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As the fall semester comes to a close, and as we all turn our thoughts to a restorative winter break, we at the Library would like to share some year-end goodies with you. In this issue of our newsletter you can read a recap of Dean Richard Zauf’s Library Lecture, see a snapshot of which resources were most used during this semester, and learn a little about an old University holiday tradition.

On a personal note, I would like to thank you all for helping to make my first semester as Dean of the Library a successful one. On behalf of my colleagues here at the Library, we wish you all a restful and happy winter break. We look forward to seeing you and collaborating with you to strengthen information literacy in the classroom and beyond in the New Year!

Dean of Lesley University Library—Hedi BenAicha

P.S. Please, don’t forget that your library is still accessible electronically during this academic break, use the search box below!

Stay tuned for a new search experience in 2017!
The Lesley Elf

By Marie Wasnock

University Archivist

Trees are trimmed, lights are hung, and the holidays have inspired reminiscences about Lesley’s former lovable mascot, the Elf. As early as 1926, the Lesley Elf has stood on the steps of Lesley’s former “Art Barn” and appeared within the covers of Lesley yearbooks in various photos, drawings, and stories. In 1937, he even penned his own diary observing Lesley student life entitled, “What Goes On At Lesley – As Seen By the Mascot.”

Lesley’s founder, Edith Lesley Wolfard, explained the fabled story of the Elf in the 1952 Lesleyan yearbook. She recalled:

“I brought him to the School many years ago. He stood on the step near the wall fountain keeping watch on the girls. At celebrations, as Christmas, a tiny lighted candle in the lantern gave a flickering light.

One day in a burst of enthusiasm he was knocked down the stairs and broken to bits, and so the girls lost their mascot.”

Despite being broken into pieces, memories of the Lesley Elf continued in the years that followed. The 1952 Lesleyan yearbook staff wrote:

“On the discovery of the meaning of the strange little man, we agreed that he was much too important to be forgotten... Although we have not seen him on campus for years, he has been watching over us from his home way down in the wishing well.

As in old fairy tales, with the breaking of the magic spell, so the curiosity of the Seniors has freed the little elf from the seclusion of the well. Let it not surprise you should he suddenly appear in your classrooms, at your proms, or even sitting on the edge of the well!”

On that note, may the fun spirit of the Lesley Elf be with everyone this season!

Happy Holidays!

Lesley University Archives: http://www.lesley.edu/library/archives/about/
On Friday December 9, Sherrill Library hosted Richard Zauft, dean of the Lesley University College of Art and Design, for the second library lecture in our 2016 series.

Dean Zauft’s lecture, “Visual Literacy in the Public Realm,” addressed the growing importance of visual design in contemporary culture, and the growing responsibility of educators to ensure that students develop the skills they need to be, as Zauft suggested, “empowered and [able to] participate fully in visual culture.”

The Davis Foundation’s Project InFUSION grant, Zauft pointed out, has helped to promote visual literacy as a topic of investigation at Lesley, with the goal of integrating these skills across the curriculum. But what exactly is it that we are talking about, when we talk about visual literacy?

Visual images today, Zauft suggested, represent more than things—they are important signifiers of concepts and ideas. Good visual information needs to be intelligible to today’s viewer-readers—and viewers need to understand how to interpret images easily. This is especially true as we move away from skeuomorphism in digital culture, and toward simpler principles of design. Zauft demonstrated this evolution by showing the progression in iconography representing various items and technologies—where we once would have seen an image of a handset with a rotatory dial and interpreted that to mean, say, “phone service available,” we can now look at a simple image of signal bars indicating wifi strength, and know that it means essentially the same thing. Some images are immediately intelligible—Zauft showed the audience a vast array of familiar icons and drove home the point that, despite their visual simplicity, most of us know how to “read” every single one. He also ventured in the other direction, showing the confusion that can arise when visual codes are not easily decipherable—from the nods and laughter around the room, it was clear that most audience members had some experience with the frustration of trying to read and interpret the obscure hieroglyphs that we sometimes encounters on clothing care labels: dry flat? drip dry? And why IS the bleach symbol a triangle?!

In sharing these images, Zauft highlighted the problematic of images that might be beautiful, but are nevertheless indecipherable. Both designers and viewers, his evidence demonstrated, must understand the principles of good visual communication.

Zauft cited the Association of College and Research Libraries’ (ACRL) Visual Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education as evidence that visual literacy can no longer be seen as supplemental to postsecondary learning. At Lesley, he pointed out, where creativity is a “foundational cornerstone” of the university mission, it stands to reason that teaching visual literacy can grow to become a part of the university identity, and help to define what we teach our students. Our challenge going forward, Zauft suggested, is to define the core visual literacy competencies that should be part of a program of general education at Lesley. We can all work to better understand how to interpret and use images in intelligent ways, and students in all disciplines can learn to use what Zauft called “the building blocks of good visual communication.”

Interested in learning more about visual literacy at Lesley, or collaborating with a librarian to bring visual literacy standards into your classroom? One place to start is at the library research guide for visual literacy, available here:

http://research.lesley.edu/VL

Thank you, Dean Zauft, for the opportunity to reflect on and discuss this cross-disciplinary topic!
Statistical Snapshot of Library Use (Sept-Dec 2016)

**Journals**

- 30,000+ unique journals
- 100+ total databases

**Books**

- 160,000+ ebooks
- 70,000+ print books

**Other Digital Resources**

- 150+ research and course guides created by staff
- 2,000+ objects in our institutional repository