

The

H ♦ A ♦ L ♦ C ♦ Y ♦ O ♦ N

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF THE THOMAS FISHER RARE BOOK LIBRARY

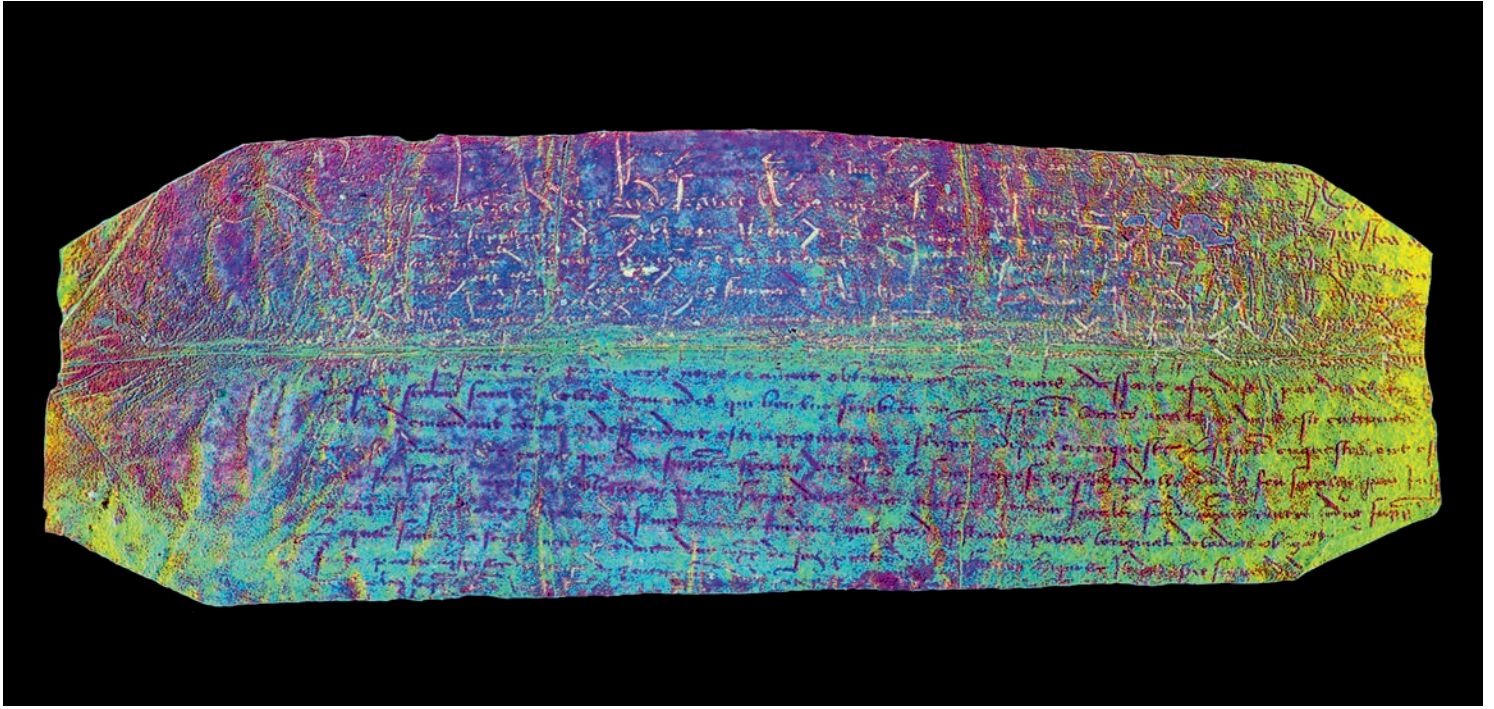
ISSUE No. 74, December 2024

ISSN 0840-5565



IN THIS ISSUE

Celebrating Forty Years of Friendship | An Animated Correspondence | The Kenny Collection: Archiving Existence and Resistance | 'A Woman's Work is Never Done': The Women's Liberation Movement in Ephemera | Rare Books & Special Collections by the Numbers | New Logo Celebrates Community of Friends | Rare Hebraica from the Reuben & Helene Dennis Museum Now at the Fisher Library | Tip of the Iceberg: The Contributions of J. Tuzo Wilson to the Fisher Library's Arctic Collections | Fisher Summer Seminars 2025 | Exhibitions and Events



CELEBRATING FORTY YEARS OF FRIENDSHIP

Loryl MacDonald

Associate Chief Librarian for Special Collections and Director, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library

THIS YEAR MARKS the fortieth anniversary of the Friends of the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library. For the past four decades, the Friends of the Fisher Library have supported special projects, important acquisitions, and public engagement programs. Our Friends' efforts have helped ensure that the Fisher is a vibrant educational hub and meeting place where rare books, archives, and special collections are accessible to all.

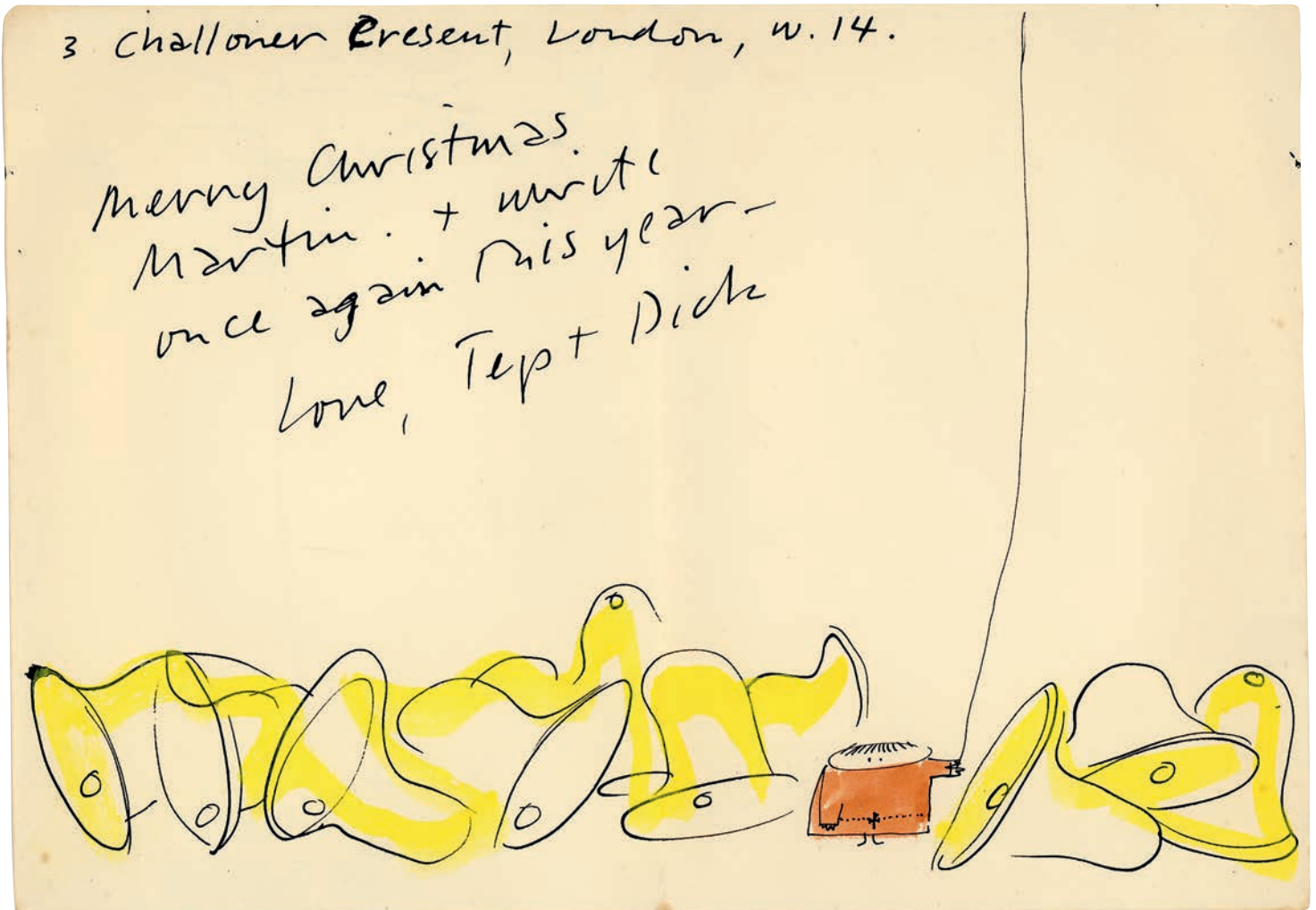
As the Friends of the Fisher celebrates this momentous anniversary, we also look forward to the future. With libraries continuing to evolve and adapt to new technologies and shifting community needs, the role of the Friends remains as vital as ever. Recently, we were delighted to announce a new one-million-dollar gift from longtime Friend of the Fisher, Mark Andrews. As part of an ongoing collaboration between the Fisher and the Old Books New Science Lab, founded by University of Toronto Vice President and

Medieval Literature professor Alexandra Gillespie, researchers have been using new technologies to uncover hidden features within rare books, archives, and manuscripts, such as obscured or illegible text. Mark's visionary donation will fund research and equipment to help reveal new details about Rare Books and Special Collections' materials. Mark's commitment to highlighting and deepening our knowledge of these works ensures that they will continue to inspire research, collaboration, and discovery for years to come. We are truly grateful for his generosity.

