

What's inside? a letter from Stephen Hawking, a gift from the estate of Roger Bishop, and more!

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January 2019



THE AMPERSAND

MESSAGE FROM JONATHAN BENGTON, UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN



The year 2018 ended on a high note at UVic Libraries. In mid-December, we received notice that we were the recipients of a substantial grant by the Victoria Foundation (matched dollar for dollar by an internal programme) to help us decolonize the “Colonial Despatches” digital archive of the correspondence between British authorities and the governors of Vancouver Island and British Columbia from 1846-1871. This ongoing **project** has been a partnership between UVic Libraries, the Faculty of Humanities, and many other supporters and contributors over the past decade. The free, online database contains many historically significant records about the settling of Victoria and Vancouver Island. However, most of these documents are largely inaccessible to researchers and particularly Indigenous peoples. Through this Victoria Foundation grant we will, in collaboration and consultation with the First People's Cultural Council and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, begin work

to decolonize the archive by developing enhanced and revised search terms, along with a newly engineered search interface.

This type of grant is a notable example of the vital impact that financial gifts, large and small, can have towards the Libraries' ability to serve our students, researchers, and community members.

As we enter 2019, I am full of optimism and excitement at the multitude of opportunities to strengthen and enhance our strategic objectives to be Open, Engaged, and Enduring, and to work in partnership and collaboration with each other and our many supporters and stakeholders. Happy New Year!

& IN THE COMMUNITY



Werner Israel and Stephen Hawking at Israel's 60th birthday in Edmonton (1991). Photo courtesy of Werner Israel.

HAWKING LETTER REVEALS FRIENDSHIP WITH UVIC PROFESSOR

by Lisa Abram, Communications Officer

UVic Professor Emeritus Werner Israel donated several early first-edition Cambridge volumes to UVic Libraries about black holes, quantum physics and relativity, along with a personal letter from notable physicist Stephen Hawking, recommending Israel for election to the esteemed Royal Society. Read about their [50-year friendship](#) and the contributions they made together to physics.

& ACROSS THE LIBRARIES



Victoria-born and best-selling author David Day's books about J.R.R. Tolkien, author of *The Hobbit*.

LINKING THE LIBRARY

by Dean Seeman, Head, Metadata

One of the most valuable resources at UVic Libraries is not a book or a manuscript but the aggregation of information about its resources: its metadata. This broad term encompasses all of the descriptions in our library catalogue, digital collections, and archives. Taken as a body of knowledge it is an incredibly rich account of our collections, with information about resources but also about people, places, and ideas.

Recently UVic Libraries has started to enhance the impact of this metadata through the adoption of “linked data.” This technology breaks our metadata down into statements that can mix with other metadata. Locally, it means that metadata in each of our different databases can talk to each other better. Globally it means our metadata can mix with other metadata from around the world.

As opposed to relying on “text matching” of people, linked data relies on a machine-understandable identifier that looks very much like a URL, like [J.R.R.Tolkien](#), for example. This data points to a variety of ways to represent that author in different scripts and languages. Other statements about the identifier/person, such as date of birth, spouse, profession, and published works, can also be made on the Internet using linked data standards, and these can be used for new and enhanced discoveries without repeating that information in every single database.

UVic Libraries is preparing its metadata for inclusion in this linked data environment to be used worldwide, and also to use metadata created elsewhere to enhance exploration of our own collections. It is yet another way UVic Libraries is thinking globally as we carry out our work.

& IN THE VAULT



Roger Bishop in previous Special Collections & University Archives space in McPherson Library (photo undated).

PROFESSOR ROGER BISHOP ESTATE GIFT HONOURS PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE OF UVIC LIBRARIES

by Lara Wilson, Director, Special Collections & University Archivist

It is with gratitude and pleasure that UVic Libraries shares the news of a significant gift from the estate of **Professor Roger Bishop** (1916-2016).

