

Spring 2009

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Osher Library Associates

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NORUMBEGA NEWS

No. 12

NEWSLETTER OF THE OSHER LIBRARY ASSOCIATES

Spring 2009

OML Expansion Nears Completion!

Passage of a higher education construction bond, followed by final approvals from the Portland Planning Board and University of Maine System Board of Trustees, cleared the way for expansion of the Osher Map Library and Smith Center for Cartographic Education (OML) in Portland. This expansion will provide scholars, University students, K-12 students, and the public with space in which to view, study, and learn from the thousands of cartographic treasures in the collections.

The Osher Map Library expansion, along with renovations to the first floor of the Glickman Family Library so that the main entrance faces campus, comprise the final phase of University Com-

mons. The Commons also includes the new Wishcamper Center, which houses the USM Muskie School and the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, and a public promenade along Bedford Street. Completion of University Commons will symbolically announce that USM has an important role to play in the lives of our students and communities, and will help ensure that the University has the physical capacity to better serve those students and the public.

Funding for University Commons, including land acquisition and construction, has been made possible by private donations, a Kresge Foundation Challenge Grant, and a higher education bond.

Save the Date

Friday, April 10, 2009
4 p.m.

Guest Lecture in the Portland
Museum of Art Auditorium

*The Coldest Crucible:
Arctic Exploration in
American Culture*

March 14 to June 21, 2009

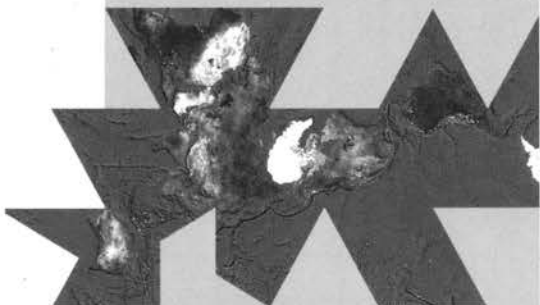
On April 10 Michael Robinson, assistant professor of history at the University of Hartford, will give a presentation in conjunction with an exhibition he guest curated for OML and PMA. Through maps, books, prints, and other graphics from OML's collections, he draws a cultural portrait of four centuries of polar exploration with an emphasis on the "Arctic Fever" that took hold in the late 1800s.

For more information visit
www.portlandmuseum.org



A rendition by Koetter Kim & Associates (KKA) of the expanded Osher Map Library at the corner of Forest Avenue and Bedford Street, Portland. Dr. Harold Osher, who with his wife, Peggy, are the library benefactors, wrote, "After a decade of dreaming, years of planning and fund raising, and months of architectural designing and negotiating with institutional and regulatory authorities construction of a major expansion of the Osher Map Library, quadrupling our space, begins. The three-story addition will be connected at the first floor level to the existing OML space and will be a highly visible part of a new gateway to the USM Portland campus and University Commons."

For exterior view of the map library depicting etched panels of Buckminster Fuller's world map, visit USM's Web cam at <http://osher-map.usm.maine.edu>



For updates of OML's interior spaces, visit www.usm.maine.edu/maps.

Work will be completed on the Wishcamper Center in the summer of 2008. The Library phase will be completed in late winter of 2009.

The Osher Map Library (OML) and Smith Center for Cartographic Education represents a significant and unparalleled treasure for Maine and New England. In the 12 years since the Map Library opened, it has grown into a nationally recognized entity, featuring outstanding collections, exhibits, lecture series, and community outreach.

The Map Library has outgrown its physical space. The Library has had to turn away offers of treasured collections simply because it does not have the room to accommodate them. The three-story expansion that will bring the much-needed Cohen Education Center to the Library; a new, climate-controlled vault; a digital imaging/reproduction center; an expanded reference area; an expanded workroom; and a new office suite.

During the construction period, OML staff can be reached at 780-4850 or oml@usm.maine.edu. And please don't forget that during construction, OML activities will continue, among them the teaching program (in borrowed space); traveling facsimile exhibitions; and public lectures.

2008 Report of the Outgoing President: A Year in Review

In some ways this has been a quiet year for the Osher Map Library, as our doors have been closed to the public. But behind the scenes there has been a flurry of activity, all of which bode well for the University of Southern Maine, the people of Maine, and those connected to the Osher Collection via the Internet.

In a unique business relationship with Historic Map Works, a Maine-based company, the majority of the Osher Collection's flat maps have been scanned and are available digitally. This is an amazing achievement, and opens many doors to the collection on a global scale. The Osher Map Collection is available for viewing at historicmapworks.com, and the University of Southern Maine is developing a new Web site which will capitalize on this accessibility from an educational perspective.

In the coming year, we also look forward to a grand reopening of the collection that will serve the needs of the library, the state and nation, with a world-class facility on par with a world-class map collection.