We also celebrated the inaugural Beyond the Page: The J. Edward Chamberlin Lecture on 22 October. The lecture was established by the McLean Foundation in the name of Ted Chamberlin, University Professor Emeritus of English and Comparative Literature at the University of Toronto and longtime advocate for Indigenous rights, including as Senior Research Associate with the Royal

Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and as author of *If This is Your Land, Where Are Your Stories?: Finding Common Ground* (2003). The new lecture series seeks to engage audiences through sharing ideas, scholarship, and traditions rooted in Indigenous knowledge. The inaugural speaker was Professor John Borrows, University of Toronto Loveland Chair of Indigenous Law and member of the Nawash First Nation, who presented on 'Living Treaties in Toronto: Anishinaabe Law and the More-than-Human World'. It is a great privilege to host this new series and we are so honoured that the McLean Foundation and Ted have chosen to establish it at the Fisher.

Thanks to the generous support of our Friends, the Fisher will continue to thrive for decades to come. This issue of *The Halcyon* is a tribute to your generosity for future generations. Here's to forty years of success, and to the bright future that lies ahead!



AN ANIMATED CORRESPONDENCE

John Shoesmith

Outreach Librarian, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library

AS MOST RESEARCHERS who use archival manuscript holdings in their work can attest, serendipity and surprise discoveries are some of the joys of exploring a collection. The same can often be said for those of us who first process a collection when it arrives at the Library. About a dozen years ago, I processed two separate donations of archival papers from Martin Hunter, who for many years beginning in the early 1970s was the artistic director of Hart House Theatre. His collections were primarily related to his longtime career in theatre: from manuscript drafts of plays and musicals he wrote to materials associated with his productions. These were a solid addition to the Library's already strong Canadian theatre holdings,

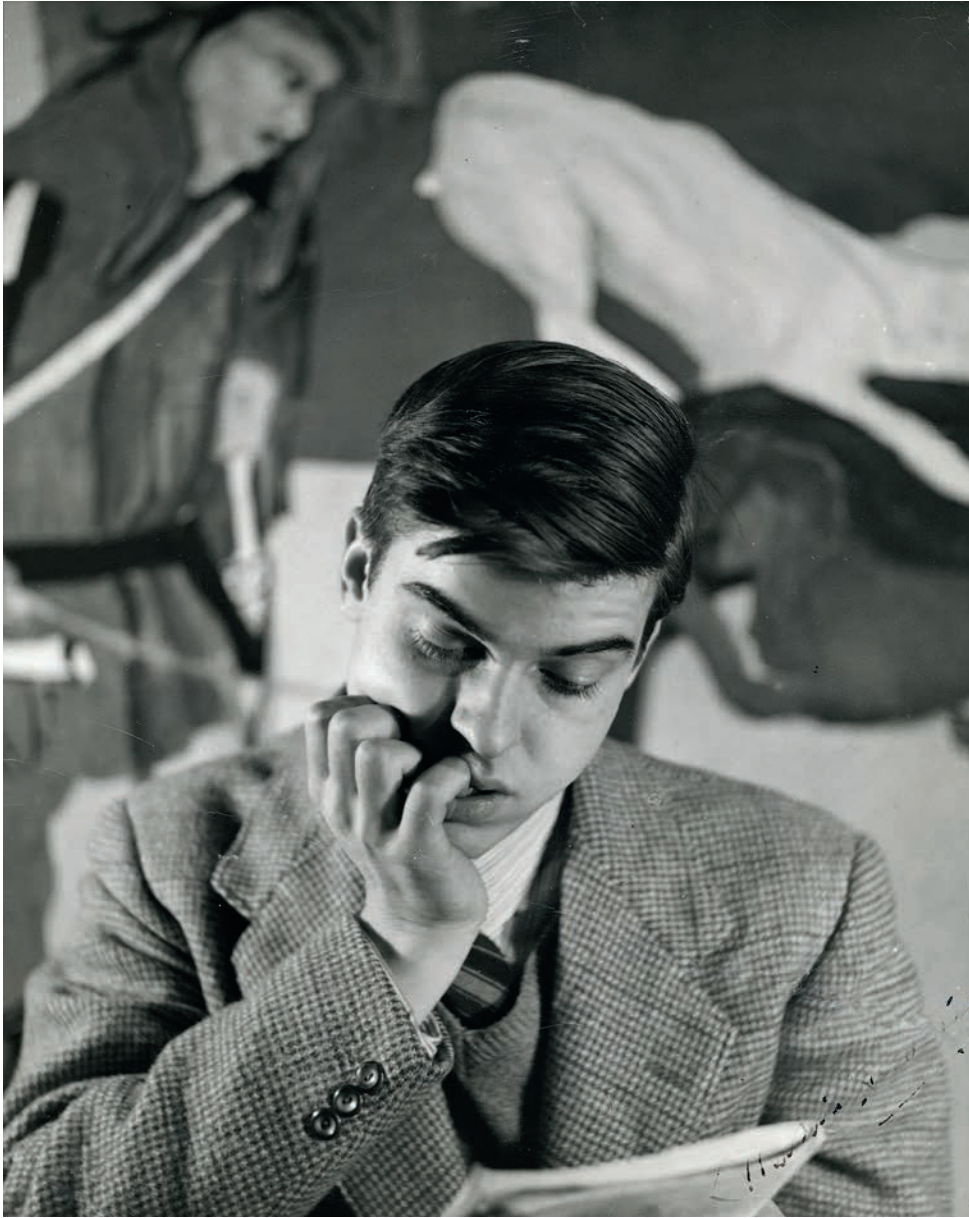
and the second accession also included a large amount of professional and personal correspondence, dating from when he was a teenager until the mid-2000s.

While going through the letters, a few of the earlier ones from the 1950s, addressed to Hunter and signed by 'Dick', caught my attention. They were written on thin onion paper, in a large swooping hand, and addressed primarily from Ibiza, Spain. The letters, often lengthy and conversational in tone, addressed myriad topics and expressed youthful enthusiasms. These included travels in Europe and settling in the then-inexpensive island in the Mediterranean Sea, relationships with women, books being read and art being viewed, tales of shared acquaintances, and struggles with

parents back home. The correspondence also touched upon Dick's own creative endeavours, those of a young painter trying to find his artistic voice.

In a letter dated July 1954, Dick details his struggles with his art, while at the same time finding some silver linings: 'Can't think of much to say about my work except that I can't stand it', he writes. 'I have no way of telling if I have developed much or not. Probably have, but I have produced very little of note and practically none of it rings any bells for me. However I am getting red-hot on my cornet, and I have changed a great deal within myself. Small consolation, since my painting should mirror all this.' Despite the artistic angst, he ends the letter with confidence in the direction

OPENING PAGE: Interior of an undated holiday card drawn by Richard Williams. **BELOW:** Undated photo of Martin Hunter.



he's headed: 'I haven't found any more out about what anything is about. Only what it is *not* about. And I'm afraid there can be no tracking-back into idiocy for me. I feel that there are no limits on me now and that I will eventually discover a bit of truth or what you call it. Funny the worse I get, and the more bewildered, the surer I am of this. Oh hell, we take ourselves too seriously.'

Reading through this correspondence as I filed it away in archival folders and boxes, there was little clue as to who this burgeoning artist was. But in a long letter written in 1955, I had my answer. Dick is still painting; he references completing a portrait of a 'Prof.

Ashley' and not being happy with it ('To me, it looks rather like all those pompous, sentimental portraits I always hated') but also alludes to an unfinished film he's working on. A few pages later, he reveals the title: *The Little Island*, calling it the 'most exciting thing I ever did, although it is mountains of work + we're only at the beginning.' He describes it as 'a 22 min cartoon-like thing about Ideals + 3 little men presenting their visions of TRUTH, BEAUTY, and GOOD, and also hacking each other to bits (at least within their visions)'. It has sound and colour, but no words, and the work is all-encompassing. 'I'm also going crazy as I'm stuck doing it all myself', he continues,

'and I really know practically nothing technically — so I'm learning as we go along.'

A search on the web quickly revealed that 'Dick' was Richard Williams (1933–2019), the famed animator best known for his work on the film *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*, which garnered him two Academy Awards. Williams also won an Oscar for his animated short *A Christmas Carol* in 1971 and would create the title animations for two films in the Pink Panther series. These letters felt like an exciting discovery: here in my hands were the early musings, narrated in real time, of a then-unknown artist who would go on to become one of the most important animators of the twentieth century, but who at the time was trying to find his artistic footing.

