come and when to leave."

## Presidential Relations

Vance knew Fuller not only when Fuller was president but also, earlier, when he was an Oberlin student taking mathematics. And Fuller was not the only president whom Vance knew well. "For some reason or other," he says, "I've been very close to presidents at Oberlin." Even as a visiting lecturer, he came to know Ernest Hatch Wilkins, because Vance was active in persuading the college administration to hire a full-time YMCA director. (A YWCA director was already in place.) Wilkins' successor William F. Stevenson was not an easy man for most faculty to know, Vance says, but Stevenson and his wife were friendly neighbors to the Vances. The Carrs were close friends; they chose to spend with the Vances the evening of the day that Robert Carr resigned his presidency. And Emil Danenberg was acting dean of the conservatory when Vance held the corresponding position in the college.

## School Board

Until 1975 Vance was married to the former Margaret Stoffel. They have four children—Susan, Peter, Douglas, and Emily—and six grandchildren. Vance and his second wife, the former Jean Haigh, now live in a condominium in Vermilion. He says the fifteen miles between it and Oberlin is "the right distance" for him now, but as a younger faculty member he lived in Oberlin and was active in the community. He was on the school board from 1952 to 1960, the last three years as its president, and won more votes than any other candidate in one election. He was also an officer for the parent-teacher organization of the public schools and at one point served on a committee seeking ways to interest Pleasant School children in mathematics. In First Church he served on the board of deacons, as head of the board of trustees, and as superintendent of the Sunday school. "I love Oberlin," he says. "It is a marvelous community in which to raise kids. The whole world is all right here in town."

Vance says he retiring now to take advantage of being physically able. He and his wife will spend part of the winter in the Southwest, close enough to the University of Arizona to use its library. He may write; he definitely plans to read—mostly history and biography—and to play golf and go trout fishing.

—Carol Ganzel