Head of the English Department at Victoria College and then the University of Victoria, as well as a founder of what would become the university's Theatre Department (1945-1971), Bishop was a passionate advocate and builder of library collections, especially the rare book holdings at the heart of UVic Libraries' Special Collections department. A librarian as well as a literary scholar, Professor Bishop "could be said to be the father of Special Collections" as observed by colleague Dr. Ann Saddlemeyer.

In honor of Professor Bishop, who **died in 2016** just weeks short of his 100th birthday, UVic Libraries purchased a finely bound second edition of Robert Burns' *Poems, chiefly in the Scottish dialect*, a volume that had eluded Professor Bishop, much to his regret, during a significant book buying trip to the U.K. in 1953. "UVic Libraries has collections of international significance thanks to Roger's vision and leadership," said University Librarian Jonathan Bengtson.

In addition to gifts-in-kind from his own collections, Professor Bishop's bequest of more than \$400,000 will ensure that the Libraries will continue to be nourished by his vision. The Bishop gift will support the acquisition of archival and rare print materials to advance learning and research in the field of English language and literature.



TOME EXHIBIT

A mixed-media installation curated by Chantal Gibson, artist-educator and writer

January 14 - February 26

Mearns Centre for Learning - McPherson Library

Reading: How She Read: Confronting the Romance of Empire on February 14, 3pm, room A003.

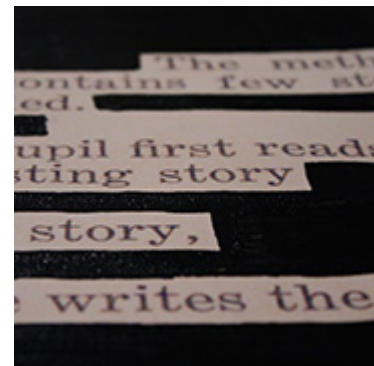
TOME is an imagined history book made from coffee and cotton. This book sculpture is a topographical landscape of memory imagined from a larger historical narrative about the African Diaspora. Challenging traditional ways of knowing, it is to be read with the senses. Situated in the Mearns Centre for Learning - McPherson Library amongst other historical and literary works, this book speaks to the creativity that emerges from the struggle for visibility and inclusion.



**TREASURES AND TEA:
THE GARDEN THAT LOVE
BUILT**
with Cathy Armstrong (The
Land Conservancy)
Wednesday, January 30
1-2 p.m.
Room A003, Mearns Centre for
Learning – McPherson Library



**TREASURES AND TEA:
SURVIVALS FROM THE
CLASSICAL TRADITION,
REMNANTS OF THE
LIBERAL ORDER:
ARCHITECTURAL
MNEMONICS IN**



**READING: HOW SHE
READ: CONFRONTING
THE ROMANCE OF
EMPIRE**
with Chantal Gibson
Thursday, February 14
3:00-4:00 p.m.
Room A003, Mearns Centre for
Learning – McPherson Library

Join Cathy Armstrong and volunteer docents from The Land Conservancy in discussing the legacy that led to the creation of **Abkhazi Garden**, a local community treasure. A love story fraught with privilege and tragedy, the tale of Peggy Pemberton-Carter and Prince Nicholas Abkhazi is fitting for a blockbuster movie plot. Living in exile since escaping the Bolshevik Revolution, the Prince met Peggy in Paris in 1922. Though World War II saw them held in prisoner of war camps more than 8,000 km. apart, the two found their way back to one another to become engaged in New York City in 1946. They would begin their new lives together, building what would become known as Abkhazi Garden.

VICTORIA'S URBAN LANDSCAPE

with **Martin Segger**

*Wednesday, February 13
1-2 p.m.*

Room A003, Mearns Centre for Learning – McPherson Library

Until very recent time, architecture was the major medium for mass communications. Buildings are as much about popular ideologies, instruments of conviction and persuasion, as they are about function and convenience. Join architectural historian **Martin Segger** for a virtual stroll through the architectural landscape of Downtown Victoria. Explore how the streets are alive with a complex set of narratives, including commentaries on faith, power, politics, and money in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