Born six weeks apart in 1933, Hunter and Williams first met at age five, 'playing in a puddle in a vacant lot', and grew up together in Toronto's Lawrence Park neighbourhood.³ As Hunter tells it in his 2008 memoir, *Young Hunting*, Williams always had an irrepressible streak: 'He was fast on his feet and utterly contemptuous of authority.'⁴ The correspondence between the two, at least as represented in the Martin Hunter Papers, began in 1951 when they were both still teenagers, with a letter from Williams written on letterhead from Camp Pine Crest in Torrance, Ontario. Hunter was a young cadet in the Royal Canadian Navy, training in Victoria, and Williams expresses disdain of the path Hunter was on, pointing to the dichotomy of trying to live a creative life while also training to be part of the military: 'I think the reason for the Navy's being is destruction — as mechanical and absolute as possible. A creative man does not in first place become a machine — at least under someone else's direction.' The letter also provides a sneak preview to the career path Williams would eventually follow, writing about a paid animation project: creating the storyboards for a sixty-second movie for the Odeon circuit and drive-in theatres, along with all the animation and artwork for the film. He earns seven hundred dollars for the work. 'I had a wonderful time doing it. I prefer doing that stuff to any commercial work I have yet done — it pays well, not much work — and so far very little competition.'⁵

Williams' first note to Hunter from abroad appears to be an undated Christmas card with an original drawing on the front: a cheeky

BELOW: Fronts of undated holiday cards drawn by Richard Williams.

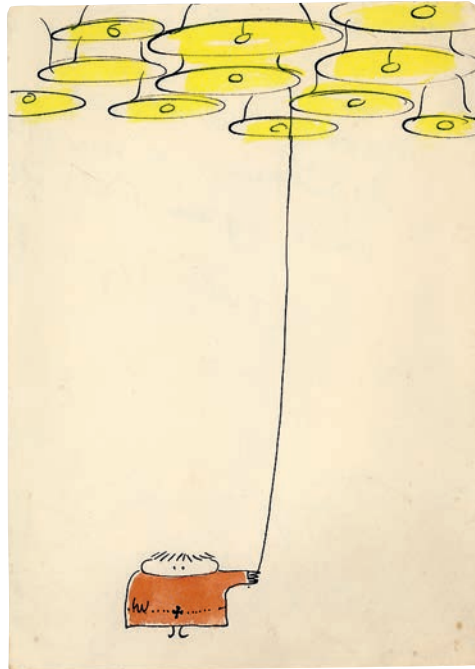


image of the Virgin Mary suckling a baby. He's already in Europe—according to Hunter's memoir, Williams had decided he would be a 'serious' painter—and settling down in Ibiza, suggesting he'll be there for a while and promising to write a long letter 'when I paint something decent'. The promised letter is dated 31 March 1954, and sent from Ibiza. It's a six-month update, several pages long, of his European sojourn: of living in Paris for almost two months, then travelling down through Spain and waiting for his then-girlfriend (and eventual first wife) Stephanie, or 'Tep', as she's referred to in his letters. He's still trying to establish himself as a painter but having minimal success. 'I've had a pretty tough six months as far as work is concerned', he writes, 'Trying to educate myself or something. I have only finished about 4 pictures and they aren't any hell. But I think I have made strides. At least I know how bad I am. Which I didn't at home.'⁶

The next letter, sent early in 1955, shows that while he's clearly enjoying the life in Spain, he continues to struggle artistically. He's wary of the future, yet also optimistic he's finding his style: 'Only trouble is my usual one, that even though I'm making progress in my work I'm just starting to get a glimpse of the sweaty road ahead. But I'm rather sure that I'm getting on the track, and looking at

my work which looks all done before-ish—I still feel that eventually I shall be stuck way out where nobody has travelled much before. That sounds pretty grand in scale and it's difficult to even say it—but I feel very strongly that I have the opportunity—if I am able to drop the outward personality enough to get on terms with it.' He also points out a new, ongoing project: 'There is a tiny circus here and I'm working on a series of clown pictures. May go up to Madrid and do a pile of lithographs when the weather gets bad.'⁷ Interestingly, these images became the basis of his short film *Circus Drawings*, released decades later in 2010.

The last letter from Williams in the collection is from 1957. He's back in London and doing commercial work to fund *The Little Island*. While he's hoping to make it back to Ibiza, he admits that he's making good money. 'It's just that I don't dare break off when things are pouring in so easily. Although the work is shitty and very commercial.'⁸ Williams never does move back to Spain, but relocates to London permanently and opens Richard Williams Animation, which becomes one of the leading commercial animation firms in England.

Although the correspondence between Hunter and Williams seemed to end, the friendship between them continued well

into their later years. According to Hunter's memoir, the two of them would spend time together when Williams was visiting Toronto, and then out on Saltspring Island in British Columbia where Williams retired after selling his production company in the 1990s. While we do not have the correspondence that can attest to their ongoing friendship or capture the success Williams would eventually achieve, the letters from his early 20s when he was an unknown but ambitious artist are an important reference for anyone compiling the life of one of the most accomplished animators of all time.

Endnotes

- 1 Martin Hunter Papers, Box 15, Folder 4. Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto.
- 2 Martin Hunter Papers, Box 15, Folder 10.
- 3 Martin Hunter, *Young Hunting* (Toronto: ECW Press; c2008), 35.
- 4 Ibid 37.
- 5 Martin Hunter Papers, Box 15, Folder 4.
- 6 Martin Hunter Papers, Box 15, Folder 8.
- 7 Martin Hunter Papers, Box 15, Folder 8.
- 8 Martin Hunter Papers, Box 16, Folder 1



THE KENNY COLLECTION: ARCHIVING EXISTENCE AND RESISTANCE

Kathryn Rouse

TALint Student, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library

IN 1977, THE Fisher Library purchased over five hundred books and three thousand pamphlets and broadsides from Robert S. Kenny, informal archivist of the Communist Party of Canada (CPC). In 1992 and 1993, Kenny subsequently donated an exponentially larger portion of his collection and personal library. A zealous and fervent collector, Kenny's gift was massive and global in scope, containing publications from numerous groups including Maoists, Trotskyists, Anarchists, New-Leftists, and, of course, Communists. However, much of the initial acquisition was produced in Canada, with many works having been printed right here at home in Toronto. One of the largest of its

kind in Canada, this collection now includes over 25,000 items and continues to be added to, making for a rich repository of social justice materials available to patrons and scholars.

The Kenny Collection is significant in that it records the efforts of social movements that have historically been overlooked and under-documented. Archives of protest are few and far between, as the ephemeral nature of pamphlets, posters, handbills, and similar materials makes them hard to collect and preserve. A great number of materials found in the collection are simple in their construction: many works fall under the umbrella of 'pamphlets'. Pamphlets can take

on a wide variety of forms from handwritten and illustrated to digitally composed, xeroxes to risographs, brochures to chapbooks. Thousands of pamphlets, periodicals, and broadsides are catalogued separately in the collection and thousands more still need to be processed.

As a graduate student who is helping to process this extensive collection, I have come to appreciate how the creation and dissemination of pamphlets, also known as pamphleteering, has always been an important component of creating societal change. Prior to the internet, activists of the twentieth century participated vigorously in material means of

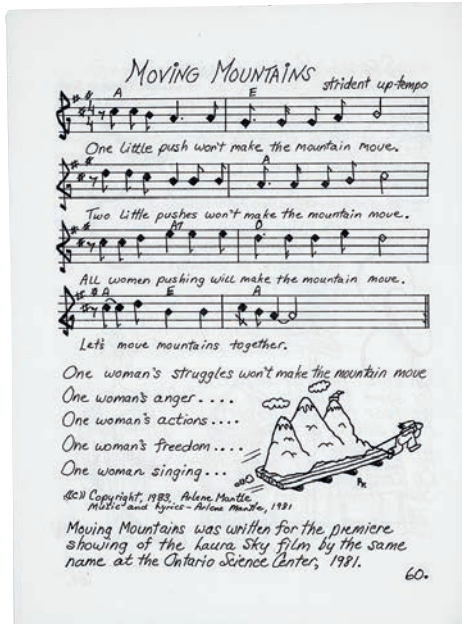
ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT: The January 1975 issue of *Banda Oriental*, a periodical published bilingually in Toronto for Uruguayan exiles and to connect with other Latin American activists in Canada. A striking linocut or woodcut on the cover of *Unite the Youth!*, a revolutionary manifesto advocating for 'the building of classless socialist society', published in 1934. **FACING PAGE:** The song 'Moving Mountains' from Arlene Mantle's *On the Line* (1983), which she notes was written for the 1981 premiere of *Moving Mountains* at the Ontario Science Centre. The film was produced and directed by Laura Sky.

communication. Zines, letters, wheatpasting, flyering, and pamphleteering were all effective tools used to communicate both within activist circles and to the broader public. In the last century alone, pamphlets have been important components of achieving victories for women's suffrage, labour unions, and civil rights. The following profiles a few striking examples from the Kenny collection.

Banda Oriental (1975) was a periodical published by the Group for the Support to the Uruguayan Resistance (also known as GARU: Grupo de Apoyo a la Resistencia Uruguay). The title and graphic were originally hand drawn and photocopied to create multiple cover pages for the printing run, with this version featuring a blue paper cover and staples as binding. The staining of the cover paper is something that happens during the long life of a circulating object. Many of the materials in the Kenny Collection are equally discoloured, and many of the materials show signs of significant wear like torn, folded, and fraying pages. The materiality of these objects speaks directly to how they were created and intended to be used. Activists prioritize efficiency and accessibility, needing to produce a large volume of materials at a low cost and intending for these materials to be easily circulatable.

