To Beeghly Library Friends:

The executive committee of the Friends of the Beeghly Library welcome you to the annual fall newsletter. We think you will enjoy the article by committee member Jim Gooch about Mission House and the article about the presentation of a Holocaust Collection from Mrs. Michal VanDommelen. We also hope you enjoy the comments on favorite books by committee member Iralene Neary. Best wishes and good reading!

Sincerely, Robert Wagoner, President of the Friends of the Library

THE MISSION HOUSE – THEN AND NOW by James Gooch

My wife and I parked our rental van and began moving furniture into our Mission House apartment in July, 1968, a month or two after I had accepted a position of assistant professor of biology at Juniata. The biology department was then undergoing expansion and renewal. Ken Rockwell, Bob Fisher, and Bob Zimmerer had been hired a few years earlier, and the holdover of the old guard was Homer Will, who had acquired, over a lifetime of study, a deep knowledge of botany and zoology. Homer was a soft-spoken gentleman with a distinct Virginia accent. At this time he was beginning to lighten his load preparatory to retirement. As I remember, he taught parasitology in 1969. If Homer was kindly, he was still a demanding taskmaster, covering the blackboard with intricate parasite life cycles in colored chalk and raining down on his students the mind-bending terminology of that discipline - sporozoite, miracidia, cercaria, schistosome, cysticercoid, ad infinitum.

In those days the Mission House was a well-maintained handsome building. Emmy and I had the first floor apartment on the eastern side. There was a big claw-footed tub in the bathroom, a spacious and well-lighted kitchen, and steam heat radiators in every room. The rent was $60 per month, a figure so low as to amount to a subsidy that compensated somewhat for Juniata’s modest salary scale.

The other first floor apartment was occupied by Evelyn Guss, Juniata’s professor of classical languages. Evelyn was well versed in Latin and New Testament Greek and she had traveled to the Levant. When Juniata deemphasized her subject she took a similar position at Maryville College in Tennessee. Genial and melancholy Harry Klug resided in the apartment above Evelyn. He had taught political science at Shepherd College in West Virginia before he made the move to Juniata. It sticks in my memory that Ralph Church, professor of literature, had also been at Shepherd, and Harry and Ralph came to Juniata together, but I may be mistaken.
Homer and Ethel were long-time dwellers in the apartment above ours. Ethel was a gardener and tended a fine rock garden in the backyard. Homer had the habit of gathering his collecting paraphernalia to chase down interesting insects, which he neatly pinned and labeled in oak, glass-topped trays in the cubby that served as the biology department’s museum. Homer was a recognized authority on sawflies, and he had an impressive collection representing nearly all the species occurring in the United States.

At this time Ken and Jane Crosby were settled in the brick house on the corner of Mifflin and 18th Street, a five minute diagonal walk from the Mission House, where they had lived before. Ken’s practical skills in carpentry, gadgetry, and all things automotive were as legendary as his acumen in expounding history. The huge furnace that heated the Mission House was in the basement. It had a screw-type coal feed that churned and groaned audibly on cold winter nights. Now and then the churning stopped and the radiators of the apartments grew cold. A chunk of slag or rock had gotten into the screw feed and jammed it. No inhabitant of the Mission House had any idea what to do, and the Juniata maintenance staff was not to be found in the before-dawn hours of a freezing night. So I, being the youngest, with a coat thrown over my pajamas, would walk briskly to the Crosby’s house and rouse Ken to come to the Mission House to get the furnace going again. He never complained.

Douglas, our son, was born in 1970. Emmy and I began to think of buying a house of our own and we did so two years later. The old gang was already breaking up. Homer retired and graciously passed on to me his academic robes he had worn during innumerable graduation ceremonies. I wore them for an additional twenty years until I grew too old to tolerate the bake-oven that materialized inside the airless rayon on hot days. Homer and Ethel moved to Sebring, Florida. Evelyn Guss departed about then. Others took their turn in the Mission House, including Bob Fisher and his springer spaniel, Sue, a well-mannered dog but a sneaky cookie thief. Soon a decision was made to convert the Mission House into a suite of student apartments, which it remains today. After thirty-some years of student occupancy the exterior of the Mission House is bearing up bravely, but signs of hard use are evident, just as they are in the surviving Juniata faculty who once called it home.

Who haunts this Beeghly Library?

Dracula was simply inviting all to see the timely display in the reading area of the Library. Be sure to enjoy the display which changes often with the various seasons and events.
The Van Dommelen Holocaust Collection:

This gift was given in 2011 to Juniata College from Mrs. Michal Van Dommelen (seen with President Kepple) through the Agudath Achim Congregation of Huntingdon. Mrs. Van Dommelen left Nazi Germany as a young girl after the Nuremburg Laws were enacted, leaving many relatives behind including a beloved grandfather, who as a Rabbi decided to stay and help his congregation, despite knowing the risks. She spent much of her life near Huntingdon, Pennsylvania.

The most significant book in the collection for Michal, is “Out of the Night,” by Jan Valtin. Many books in the collection are personal narratives of Holocaust victims. The books are on display currently in the Klaus and Ellin Jaeger Information Commons. Also included in the gift from the local congregation were books from the Gordon Family (Jacob Gordon ’10).

My Favorite Books—(From time to time we plan to include some comments on favorite books from our Friends Executive Committee members.) From Iralene Neary

As a student in high school I was not required to read classical literature. But as I grew older I longed to know what I had been missing. So it became my goal to read as many old classics as I could. Starting with To Kill a Mockingbird I spent many enjoyable hours reading and my most recent endeavor has been Common Sense by Thomas Paine. This little volume, written in 1776 and originally called a pamphlet, is full of good reasons why the American colonies should become independent of Great Britain.

In the book Paine presents the pros and cons for independence and has this to say about our being the subjects of Great Britain: “But Britain is the parent country, say some. Then the more shame upon her conduct. Even brutes do not devour their young, nor savages make war upon their families . . .”

Many of Paine’s observations could apply to current day problems and, in my opinion, should be required reading for any person running for public office. For example: “It is not in numbers, but in unity, that our great strength lies . . . .” True in 1776 and true today.
As always, thank you for being a Friend!

View From the Director’s Office:

It has been a good semester, lots of enjoyable students, and a steady pace to life here. This year we even stayed open the weekend of Fall Break for the first time at the request of the “campus”. It is a nice reminder to us that the Library is in demand despite tales of its eventual demise into cyberspace. Our recent survey of juniors indicated that students use the Library and its resources effectively. They even prefer print over electronic resources by 90 percent. Last week we had a Poetry Reading in the Information Commons. The Library will be receiving new computers over the Christmas Break and we enlarged our Instruction Room/Writing Center this summer. The extra space is always welcome!

As always, thank you for being a Friend!

Kind regards,
John Mumford