



## Strengthening our Capacity and Addressing Library Users' Needs

By Kathy Irwin, Dean of University Libraries

I hope your new year is off to a great start! Here at the University Libraries, we have several initiatives underway to enhance our employees' skills, gather and act on user satisfaction data, and undertake strategic planning.

During 2022, we offered onsite training for about 20 library employees to hone their skills at facilitating meetings, surfacing concerns, and coming to agreement. Recently, we conducted a conflict management assessment for all library employees and hosted discussions within library departments to understand our colleagues' preferred styles and under what conditions each style is useful. These skills are essential for accomplishing our goals of enhancing our problem-solving skills, developing a creative mindset, increasing collaboration among library employees, and embracing diversity and inclusion. As competition for undergraduate students increases and our state's residents become more diverse, it is imperative to strengthen our employees' abilities for navigating these changes.

To understand our library users' experiences, the University Libraries will survey CMU students during the spring 2023 semester. We hope to learn about their experiences using the library's collections, spaces, and services and ways we can better address students' evolving needs. This survey continues a pattern of surveying library users every 3 to 4 years. Past survey results have been instrumental in guiding our efforts for service enhancements and building remodels. Given pandemic conditions during the past two years, we had delayed conducting this important user survey by a year or two. Thankfully, students have been using the library much more this year than the past two years, and we anticipate collecting great information to inform our planning for the next several years.

Several strategic planning initiatives are underway at CMU. During spring 2023, the university is conducting a strategic planning process aimed at differentiating CMU from other state universities. The academic division's strategic visioning process is following a step or two behind the university-wide process. Clarke Director Carrie Marsh celebrated her one-year anniversary at CMU this February, and the time was ripe for a strategic planning process within the Clarke Historical Library. They will be working with an external consultant to develop a three-year strategic plan. Once these three strategic planning processes are complete, the University Libraries will align its goals with CMU's plan during the 2023-2024 academic year. Doing so is crucial to ensure the University Libraries is supporting CMU's current initiatives and direction. *(Continued on page 2)*

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Finally, we want to hear from our Friends! During spring 2023, we are asking our Friends of the Libraries to complete a brief survey about your preferences for communications and appreciation events. The wine tasting at our fall 2022 Friends appreciation event was a departure from our practice of hosting a best-selling author followed by lunch and a book signing. We have many ideas about potential communication methods and future events and would love to know what

resonates with you. Directions for completing the survey are available on page 7 of this newsletter. Your gifts to the University Libraries assist us in supporting learning and research. We greatly value your interest in the libraries' collections, spaces, programs, and services. Truly, your gifts have assisted us in going the extra mile and ensuring that the University Libraries are relevant for the current and future generations of CMU students and faculty. Thank you!

## Donor Spotlight:

### Robert Kohrman, CMU emeritus professor of chemistry, about the Robert E. Kohrman Angling Collection at the Clarke Historical Library

Dr. Kohrman donated his angling book collection to the Clarke in 2021, his periodicals and catalogues in 2022, and endowed the collection to fund its continued growth. The Kohrman Angling Collection adds distinction to the Clarke and will benefit generations of students, faculty, staff, and scholars. We are so grateful for his generosity.

#### How did you get into collecting the history of angling?

I enjoy fly fishing and spin casting for trout in streams and have fished since about 1970, when a student took me up to Lake Michigan to fish for salmon. The student, another faculty member, and I caught 15 Coho salmon by 10:30 in the morning. Rather naively, I thought this was a great sport! In more recent years, I have fished in streams in the western United States, the northwestern part of Michigan, and especially along the shores of Lake Superior. What I like is just to walk streams and shorelines—'active fishing' I would call it. And to paraphrase the comments of Robert Traver, I like to fish in the beautiful places where trout live.