To that point, *Unite the Youth!* by V. Chemodanov (1934) was created from a single sheet of paper cut and folded to make a very thin leaflet. Short and sweet, this supplement to the *Young Worker* (the 'Official Organ of the Young Communist League of Canada') acts as a sort of pocket edition, outlining Young Communist International's stances, goals, and calls to action in an easily digestible format. Manifestos can be lengthy and intimidating, so having an introductory or beginner-friendly document makes outreach efforts easier. Despite its small size, the pamphlet had a very large impact; so much so that the RCMP deemed it noteworthy in a 1934 report on 'revolutionary organizations and agitators in Canada.'¹ The graphic printed on the cover was created using a woodcut or linocut, another easily replicable printing method. Theoretically, once created, the cut could be used infinitely so long as there was paper and ink to print it with.

Outsourcing to a professional designer or printer was often unnecessary, as individuals were willing to create materials and distribute them. At the same time, there are many examples of local artists stepping in and contributing to their community or causes they support. Arlene Mantle, a Toronto musician remembered for her community involvement,



penned and illustrated *On the Line* (1983), a songbook containing the notation and lyrics to songs of protest. Her annotations add context, situating the songs around specific events in Toronto's history. As with *Unite the Youth!*, the booklet is palm-sized and would have been easy for individuals to transport and hold during marches.

Pamphlets as a format are incredibly compelling, and many in the Kenny Collection appear handmade. Their simple and at times do-it-yourself appearance make visible the people behind the publication, encouraging the reader to consider how the pages were printed and who bound them. This aspect of the pamphlets pictured herein is something that was lost in the move towards digital means of communication. Many contemporary activists now conduct a portion of their work online: posting acts as an updated form of pamphleteering. Graphics sharing information, timelines, event details, reading resources, eyewitness accounts, and more achieve the same ends as physical pamphlets. Many archives documenting recent social movements and protests are digital, in line with the amount of digital material being created around them. However, in light of the emerging dangers and drawbacks of online spaces, including user surveillance and content suppression, many activists are once again embracing physical pamphlets. The techniques used to create the pamphlets in the Kenny Collection are easily replicable and remain accessible to this day.

Despite the ephemerality of many pamphlets created by activist groups, it is important to archive them all the same. Archiving social

and political change, and the resistance to it, is incredibly important to our histories. Contemporary pamphlets, the information they communicate, and where they can be found are indicative of the current context and socio-political climate. As a graduate student, I spend a lot of time on the St. George Campus in downtown Toronto. The University of Toronto is a meeting place for diverse people and viewpoints, many of which are interested in social change and advocacy. I notice new posters affixed to lampposts and other city fixtures weekly, and it is not uncommon for me to receive or accept a pamphlet from a group I am involved in or a student organization operating on campus. Recently, pro-Palestinian protesters and pamphlets have been especially visible on campus and in the city. Echoing the efforts of Robert Kenny, grassroots organizations like the Toronto Zine Library and Librarians and Archivists with Palestine have already begun the work of collecting and making available pamphlets and other materials being published today around these and many other important contemporary issues.

There is a wealth of works to draw inspiration from available to be consulted at the Library. Looking through Toronto's activist history may help build and expand the understanding of our socio-political history, the progress we have made, and what work there is still to be done. Creatives of all kinds, as well as local activists, would find much of interest in the Kenny Collection, which can be requested by anyone and viewed in the Fisher's Reading Room. It is clear from looking at this material that many contemporary conflicts and struggles have been ongoing for decades. The Kenny Collection contains many disparate voices united in the fight towards improving the conditions of the world in which we all live. In the work of preserving these stories, libraries, including the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, ensure that these voices are heard and remain relevant for future generations.

Endnote

- ¹ 'Weekly Summary Report on Revolutionary Organizations and Agitators in Canada no. 726,' in *R.C.M.P. Security Bulletins: The Depression Years, Part I*, eds. Gregory S. Kealey and Reg Whitaker (St. John's: Canadian Committee on Labour History, 1993), 300. <https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/RCMP/article/view/9397/9452>.



'A WOMAN'S WORK IS NEVER DONE': THE WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT IN EPHEMERA

Elizabeth Ridolfo

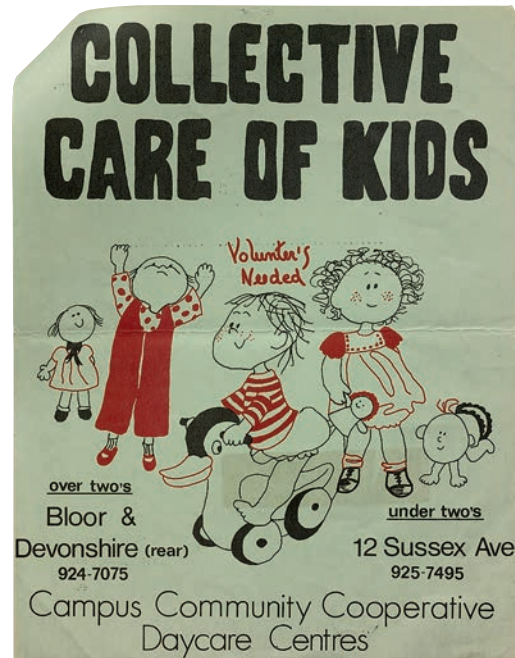
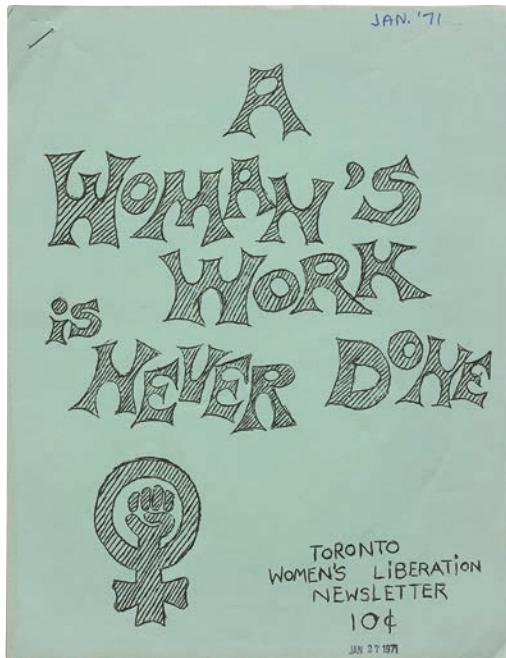
Special Collections Projects Librarian, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library

LAST SUMMER, A backlog survey undertaken by Fisher staff highlighted some gifts that did not get the attention they deserved due to the distractions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. One of these is a selection of periodicals and ephemera donated in 2020 by Ken Wyman, which provide a snapshot of portions of the women's movement in Canada during the late 1960s to mid-1970s, enhancing our existing collections on social movements in Toronto, as well as those on local and international Women's movements in the Flora MacDonald Denison Collection. The donation includes thirteen issues of the newsletter put out by Toronto feminist organizing centre The Women's Place, thirteen issues of *A Woman's Work is Never Done: Toronto Women's Liberation Newsletter*, and issues of Canada's first feminist periodical *Pedestal: A Women's Liberation Newspaper*, produced by the Vancouver Women's Caucus.

The Vancouver Women's Caucus, born from the Feminist Action League that offered services and information for women at Simon Fraser University, championed women's liberation on many fronts. In 1970, they entered a protest candidate in the Miss Canadian University pageant to question the relevance of beauty contests and promote the cause of women's liberation. In response to a 1969 amendment to the criminal code that made abortion legal but only within a very narrow set of conditions, they organized an 'abortion caravan' that travelled from Vancouver to Ottawa to advocate for increased access to abortions for all women. Issues of *The Pedestal* described and encouraged people to support the caravan, which stopped in major Canadian cities, running events and growing larger as it moved across the country. Once it reached Ottawa, its organized actions included a group of women interrupting debate at the House of

Commons and chaining themselves to seats in the public gallery.

In Toronto, feminist groups were also organizing around similar issues such as gender roles, media representation, legal rights, and childcare. *A Woman's Work is Never Done* was the newsletter of the Toronto Women's Liberation Movement, which had an office on Huron Street on the University of Toronto campus. It shared international feminist writings and news and included personal ads and movie and book reviews. It highlighted committees and education initiatives organized to inform and support women in the community, as well as discussion groups on subjects like abortion, divorce, Marxism, and daycare, the latter of which would become one of their most active causes. Believing that women, including those with children, should have the same flexibility to participate in all aspects of life as men, they began fighting



for a daycare on campus. Members of the group approached the university for a suitable space, and when that failed, rented a space at 12 Sussex Avenue and began operating a daycare there in 1969. The Toronto Women's Liberation newsletter chronicled the struggles that followed between what became known as the Campus Community Co-Operative Day Care Centre, the university, and the Provincial Government's Day Nurseries Branch.

Feeling that an unstructured environment surrounded by community volunteers, family members, and staff was healthiest for children, and taking issue with the training programs available for early childhood workers at the time, the Centre strongly disagreed with hiring professional staff. This caused problems when they applied for licensing, as did issues with their facilities, which needed twelve thousand dollars' worth of improvements to meet health and fire regulations. They successfully pressured the university into providing the necessary funds with an organized sit-in at Simcoe Hall. When the daycare needed to expand and had difficulty finding space for a second location, they occupied the university's unused Meteorological Clubhouse, running it as a daycare for months before being given official permission to use it. The cooperative celebrated its fiftieth anniversary on campus in 2020 and has remained a very necessary

support for the local community, including the two Fisher staff members whose children attend the daycare today.