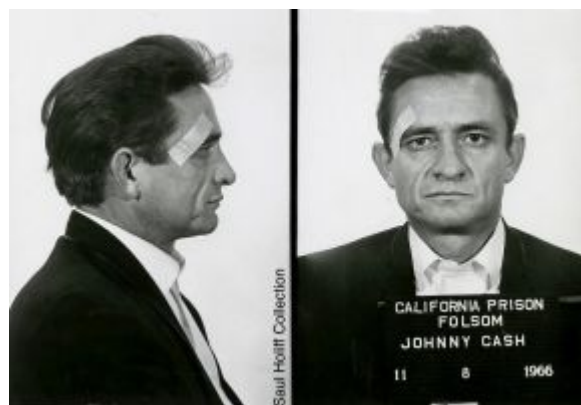
Artist-educator **Chantal Gibson** reads from her recently published book *How She Read*. Gibson's work explores the cultural production of knowledge, and the overlap between literary and visual art, challenging imperialist notions quietly embedded in everyday things—from academic schoolbooks to kitschy souvenir spoons. Her visual art has appeared at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto and Montreal Museum of Fine Arts in Montreal. An award-winning instructor, she teaches writing and design communication in the School of Interactive Arts & Technology at Simon Fraser University. **About the book.**

& IN THE NEWS



IN PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE COURSE - MYTHS AND OMISSIONS: A TEXTBOOK HISTORY OF BC

If you missed Indigenous Studies Librarian Pia Russell's recent talk about BC historical textbooks, you can attend her lecture on the subject through the Continuing Studies course she is teaching on Jan 31. **Registration required.**



UVIC'S TOP 10 STORIES OF 2018

The Holiff Archives made the **top 10 list** of UVic stories in 2018. Visit Special Collections to see artifacts from Johnny Cash's life, donated to the library from the family of Cash's manager, Saul Holiff. You can always view the **exhibit**: Volatile Attractions: Saul Holiff, Johnny Cash and Managing a Music Legend.

& OUR PEOPLE, YOUR LIBRARY



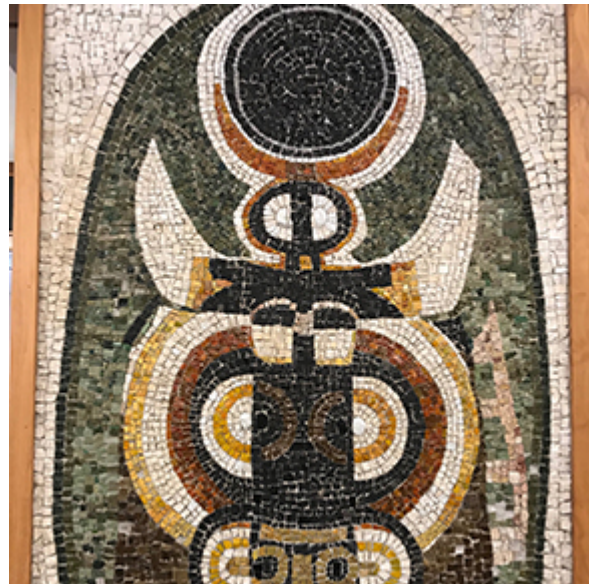
WHITE GLOVES - TO WEAR OR NOT TO WEAR?

In many research libraries, users are required to wear white cotton gloves when handling archival and library materials in special collections. This practice has fallen out of favour because white gloves provide limited protection for collections and reduce tactile sensitivity making it difficult to handle collections carefully and ultimately increasing the chances of physical damage. Cotton gloves have many small hairs that can easily catch on brittle edges or worsen an existing tear. Cotton is also very absorbent and thus easily soiled, picking up dirt, dust, and other materials that can then be transferred to the item being handled. [Source](#).



IT'S AS EASY AS 1-2-3!

You can [sign-up](#) for our monthly newsletter. Read [archived issues](#) you may have missed. And register for a [free community card](#) at the loan desk. Our library is your library!



CORRECTION

In the December issue, we published the incorrect date of Margaret Peterson's passing. It should be 1997 not 1927. We apologize for this error.

& THE LAST WORD



Art installation in the former textile factory highlighting the stories of camp survivors.