My sincere thanks go out to the Associates and all the staff at USM who have worked so hard to make this happen. Harold and Peggy Osher's vision and generosity to share the collection, from the city of Portland, to the citizens of Maine, and now to extend that reach to every nation on Earth, as the Osher Map Library gains both a larger physical presence as well as a virtual presence using the Internet, is coming to realization.

I also want to mention the wonderful map façade that is prominent on the

exterior of the building. That is a unique map projection developed by Buckminster Fuller, which he called the Dymaxion.

It shows the physical connections of the continents in a way that most other maps do not. Given our modern continental connectivity specific to the maps held in these walls, via the Internet, I think this projection is a most appropriate choice. It is the largest of its type, etched on aluminum and glass.

Phenomenal achievements like these do not happen without the hard work and dedication of the Osher Library Associates Board, the membership, and the many donors who have supported the collection and the organization over the years. We are a volunteer organization, and I must thank everyone who has devoted time and energy to this cause; past, present and future—without you this could have never happened.

We welcome a new Board member this year; Joe Wood; and a sincere thanks to outgoing Board member Francis Minden for her service. I want to thank Bob Caswell for his service as vice president, and welcome the incoming president and vice-president of the Osher Library Associates. Harry Pringle will, once again, assume leadership of the Associates, and James Buchanan will be vice president.

And lastly, there is no way to express my gratitude to Yolanda Theunissen and Mathew Edney. They have shepherded the collection through rough waters and calm; they have worked tirelessly to promote and share the collection with the world, and their efforts, and they themselves, are the cornerstone of the Osher Map Library. Thank you.

- Mike Hermann



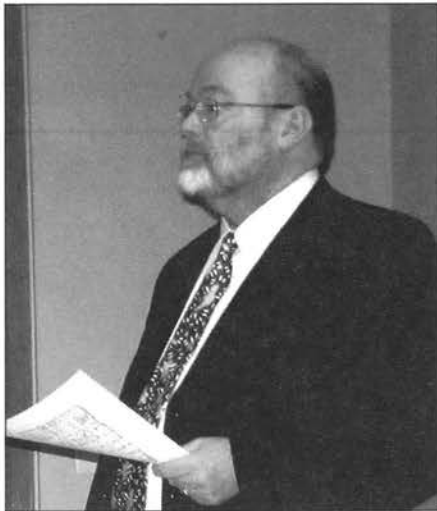
In December 2008, Mike Hermann moved to Athens, Ohio, and set up shop as Purple Lizard Maps (www.purplelizard.com). During the coming year he will continue his work on the *Historical Atlas of Maine* from afar. On January 15, the *Bangor Daily News* printed a lengthy review of a historical map he developed with Margaret Pearce, assistant professor of geography at Ohio University, titled, *They Would Not Take Me There: People, Places and Stories from Champlain's Travels in Canada, 1603-1616*. For more information see www.bangordailynews.com/detail/97169.html

Matthew Edney

Matthew Edney, the founding faculty scholar in USM's Osher Map Library (OML), has gone full circle.

Matthew first joined USM in 1995 as the OML faculty scholar and associate professor of Geography and American and New England Studies. He was on leave from 2005 through most of 2007, teaching at the University of Michigan and directing the award-winning History of Cartography Project at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is now back at USM as Osher Professor in the History of Cartography but also will continue his duties as director of the History of Cartography Project, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

In his role as Osher Professor, he will serve as the Map Library's faculty scholar, and teach in the Departments of Geography and American and New England Studies.



Matthew Edney

In his capacity with the History of Cartography project, he served as co-editor of the 2,180-page *Cartography in the European Enlightenment, Volume Four*, which is part of the project's award-winning series. Matthew's mentors, the late cartographic scholars J.B. Harley and David Woodward, founded the series.

The History of Cartography series has been cited for redefining the way maps are studied and understood by scholars in a number of disciplines. Founding editors Harley and Woodward envisioned the project as an ambitious six-volume reference work that would examine the social

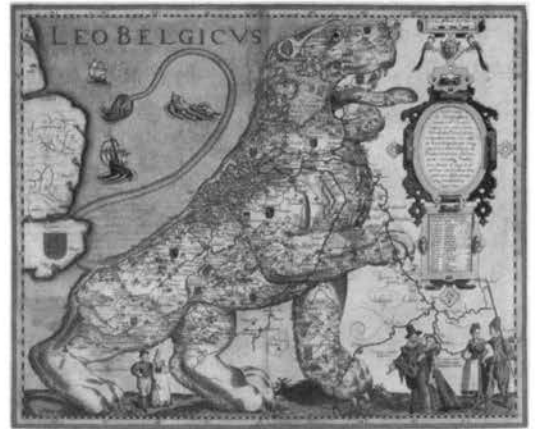
production and consumption of maps across cultures, from prehistoric origins to the present.

Matthew also serves as president and chairman of the American Friends of the J. B. Harley Research Fellowships, Inc.; a trustee of the J. B. Harley Research Fellowships; and a director of Imago Mundi, Ltd., publisher of the respected international journal of cartography and coordinating body of the international conference on the history of cartography. The Harley Research Fellowships, which are reserved for scholars pursuing advanced cartographic research, are named for the late J.B. Harley.