Located a bit north of the university on Dupont Street, The Women's Place was a feminist organizing centre and library that operated in Toronto from 1972 to 1974. It hosted 'consciousness-raising' groups and workshops and served as a space for women to gather and learn. Initially grant-supported, it later relied on donations, pledges, and volunteers to pay its bills and maintain its daily operations. The centre offered legal clinics and advice on issues of discrimination and divorce and drop-ins on topics like home and auto repair and women's history. A speaker's bureau had women available to present feminist perspectives to counteract the dominance of what they felt were stereotyped, degrading, and damaging images of women presented by the media. To jumpstart the book collection that would become their feminist lending library, The Women's Place had a 'book party' in July of 1972 (admission: one book) and soon had over four hundred titles to lend. Their offerings grew to include a lesbian caucus, a medical clinic, a theatre group, and a bookstore that later became the Toronto Women's Bookstore and The Women's Press. Collectives around self-defence, working women, abortion and birth control, and legal rights formed. The

newsletter, which started just one month after The Women's Place opened, is a record of their offerings, charting their growth, struggles, and relationships with local and international feminist, political, and queer movements. The Women's Place closed in 1974.

Though some of these items are available online or through databases subscribed to by the University of Toronto, sharing the physical material more clearly illustrates the spirit of the movement, especially in a classroom setting. The real-time view of the growth, development, and collaborative activities of women's organizing and cooperative efforts conveys the challenges and joys of organizing in a more dispersed and less connected environment. We are grateful for the gift of these ephemeral items, which will bring our visitors into closer contact with the individuals and issues of the recent past.

For more information about the history and operations of the CCCDCC please see the University of Toronto Archives and Records Management Campus Community Cooperative Day Care Centre fonds B2021-0002.

Some digitized and text-searchable copies of these documents are also available at Rise Up! Feminist Digital Archive. <https://riseup-feministarchive.ca/>.

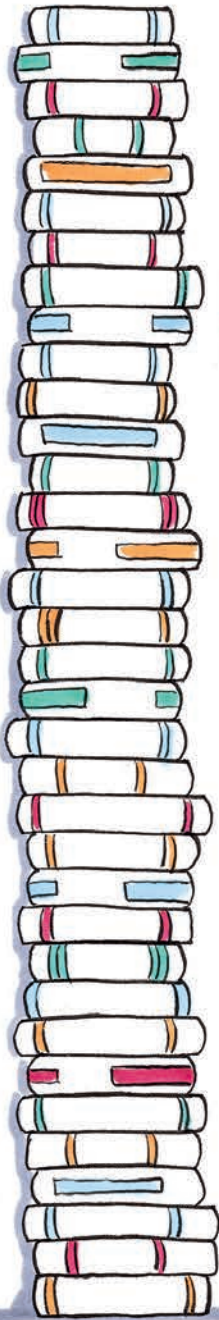


RARE BOOKS &

BY THE NUMBERS



COLLECTIONS



5590

NEW PURCHASES



3590
in FY 2024

2081
in FY 2025

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS ACCESS



1062 NEW READERS REGISTERED

ARCHIVAL COLLECTIONS



38 COLLECTIONS PROCESSED

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS!



OUTREACH & VISITORS



● 19 OPEN HOUSES
1734 PARTICIPANTS



● 9 WORKSHOPS
225 PARTICIPANTS



● 120 TOURS
1869 PARTICIPANTS

REFERENCE & RESEARCH SERVICES



● 924
IN-DEPTH RESEARCH
QUESTIONS



● 1737
BRIEF REFERENCE
QUESTIONS



● 1463
DIRECTIONAL &
INFORMATIONAL
QUESTIONS



80.25 METRES



NEW LOGO CELEBRATES COMMUNITY OF FRIENDS

Mimosa Kabir Ketley

Senior Development Officer, Major Gifts, University of Toronto Libraries

AS WE CONTINUE to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the Friends of the Fisher Library, we are delighted to unveil a new logo that captures the spirit of our vibrant community. Founded in 1984, the Friends group was established to bring together individuals passionate about strengthening the Fisher Library's exceptional collections and raising public awareness of its remarkable resources. Over the past four decades, the Friends have been pivotal in enabling countless acquisitions, special projects, and public engagement programs.

Designed by the University of Toronto Communications team, the new logo reflects the architectural grandeur and cultural significance of the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, featuring a hexagonal shape inspired by the Library itself. The hexagon, often found in nature—such as in honeycombs

built by bees, symbolizing community and collaboration—also has literary significance. In the famous short story, 'The Library of Babel', Jorge Luis Borges imagines the universe as a library—a moving structure composed of infinite hexagonal galleries. The infinite library represents the boundless nature of knowledge and information, emphasizing the interconnectedness of human nature and libraries. The shape serves as a powerful reminder that the Fisher Library is more than a physical space: it is a gathering place—a hub where scholars, visitors, and lifelong learners come together to connect, not just with each other, but with history and knowledge.

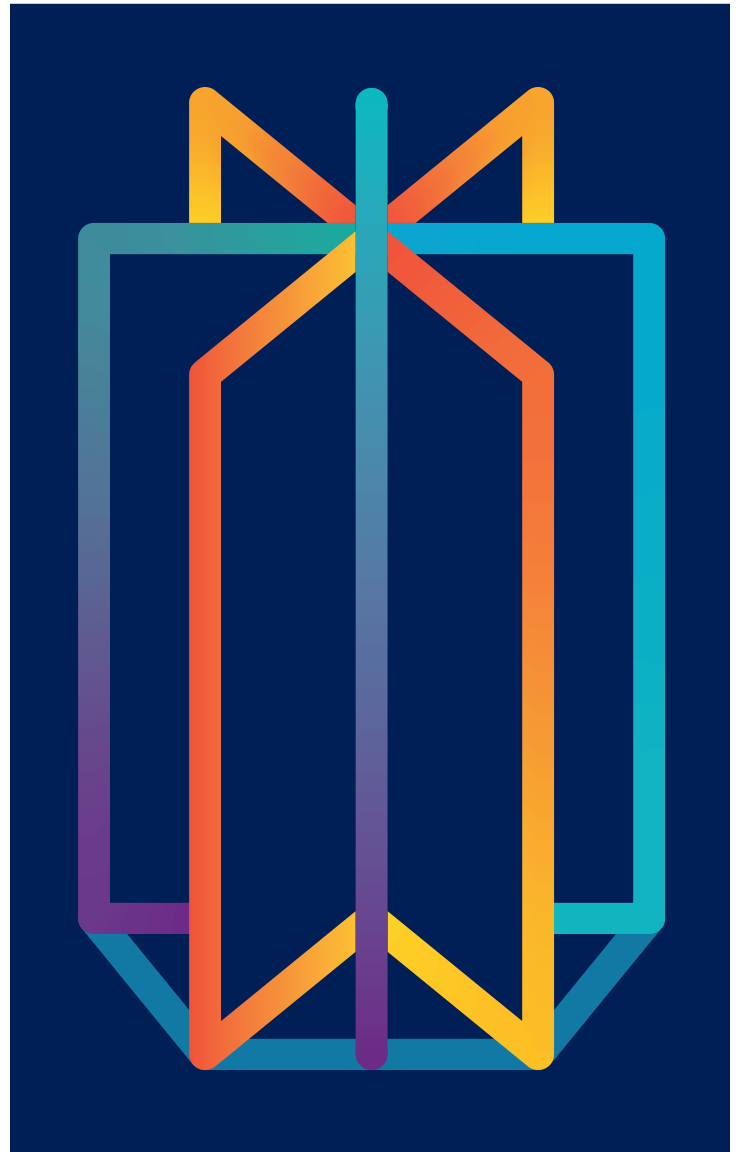
The Friends of the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library have been instrumental in the growth and success of the Library. Their generosity has funded a wide range of initiatives, from the publication of award-winning exhibition

catalogues to hosting annual lectures, all of which have contributed to the thriving intellectual community at Fisher. In the past year alone, support from the Friends made it possible to acquire a manuscript version of Sir John Mandeville's *Travels*, one of the most widely read works of the Middle Ages. This invaluable manuscript is now regarded as one of the most significant medieval texts in the University of Toronto's collection.

As we look back on four decades of support and friendship, we are deeply grateful to this community that has helped shape the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library into what it is today: a place where rare books, manuscripts, and special collections continue to inspire scholarship and ignite the imagination of all who visit.

Thank you for being a Friend.

FACING PAGE: Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library. **BELOW, LEFT TO RIGHT:** Ceiling as viewed from the atrium of the Fisher Library showing the hexagonal architectural detail, and the new logo, inspired by this design feature.