EMBEDDED LIBRARIANSHIP

by Matt Huculak, Digital Scholarship Librarian

In 2012, the University of Victoria Libraries became one of the first libraries in North America—perhaps even the world—to hire a “Grants & Awards Librarian.” Christine Walde, an author, artist, and librarian extraordinaire, was hired to work with the UVic community in order to help faculty & students work through the long-term preservation and accessibility requirements of publicly funded research. Little did I know when I was hired as Digital Scholarship Librarian that her work would have such a profound effect on my own work and engagement with the world.

One of the things I love about my job is I never know who is going to walk through my door looking for a partner in collaboration. Last year, Dr. Charlotte Schallié of German and Slavic Studies, asked if we could collaborate with her in putting together a small grant as part of the **Holocaust Studies** stream in the Humanities. The “**Ravensbrück Visual Storytelling Colloquium and Workshop**” grant would give UVic students an opportunity to live at the Ravensbrück Nazi Concentration Camp Memorial and Interpretation site and work with fellow students from around the world—including Germany, Israel, and the United States—to develop ideas around the teaching of the Holocaust to new generations through graphic novels and to learn how to create graphic novels themselves.

The Ravensbrück Nazi concentration camp was built in 1939 specifically to house women prisoners of the Nazi regime. It was a site of terror, of medical experiments, of forced labour, and it was the destination of the death marches from Auschwitz and Birkenau when the Soviets began to liberate death camps towards the end of the war. Today, it stands as a witness, a place of memory and resistance, and a place to honour those who were imprisoned there.

Charlotte warned us before we left that visiting such sites has a profound effect on one's self, but I didn't realize how deep and life-changing it would be, and what an honour and privilege it would be to learn about the lives of the women who once lived there. One aspect of camp life that I was ignorant of was how prisoners used art to retain their humanity in inhumane situations. Many women at Ravensbrück risked their lives to smuggle paper, pens, and pencils out of the homes of guards, so they could draw both creative work as well as images that documented their treatment at the camp. They formed communities of support and friendship with those they could trust, and even in the darkest hours of the night, found ways of expressing themselves through art.

For a week we lived at the memorial site and learned about the history of the place and the lives of the people who lived there. We attended workshops by graphic novelists to learn about the genre and create our own work based on our experiences there. A growing concern in the community is that as survivors pass away, how can newer generations keep alive their memories and stories; we were given the opportunity to learn about the graphic novel form to tell the stories that need to be remembered.



Matt Huculak and workshop attendees making collages during the "Making a Graphic Novel" workshop.

But in the era of the digital revolution, we face great challenges preserving the work created on computers. A piece of paper might be found decades—even centuries—after it has been created. But now we have trouble reading files from just a decade ago. Vint Cerf, a founder of the Internet, warns of the “**digital dark age.**” To read a file from 2008, for example, you need three things to read it: the file itself, the software to open that file, and a computer that can run the software to open the file.

My privilege as a librarian at the colloquium was to work with students and faculty to understand how to preserve objects in the digital age—including the graphic novel artwork they were producing.

Because I was made a part of the grant and was able to attend the colloquium in Germany, I gained first-hand knowledge of the needs of the Holocaust Studies community as they fight against time to preserve the stories and objects in our history.

The University of Victoria Libraries hosts an exhibition platform called “Omeka,” which allows students, faculty, and community members to use to preserve digital information and tell stories about that information. We used this platform at Ravensbrück to teach folks how to think about digital information for long-term preservation and accessibility, because some stories are too important to lose to time.

I still have nightmares about that camp. I’m told this is normal for those in the field, but I’m honored to have the company of a new community of friends and colleagues with whom I now share a renewed drive to petition for the dignity of people everywhere. The University of Victoria, the wider community, and Canada as a whole can be proud of our students and faculty, who are working tirelessly to tell the stories of those who came before us so that we can be a better community together, today. It is an honour to be in a profession that seeks to make that work available for the future.



**University
of Victoria**

Libraries

This monthly newsletter is sent to you by the UVic Libraries Communications Office: libcomm@uvic.ca



uvic.ca/library