I am naturally a curious person. Actually, curiosity is what led me to be a chemist. Thus, one day while driving through the town of Grayling in the 1970s, I became curious as to why this town was known as Grayling; and it didn't take long to discover it was named after a fish. Consequently, my interest was sparked, and my adventure in collecting began because I learned that the history of the fish is best described in the periodical literature. The Michigan grayling was first characterized in 1865 by a Philadelphia scientist, but very few people knew about it at the time. However, in 1873, a famous author/editor, Charles Hallock, published a book titled *The Fishing Tourist* in which he detailed the fishing for grayling found in Michigan and how to get there. Immediately thereafter, large numbers of anglers traveled by train to Michigan to fish for the grayling. Given the angling pressure on the fish, it took only 30 years for the grayling to become extinct in the state. William Mershon, a lumberman from Saginaw who



Robert Kohrman and his dog, Abby.

fished the grayling during this time, discussed grayling fishing in his book, *Recollections of My Fifty Years Hunting and Fishing* (1923). Mershon wrote about the extinction of the Michigan grayling due to overfishing and the exploitation that resulted. His book included a 1903 photo of probably the last grayling caught in Michigan. Mershon ultimately became Michigan's leading conservationist of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

#### What has been your process in collecting?

##### How did you begin?

In the 1970s I set out to locate 19<sup>th</sup> century periodicals that described the history of the grayling fish; and later, I began collecting books. I became interested in the early magazines because they contained detailed information relating to early Michigan angling history. I also learned about the wonderful Reed Draper Collection of angling books that was donated to the Clarke prior to my arrival at CMU. When I started collecting angling books, I looked ahead to the day when I could assist the Clarke and ultimately complement its existing collection.

Earlier, I mentioned Charles Hallock and his important

book. In 1873, he also began publishing the preeminent 19<sup>th</sup> century sporting magazine, *Forest and Stream*, which was dedicated to wildlife conservation. Initially, I set out to find libraries that held this and similar titles, but it was a challenging search.

Whenever I went to a chemistry meeting or when I went on family trips to New England, I visited libraries looking at their collections of sporting periodicals. If I was able to find one, I took notes and then would make copies and put together notebooks of my research. At some point I became interested in specifically collecting the original volumes themselves. I followed auctions, visited bookshops, and read *AB Bookman's Weekly*, a now ceased publication for the bookselling trade. It contained advertisements for buying and selling books and periodicals, and I focused on those booksellers who specialized in fishing and angling. Ultimately, in that magazine, I learned of a periodical warehouse auction to be held in Connecticut. Well, lo and behold, at that auction, of interest to me, numerous periodicals were being sold—several chemistry journals as well as 35 or 40 volumes of *Forest and Stream*. I sent a letter with my bids, and I won every item. That was the beginning of my collection of sporting periodicals. The chemistry serials became part of the Department of Chemistry's library.

There was another influence that encouraged me to go beyond just being a scholar and gathering data to being a 'complete collector,' so to speak. In the 1870s, a chap named Fred Mather of Honeoye Falls, New York, came to the Au Sable River to figure out if he could gather fertilized eggs and reproduce the Michigan grayling back home in New York. He conducted many experiments and published his work in an agricultural magazine titled *The Livestock Journal*. I went to the Library of Congress to examine his research results and discovered that the library had discarded their holdings of this periodical. I was flabbergasted! I ultimately learned that it is a very common practice for libraries—even the LOC—to deaccession titles from their collections for many reasons—space being only one; however, it taught me the importance of organizing and saving the history of conservation to be found in these journals. As for the *Livestock Journal*, I ultimately was able to examine the only remaining set of this title in the Buffalo Public Library.

In my early collecting days, as I said, I focused on research in periodicals, but also envisioned complementing the book collection at the Clarke. I would give much credit to people like former Clarke directors John Cumming and Frank Boles, staff member Bill Miles, and the former reference librarian, John Fierst, who always encouraged me in my work.