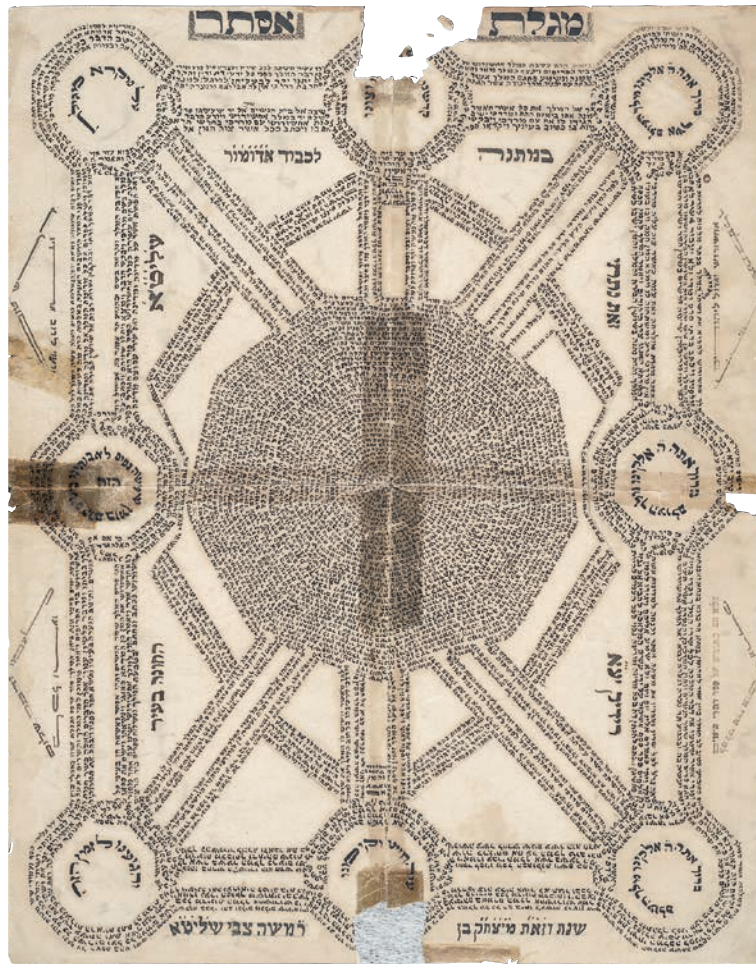


**FRIENDS
OF THE
FISHER
LIBRARY**

Not yet a member of the Friends community?

Join us in supporting the Fisher Library by visiting
fisher.library.utoronto.ca/donations/friends.

Your contributions will help fund acquisitions and community engagement initiatives, while providing you exclusive access to special publications, lectures, exhibitions, and other events.



RARE HEBRAICA FROM THE REUBEN & HELENE DENNIS MUSEUM NOW AT THE FISHER LIBRARY

Nadav Sharon

Jewish Studies Librarian, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library

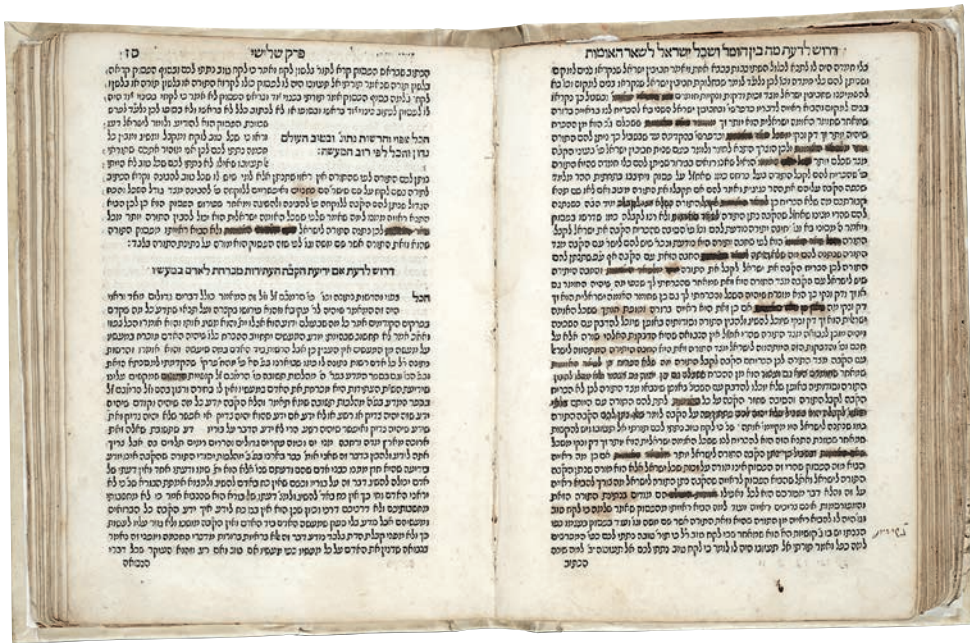
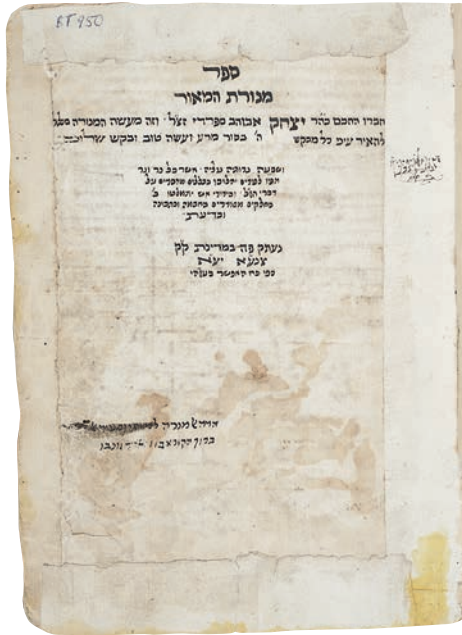
THE CONSERVATIVE BETH Tzedec Congregation, one of the largest and oldest synagogues in Toronto, has recently decided to close its Reuben and Helene Dennis Museum after more than fifty years of existence. The bulk of the museum's collection, the Cecil Roth collection of Jewish historical objects, which includes a remarkable collection of *ketubbot* (marriage contracts), has been acquired by the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM). However, the museum's manuscripts and many of its rare and early printed books that were not part of the Roth collection were donated to the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library last year.

The collection consists of nine manuscripts and a few dozen printed books, ranging from the mid-sixteenth century to the mid-twentieth

century. They include Scripture, works of liturgy, *halakhah* (Jewish religious law), mysticism, art, and more. The manuscripts hail from a wide diversity of locations, including Morocco, Yemen, Italy, and Germany. The following are preliminary descriptions of a selection of the items in this collection.

Two manuscripts were copied in Modena Italy. One, dated to 1667, is of *hilkhot shehitah* (the laws of ritual slaughter). The other, dated 1811, is of *Seder teki'at shofar* (the order of the blowing of the *shofar*). The central part of the Rosh Hashanah liturgy is the blowing of the *shofar* (ram's horn). The ritual includes blessings followed by three different sounds (*teki'a*, *shevarim*, *teru'a*) that are blown in set orders at fixed points of the communal prayers. However, the exact points in the liturgy at which the

shofar is blown vary between different Jewish traditions. This manuscript is solely devoted to the order of the *shofar* blowing and thus includes only the blessings and some liturgical poems that accompany it as well as the timing and order of the sounds. It is therefore quite short (only fifteen leaves), in comparison to *Mahzorim*, which are prayer books that include the entire day's lengthy liturgy. Given that this manuscript was made for the use of the leader of the communal synagogue liturgy, it is in a large format and large font. Like many other modern Italian manuscripts of *Seder teki'at shofar*, it includes kabbalistic prayers and explanations that accompany the ritual. The illustrated title page indicates that it was copied by a scribe named Shimshon bar 'Azariah Sanguinetti for one Yosef Eliyahu Pesah.



of the rabbi is not written, but the scribe's name is Yitshak ben Moshe Tsevi and it is dated to 1902. It was formerly owned by the late Toronto rabbi David Monson (1917–2008), who gifted it to the museum in 1989.

In addition to the manuscripts, some of the printed books are truly unique. One example is a *Hagadah shel Pesah* (Passover Hagadah) printed in Bombay (Mumbai), India in 1856, which consists of the text of the hagadah alongside a Judeo-Arabic translation. This scarce Hagadah, copies of which can be found in only a handful of institutional libraries worldwide, was produced in lithograph. One of the more interesting printed books in this gift is a copy of *Lehem Yehudah*, a commentary on the Mishnah tractate *Pirke Avot* (Ethics of the Fathers) by Rabbi Yehuda ben Shemuel Lerma (mid-sixteenth century). Lerma, who was of Spanish origins, initially published his commentary in Venice in 1553; however, all the copies of that first edition were burned in the great burning of the Talmud and other Jewish texts by the Roman Inquisition in that same year. As Lerma writes in the preface to this second edition, no surviving copies were found and he then had to reconstruct the work from memory. Subsequently, a single copy of the first edition was found but, comparing the two, Lerma concluded that the second surpassed the first. This second edition was printed in 1554 in the town of Sabbioneta in Northern Italy, where the Jewish printer Tobia ben Eliezer Foà had set up a printing house that became known for the quality of its book production. Interestingly, this copy of the Sabbioneta edition includes the markings of censorship, with blacked out words and phrases throughout.

These preliminary and selective descriptions are just a taste of the variety and the scholarly value of the manuscripts and books in this collection. The Fisher Library is extremely grateful to Beth Tzedec Congregation for choosing it to be the new home for this important collection, and to Dorion Liebgott, curator of the Reuben and Helene Dennis Museum, for both managing and maintaining the collection for so many years and for overseeing its transfer to the Fisher Library.

A manuscript dated to 1774 from Mannheim, Germany, is intended for the use of the *Hevra Kadisha* (Jewish burial society) and includes the prayers that are recited at funerals and during the burial.

One of the manuscripts from Yemen is of the Aramaic translation of the entire annual cycle of *haftaroth*, the portions that are publicly read as part of the Shabbat service in synagogue, following the weekly Torah portion. Another Yemeni manuscript is of the book *Menorat Ha-Ma'or* by the Spanish rabbi and kabbalist Isaac Aboab (fourteenth century). This work of ethics became quite popular and was published several times from the early sixteenth century

onwards. This manuscript, produced in Sana'a by a scribe named Yihye ben Mosheh ben Shalom Elkartah in 1740, was probably copied from the Venice 1623 edition, given that the manuscript's title page and verso appear to imitate the title page and verso of that printed edition. This reveals the wide distribution of Italian Jewish books as well as the popularity of this work.

Another noteworthy manuscript is the most recent and is only one page. The entire Book of Esther is written on a single page in minuscule letters in an artistic design. As attested on the manuscript, it was made as gift for the Hasidic rabbi of the town of Ridnik (Polish: Rudki), now a part of Ukraine, not far from Lviv. The name

FACING PAGE: The entire Book of Esther on one page in minuscule letters, manuscript (1902). **THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:** *Seder teki'at shofar*, manuscript (Modena 1811). *Menorat Ha-Ma'or*, manuscript (Sana'a 1740). Censorship markings in the copy of *Lehem Yehuda* (Sabbioneta 1554).



TIP OF THE ICEBERG: THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF J. TUZO WILSON TO THE FISHER LIBRARY'S ARCTIC COLLECTIONS

Grant Hurley

Canadiana Librarian, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library

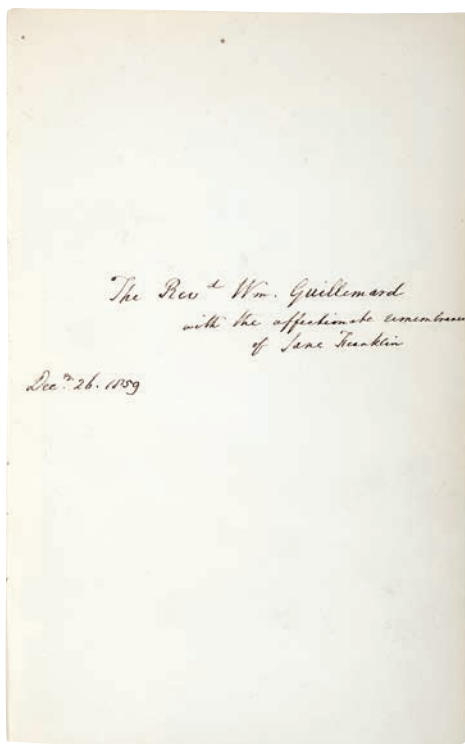
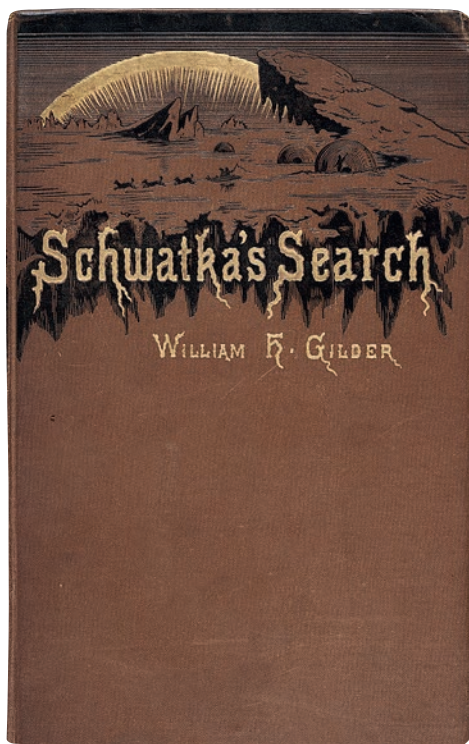
IN WINTER 2026, the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library will feature an exhibition titled *Arctic Fever: Image and Narrative in British Circumpolar Voyaging in the Long 19th Century*. Curated by Dr. Mark Cheetham and Dr. Isabel Gapp, the exhibition will highlight the Library's remarkable collections on the North with a special emphasis on its representation in imagery, from lushly illustrated lithographs to examples of maps, children's literature, and photographic technologies like the stereograph. The exhibition has spurred a renewed focus on adding materials to our collections that help document a fuller picture of the Arctic, particularly by looking at the North as a transnational region connected by a shared environment and ecology; cultural, linguistic and social relationships; and current-day political and climactic concerns. This has meant acquiring supporting materials relating to *Kalaallit Nunaat* (Greenland), Sámi territory, and Siberia, as well as surfacing stories of Inuit agency and authorship in their sovereign territories. But supporting the exhibition has also meant investigating the origins of the Fisher's existing deep collections on the Arctic. Like many of the Library's subject specialities, our strength in

Arctic materials has emerged slowly over time. Items have been donated in smaller numbers or purchased one-by-one. After nearly seventy years of collecting, an incredibly rich collection has emerged. However, in looking at the source of the materials selected for the exhibition as well as many other titles on Arctic themes, one name kept coming up: Patricia Proctor (1944–2019). Further investigation revealed the extent of her gift: 271 books owned by her father John Tuzo Wilson (1908–1993), which were donated to the Library in 2002. This article explores the story behind this underrecognized collection.

J. Tuzo Wilson is best known as the key contributor to the theory of plate tectonics, but he had an incredibly varied career over his lifetime as detailed in Nick Eyles' biography *Tuzo: The Unlikely Revolutionary of Plate Tectonics* (Toronto: Aveo UTP, 2022). Wilson was born in Ottawa in 1908 to John Armistead Wilson (1879–1954) and Henrietta Tuzo (1874–1955). Wilson senior was a noted engineer and pioneer of aviation in Canada, and his friendship with controversial Arctic traveller Vilhjalmur Stefansson (1879–1962) surely ignited the younger Wilson's lifelong interest in the Canadian North. Henrietta

was a famed mountaineer; Mount Tuzo in Alberta is named after her. Tuzo Wilson was one of the first people in Canada to receive a degree in geophysics, graduating from Trinity College at the University of Toronto in 1930. From 1929 to 1939 he assisted intermittently with field surveys in the Canadian North for the Geological Survey of Canada. This work was interrupted by his distinguished service in the Second World War, which he ended with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in 1943. After his return to Canada, he was assigned to several experimental operations designed to test Canada's ability for Arctic defence against Japanese and Russian overland invasion into North America. The most ambitious of these was Operation Musk Ox. Taking place in 1946 between the end of the Second World War and the beginning of the Cold War, the expedition began in Churchill, Manitoba in February 1946, travelling north to Cambridge Bay in Nunavut, and then again southwards to Edmonton, ending on 6 May 1946. Operation Musk Ox was considered a success for its use of then-new technologies like the snowmobile in military operations, but Wilson saw a limited future in the Army as talented personnel left for new horizons. Also tiring of the bureaucratic

FACING PAGE: Woodburytype print ‘Stopped by the Ice off Cape Prescot’ from George Nares’ *Narrative of a Voyage to the Polar Sea* (1878). Woodburytypes were marketed as ‘permanent’ because the pigmented gelatin ink used to print them was relatively stable compared with photographs developed directly from light-sensitive chemicals. The prints were most used for high-quality book illustration between 1875 and 1900. **BELOW, LEFT TO RIGHT:** The cover of *Schwatka’s Search* (1881) with its eye-catching icy publisher’s cloth. Presentation inscription in Leopold McClintock’s *The Voyage of the ‘Fox’ in the Arctic Seas* (1859) from Lady Jane Franklin to Reverend William Guillemard (1815–1887), then Headmaster at the Royal College at Armagh, Northern Ireland. Guillemard was Lady Franklin’s cousin.



Geological Survey, Wilson became a professor at the University of Toronto in 1946 where his career as a geophysicist led him to circle the globe many times. During this time, he was forced to revise his earlier belief that continents were fixed and immovable and introduced a revolutionary idea about how continental plates move past one another: the transform fault, a theory that gained him global acclaim. Wilson served as Principal of Erindale College from 1967 until retiring from the University in 1974, concluding his career as Director General of the Ontario Science Centre before truly retiring in 1985.

J. Tuzo Wilson’s relationship with book collecting began at Cambridge University in 1930, where the eminent Arctic traveller and geologist James Wordie (1889–1962) was assigned as his tutor. Wordie had served as geologist for Ernest Shackleton’s 1914 Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition and would also make many trips to the Arctic. As related in Wilson’s unpublished memoirs, Wordie advised him to acquire books on Arctic exploration with an eye toward both cultivating a well-rounded scientist and suggesting that such

materials could be a wise investment. Wilson followed this advice upon his return to England during the Second World War, noting that ‘books had been accounted a poor risk in the Blitz and prices had plummeted.’ With his wife Isabel (1910–2001), ‘we passed hour after quiet hour in the stacks of Maggs, of Francis Edwards, of the Museum Bookshelf, or cruising up and down the Tottenham Court Road hanging over the tables of old books ranged along the street, tracking down the first editions of Samuel Hearne and of the multitudinous annals stemming from the Franklin Search.’¹

The collection itself reveals a deep interest and canny eye for sourcing books about the Canadian northwest and Arctic regions. Titles in use for *Arctic Fever* include Nares’ *Narrative of a Voyage to the Polar Sea During 1875-76 in H.M. ships ‘Alert’ and ‘Discovery’* (1876), a record of the first significant British Arctic expedition following twenty-five years of searching for John Franklin. The book is especially notable for its inclusion of six Woodburytypes, a unique photomechanical method of printing that shares a process in common with intaglio printmaking methods.