#### Do you have a favorite item or items in your collection? Was there one that got away?

I have many stories of things that got away. There is a book titled *The Log of the North Shore Club* (1911) written by Kirkland Alexander, a newspaperman who wrote for *The Detroit Journal*. He took a bunch of fellow Detroiters fishing on Lake Superior every year, and he summarized his several trips in this work. The book has many problems as a literary work: the chapters are undated, the cast of characters are identified only by first names, and the photographs of people are also unidentified. Nonetheless, I own several copies of the book as it is the most important work describing early angling in Lake Superior waters. Well, a number of years ago, a copy of that book appeared at auction which contained two long inscriptions by the author on the beginning endpapers; and all photos showed every individual identified in the author's handwriting. "Wow," I said, "I've got to have that book..." and sent in a very high bid to the auction gallery. To my deep disappointment, I didn't win it. Years later, an important collection of angling books came up for auction at Doyle Auction Gallery in New York—this was an internet auction—and would you believe I got that same book the second time around, and it's now in the Clarke.

Do I have a favorite? I would say the book I've mentioned, *The Log of the North Shore Club*, is a favorite of mine because I intimately know the geography—the places they fished. I've been there and done that myself. Another favorite is a set of small volumes that are sort of a hybrid between a periodical and a book. They are called *The Transactions of the Michigan Sportsmen's Association* and date from the late 1870s and early 1880s. They are important because they document the first awakening of environmentalism and conservation in Michigan. These seven volumes constitute the most complete set of this publication in existence, and they are now in the Clarke.

#### What have you learned through your experience as a collector?

From my perspective, it goes back to what I said at the outset about the importance of curiosity. Whether you collect stamps or coins or books or baseball cards, your curiosity drives you to find out what else is out there and to set goals for yourself and your collection. There is an old cliché that the most important thing about collecting anything is not about the collection; it's about the chase. You learn a lot through the experience, it's meeting people, it's doing the research, it's going to the library, visiting bookstores, reading dealer catalogs—following breadcrumbs and clues. Of course, today it is a bit different due to the internet. (Continued on page 4)



(Continued from page 3)

### Why did you donate the collection to the Clarke?

Obviously, I have a passion for this subject. And financially, I could have benefited by handing the collection to a book dealer to sell or an auction company. The advantage of doing that would be to allow other people to benefit from the collecting experience I went through. I felt, however, that it's important to keep the collection together, especially the periodicals, as they represent perhaps the very best such collection in the country, are a mark of distinction for the Clarke, and complement the existing Reed Draper Collection. Because of the rarity of so many of these titles, it was important to me to keep this body of literature together so that future scholars might benefit from having the collection in one location.

### Do you have any hopes for the collection?

I hope that people will learn what outstanding materials are found in the Clarke—including the angling collections. I anticipate that through in-library and traveling exhibitions, the speaker series, through publications, through the website, and especially use by students, that the word will get out and the collection will be used in a scholarly fashion. There are many stories to share and audiences to reach. I also believe that the Clarke should continue to add titles to the collection when opportunities arise—especially works that connect to the conservation history of Michigan waters and those of the Great Lakes region.

## Bryan Whitledge Appointed Clarke Public Services Librarian

The Clarke Historical Library is pleased to announce that Bryan Whitledge is our new Public Services Librarian. He began this new role on September 1, 2022. The Public Services Librarian is 'first contact' for most researchers, and Bryan brings to the role deep subject knowledge of CMU history and Michigan history as well as a strong commitment to providing the best service to our users. As Public Services Librarian, Bryan develops and manages the Clarke's public services and provides advanced research support to students, faculty, staff, and the wider research community. In addition, he oversees the reading room operations and supervises a team of student staff that supports our public-facing services. Bryan collaborates with faculty and library colleagues on instruction focused on primary source literacy. He also leads the exhibition program and is a key contributor to promoting the Clarke's collections, services, and programs within CMU and outward to the community.