Another is Gilder’s *Schwatka’s Search: Sledging in the Arctic in Quest of the Franklin Records* (1881), describing the last major search for evidence of John Franklin’s fate in the nineteenth century. Led by Lieutenant Frederick Schwatka of the United States Army, the expedition was one of the few that relied on Inuit knowledge of the territory to both travel safely through these lands and uncover further details about Franklin’s fate, including the location of gravesites of crew members.

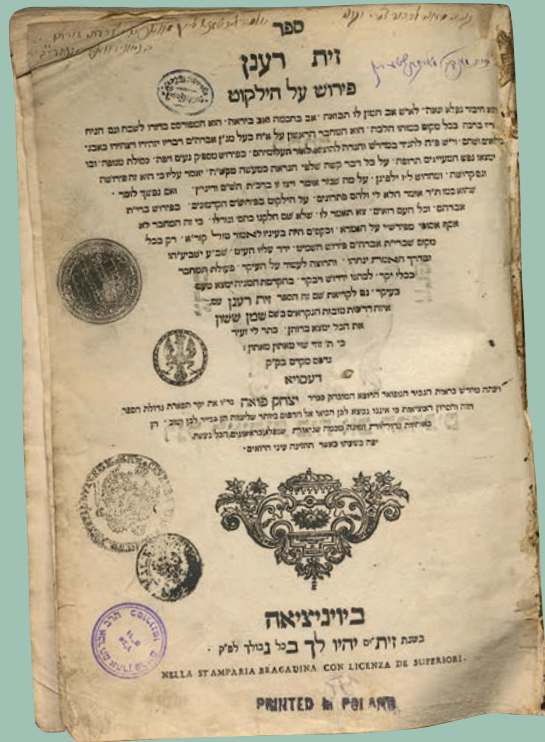
Other significant items include signed copies of books by John Franklin and Edward Belcher, a presentation copy of Isaac Hayes’s *An Arctic Boat Journey* (1860) to Henry Grinnell, and Leopold McClintock’s *The Voyage of the ‘Fox’ in the Arctic Seas* (1859) inscribed by Lady Jane Franklin. Other items outside of the scope of Arctic topics include *Rariora musei Besleriani quae*, a 1716 work of natural history, and several early imprints from British Columbia.

The drive behind the *Arctic Fever* exhibition is to bring the discourse and imaginary surrounding the Arctic in the nineteenth century into conversation with those of today. Studying these books allows us to trace a lineage of mapping and surveying leading to resource extraction that can help us better understand today’s urgent concerns around melting polar ice and geopolitical control of the region. Unlike many collectors attracted to the aura around the books of Arctic exploration, J. Tuzo Wilson actually set foot in the Arctic, and his collection reflects this lifelong relationship. Together with stories of Inuit knowledge and resilience in their homelands often present in these volumes (and the dire consequences of devaluing this knowledge, as John Franklin learned), Wilson’s collection provides a remarkable window into visions and experiences of the Arctic that can teach us as much about Arctic futures as its storied past.

With sincere thanks to Susan Wilson for providing me information about her father’s book collecting.

Endnote

- 1 J. Tuzo Wilson, unpublished memoirs, page 125, private collection of Susan Wilson.



Fisher Summer Seminars 2025

Hebrew Paleography and Manuscript Notations in Early Hebrew Printed Books 9-10 June 2025

Together with the Footprints: Jewish Books Through Time and Place project, this seminar will focus on evidence indicating the provenance and past movement through time and place of Fisher's early printed books in Hebrew. This provenance information will be collected from printed books and might include owner inscriptions, censor signatures, marginalia, and bookplates. The work will involve handling sixteenth and seventeenth-century books, carefully perusing their bindings and pages for such evidence, deciphering or translating it if necessary, and entering it into the Footprints database. Led by experts in Hebrew paleography and members of the Footprints team, this workshop will offer basic training in early modern Ashkenazic, Sephardic, and Mizrahi Hebrew hands as well as training in the use of the Footprints database. A good command of Hebrew and/or other Jewish languages like Yiddish, Ladino or Judeo-Arabic is preferred. Those who do not have proficiency in Hebrew or Jewish languages, but have a passion for the history of material texts and other skills that would contribute to the project, such as paleographical skills in Latin scripts or expertise in early modern book bindings, are welcome as well.

Queer Book Arts 24-26 June 2025

This seminar will explore the interdisciplinary field of queer book arts by examining books through the lens of research creation. Bringing together artists, bibliographers, book historians, librarians, and printmakers, this seminar will teach participants about the growing field of queer bibliography, and the preservation and dissemination of queer histories through embodied methodologies. Participants will have opportunities to engage and create using the rare books and special collections at the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, and will attend printing workshops to be held in the Print Studio at the John M. Kelly Library at St. Michael's College.

Please look out for the call for applications for this seminar on our website in early 2025: fisher.library.utoronto.ca.



TO LEARN MORE about how to support the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library through gifts of materials, donations or a provision through your will please contact the library advancement office to confirm the nature of your gift. We will be in touch with you regarding recognition, should you wish to join our list of distinguished Heritage Society donors or remain anonymous.

For more information please contact Anna Maria Romano at **416-978-3600** or visit <http://donate.library.utoronto.ca>.

Thank you!

EXHIBITIONS & EVENTS 2025

EXHIBITIONS

Exhibition Location and Hours

9–5, Monday–Friday
Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library
120 St. George Street, Toronto, Ontario

Before visiting, please check our website to confirm hours of opening.

27 January to 25 April 2025

De cerebro: An Exhibition on the Human Brain

While the modern study of anatomy has been in practice for well over five hundred years, the brain remains today one of the least understood parts of the human body. From the first anatomists to dissect complex brain lobes and nerves, to philosophers who grappled with concepts of the soul and mind, to outside thinkers who explored the outer reaches of human consciousness, this exhibition will consider the history of the brain in print from multiple perspectives. *De cerebro* is curated by Science & Medicine Librarian, Alexandra K. Carter.



20 May to 8 August 2025

Jewish-Muslim Interactions in Books in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods

In recent generations, there is a tendency to view and define relations between Jews and Muslims through the lens of 20TH-21ST century political conflicts. Yet, the peoples that adhere to these two monotheistic religions have interacted in multifaceted—often much more positive—ways through the ages. The purpose of this exhibition is to highlight these relations, some of which had profound impacts on modern-Western culture more generally, through the holdings of the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library. *Jewish-Muslim Interactions* is curated by Jewish Studies Librarian, Nadav Sharon; retired Near and Middle Eastern Studies Librarian, Blair Kuntz; and Professor Walid Saleh, Department for the Study of Religion, University of Toronto.

EVENTS

Lectures begin at **6:00 PM**
Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library
120 St. George Street, Toronto, Ontario

Thursday 6 February 2025

The George Kiddell Memorial Lecture
Subject: Caribbean cookbooks

Thursday 27 February 2025

The Johanna and Leon Katz Memorial Lecture
I'm So Glad We Had This Time Together: A Love/Hate Letter to My Hometown, the City of Toronto
Toronto illustrator/cartoonist Maurice Vellekoop will speak.

Wednesday 30 April 2025

The John Seltzer and Mark Seltzer Memorial Lecture
Speaker: Mark Andrews

Stay up to date! Visit the News & Events sections of our website and our social media channels for information about upcoming events. fisher.library.utoronto.ca

EDITORS' NOTE

This issue was edited by Grant Hurley, Liz Ridolfo, Loryl MacDonald, and Maureen Morin, and designed by Maureen Morin. Comments and/or suggestions should be sent to:

Liz Ridolfo
Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library
Toronto, Ontario M5S 1A5
liz.ridolfo@utoronto.ca

The Halcyon: The Newsletter of the Friends of The Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library is published twice a year in June and December. *The Halcyon* includes short articles on recent noteworthy gifts to and acquisitions of the Library, recent or current exhibitions in the Library, activities of the Friends, and other short articles about the Library's collections.

Queries or corrections for the mailing list or membership list should be addressed to:

Anna Maria Romano
University of Toronto Libraries
Toronto, Ontario M5S 1A5
416-978-3600
annamaria.romano@utoronto.ca

Members of the editorial board of *The Halcyon* are Grant Hurley, Liz Ridolfo, and Loryl MacDonald, Fisher Library, and Mimosa Kabir Ketley and Maureen Morin, University of Toronto Libraries.

Photography by Paul Armstrong, Gordon Belray, Maureen Morin, Liz Ridolfo, John Shoemith, Paul Terefenko, and Michael Volpe.

The
H·A·L·C·Y·O·N