Bryan Whitledge, Clarke Historical Library Public Services Librarian

Bryan is a long-time employee of the Clarke and the CMU Libraries. From 2011-2015 Bryan was a project researcher and the Clarke's reference assistant; after that he managed reformatting and imaging before he was appointed the first Archivist for University Digital Records in 2016. He's involved regionally and nationally in archival associations and has given many presentations on archival and digital library topics. Bryan received his Master of Library and Information Science degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 2011 and a Master of Arts degree in political science from CMU in 2019. Before embarking on a career in librarianship, Bryan trained in secondary-level social studies education with the hope of also being a sports coach. Among his many interests, Bryan is a dedicated four-seasons bicycle rider and is a fountain pen collector and ink enthusiast. He also is a puzzler; he loves crossword puzzles, pub quizzes, and trivia.



## In Memoriam: Margaret Danowski

Margaret Danowski, the subject librarian for The Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow College of Health Professions, passed away Tuesday, Oct. 25, 2022. Margaret was a great partner with faculty and students on research projects and an active volunteer in library professional groups. Her colleagues in the University Libraries and College of Health Professions greatly miss her warmth, hard work, and disciplinary knowledge.

## Family Study Room

By Tim Peters,  
Associate Dean of University Libraries

During Spring 2022, several students approached the Dean of University Libraries hoping to establish a family-friendly study space within the Park Library. There are many CMU students who are also parents of young children, and there are times when these two responsibilities overlap. The students asked if it would be possible to create a space where parents can work on their assignments and have their children with them. A safe, shared space for students and their children to use and enjoy.

Fast forward to January 2023 and a new family-friendly study room is open on the first floor of the Park Library. Park Library 118 is a self-contained space offering comforts for both students and their young children. The room features adult-sized tables and chairs for study and writing, and a computer for convenient access to digital resources and tools. It also offers child-sized tables and chairs so children can engage in their own activities, whether it be their own schoolwork, drawing and coloring, reading, or play. For younger children, the room includes age-appropriate books and toys. The room also offers



The Family Study Room at CMU Libraries

an enclosed space for nursing and general privacy. Students simply need to complete a registration form to gain ongoing access to the room. Although this space was designed with CMU students in mind, the space is also available for CMU faculty and staff to use when accompanied by their children.

We're excited to offer this fun new space to families, and we hope this family-friendly room allows CMU students with children to take full advantage of all the resources and services the library has to offer.

## 2022 Adobe Creative Jam Brings Students, Faculty, and Staff Together to Learn and Explore

By Ann Kucera, Systems Librarian

The library hosted an Adobe Creative Jam consisting of a kick-off event that included training in Adobe Premiere Rush video editing software; a video creation contest; and prizes/awards. The event increased awareness of CMU as an Adobe Creative Campus. It also provided expert training in Adobe Premiere Rush for event attendees and allowed participants to increase their digital literacy and engage in a creative activity.

Approximately 115 students, faculty, and staff attended the kick-off event which was offered both in-person in the Sarah and Daniel Opperman Auditorium and virtually. In addition, the training was recorded and can be used to support future assignments. At the end of the kick-off, the theme "The CMU Experience" was announced and discussed, and participants were challenged to create a one-minute or less video that portrayed their CMU experience. Over the next two weeks, novice and experienced creators submitted videos.



Adobe Trainer Eric Rouse showing participants how to capture and edit video with Adobe Premiere Rush at CMU's Adobe Creative Jam.

Winners for three categories and one honorable mention winner were chosen. Learn more about the winners, their work, and creative process at [library.cmich.edu/AdobeCreativeJamWinners](https://library.cmich.edu/AdobeCreativeJamWinners)

Faculty and staff across campus worked together to plan and execute the event. Several employees from Adobe also supported the planning and implementation of the Adobe Creative Jam.





## What is the Friends of the Libraries?

The Friends of the Libraries is a membership organization that consists of people who have donated at least \$100 to the Central Michigan University Libraries during the past year. Friends' gifts support the programs and services of the University Library and the Clarke Historical Library, including purchasing unique materials for our collections, enhancing library services and spaces that support learning and research, and developing cultural programs on diverse topics and perspectives.

The benefits of being a Friend include receiving invitations to public and Friends-only events, receiving library newsletters and updates, and having access to behind-the-scenes tours and information. We hope that our Friends gain satisfaction from having a positive impact on student success, faculty creative works, and community programs.

Recently, we have used Friends' gifts to create a family study room, sponsor CMU's International Film Festival, fund the browsing book rental collection, and subscribe to the Hathi Trust. During summer 2023, Friends' gifts will enable us to complete several building projects: upgrading the sound system in the Baber Room; upgrading the Strosacker Room's audiovisual equipment to support HyFlex meetings; remodeling the former research help desk into study space; and creating a new outdoor seating area near Ponder Coffee.

Thank you for being a Friend of the Central Michigan University Libraries! We appreciate your ongoing support, and so do our staff and faculty!

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Gerald and Marie Steube

## Take the Friends of the Libraries Survey

You are invited to complete a brief survey about your experiences as a Friend of the Central Michigan University Libraries. The survey is voluntary and anonymous. It includes 17 questions and will take about 7 minutes to complete. Question topics include library acknowledgments, library newsletters, your experiences with past Friends events, and your interest in possible future Friends events.

To complete the survey online, go to:

» [library.cmich.edu/FOTLSurvey](https://library.cmich.edu/FOTLSurvey)

We're collecting responses through: **March 31, 2023**

If you would prefer to complete a physical copy of the survey, please email us at [LIBDEAN@groups.cmich.edu](mailto:LIBDEAN@groups.cmich.edu) and we will email or mail you a copy as you prefer.





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## 2023 Speakers, Events, and Exhibitions

### Baber Room Gallery Exhibitions:

Learn more and find Artist Talk event dates at [library.cmich.edu/Exhibitions](https://library.cmich.edu/Exhibitions)

#### » January:

**Brian Nelson**, *Thinking Outloud, Installation, Sculpture and Works on Paper*

#### » February - March:

**Danielle Eliska**, *Capitalize the B in Black, photography and collage amplifying Black life, stories, and lineage*

#### » April - May:

**Clinton Snider**, paintings and sculptures

#### » June - July:

New Acquisitions, Newly acquired works into the University Art Collection

#### » August - October:

**Scott Hocking**, Sculptural Installation and Photographs

#### » October - December:

**Lakela Brown**, Sculptural Reliefs in Paper and Plaster

### Clarke Historical Library Speakers and Events:

Learn more and register for online events at [clarke.cmich.edu/SpeakerSeries](https://clarke.cmich.edu/SpeakerSeries)

#### » February 7, 7:00 p.m. | Online Event, Registration Required

**Phyllis Michael Wong**: History of women workers in Michigan's Upper Peninsula garment factories

#### » February 13, 7:00 p.m. | Online Event, Registration Required

**Derek H. Alderman**: Teaching place naming in university classes

#### » February 15, 11:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. | In-Person Event

**Children's Books From Around The World**  
Baber Room, Park Library

#### » March 1, 5:00 p.m. | In-Person Event

Film Screening of *In Between the Trees: The Story of Idlewild and Woodland Park, Michigan* and Q&A with Filmmaker Rose Hammond Sarah and Daniel Opperman Auditorium, Park Library

#### » March 28, 7:00 p.m. | Online Event, Registration Required

**Matthew Skic**: Revolutionary War veteran and African-American abolitionist James Forten and his family

#### » April 11, 7:00 p.m. | Online Event, Registration Required

David M. and Eunice Sutherland Burgess Endowed Speaker:  
**Arthur Yorinks**: Award-winning children's book author and his life in the arts