Matthew was born and raised in southwest London, England. He came to the U.S. in the fall of 1983 and has lived here ever since. He taught at SUNY-Binghamton from 1990 to 1995 before joining USM. His interest in cartography dates back to the age of four, when he would spend hours tracing maps.

Maps As Art, And More

This is a map that is frequently cited as a prime example of cartographic art. It was created in Amsterdam during the Dutch Golden Age, when artists and mapmakers in the Netherlands were world leaders in their respective creative activities. The image of the Low Countries in the form of a lion is indeed one of the most decorative in the history of cartography. It was originally created by Michael Aitzinger in 1583 to illustrate his book on the history and topography of the Low Countries. The title "Leo Belgicus" (Lion of Belgium) uses the name Belgium to designate the Seventeen United Provinces of the Netherlands, an area that now encompasses Holland and Luxembourg as well as Belgium. The lion had long been a heraldic symbol of strength, bravery, and patriotism, and appeared on the coats-of-arms of most of the provinces of the Netherlands. The attractive design captured the imagination of historians, artists, and mapmakers and was widely copied, sometimes with alterations in the posture and orientation of the lion. It eventually achieved the status of a unifying patriotic emblem during the struggle for independence from the Spanish empire.



Although "Leo Belgicus" maps are relatively rare, the Osher Map Library holds five different examples. The version shown here was created in 1617 by Pieter van den Keere (Petrus Kaerius), one of the most accomplished Dutch map engravers of the early seventeenth century. The powerful yet graceful leonine image is superimposed on a detailed map of the Low Countries containing miniature provincial coats-of-arms (many bearing the image of a lion). The North Sea is embellished with two ships and a sea monster. Along the bottom are three couples displaying typical apparel of the common people of Friesland and Belgium, and adolescents of northern Holland.

While this map clearly merits recognition as a work of art, it represents "art with a purpose," transmitting geographic and cultural information and playing a significant role in the history of a nation.

Dr. Harold Osher, the author of this story, and his wife Peggy are major benefactors of the Osher Map Library.

Save the Dates Friday and Saturday October 16-17, 2009

Plans are underway for a gala celebration on Friday evening. On Saturday, the Osher Map Library will host a series of public lectures on a variety of topics relating to the history of mapping. A new exhibition, *Treasures Four*, showcasing recent gifts and acquisitions will be on view in the new gallery. Updates to follow.

OML receives NEH Preservation and Access Grant

In July 2008, OML received a \$466,009 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to purchase custom designed compact storage systems and related equipment for its new three-story addition. This is the largest NEH grant USM has received to date. OML was one of 9 cultural institutions selected nationwide from among 89 applicants to receive an NEH Preservation and Access Grants for Stabilizing Humanities Collections.

To safely house its diverse collections in its new 7,750 square-foot vault, OML needs a storage system that is suitable for books and sheet maps as well as artifacts such as globes and scientific instruments and cartographic ephemera such as puzzles and games. Since the map library opened in 1994, its collections have grown to 100,000 rare and semi-rare maps, atlases, and books, dating from 1475 to 1950, along with a reference collection of over 4,000 volumes. Further growth is anticipated in the near future since OML has accepted several atlas, map, and travel collections. The delivery of these gifts has been deferred until the new facility is completed later this spring.

The NEH grant funds a variety of storage systems. Museum quality cases

with UV glass will protect the globes and artifacts from light damage and dust buildup. Special storage systems will support wall maps and framed objects. Library shelving for bound materials is customized to safely accommodate four different book dimensions. Sheet maps will also be segregated by size to maximize flat file storage.

The first phase was completed last summer when the tracks for the compact shelving were installed in the cement floors. In January some 80,000 pounds of steel shelving and flat file cases were delivered and erected in the new vault. The final phase of moving back the materials from offsite storage will begin after the HVAC systems tests are completed. We hope all the collections will reside under one roof when classes resume in Fall 2009.

Thanks to the NEH grant and other generous donors, OML's collections will be housed in a facility that meets environmental and security standards for the 21st century. This in turn will allow OML to serve its various constituencies for decades to come according to the practices recommended for archives and special collections. We look forward to celebrating OML's reopening on October 16-17, 2009. For additional photos of the new storage systems and a look at the various stages of the building construction visit the OML Web site at www.maine.edu/maps.



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President: Harry R. Pringle
Vice President: James A. Buchanan
Secretary: Frances R. Frost
Treasurer: Stacy Stevens

Osher Library Associates
c/o Osher Map Library
P.O. Box 9301
Portland, ME 04104-9301

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the OML at (207) 780-4850 or
oml@usm.maine.edu.

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Osher Library Associates

Osher Map Library and the
Smith Center for Cartographic Education
University of Southern Maine
314 Forest Avenue
P.O. Box 9301
Portland, ME 04104-9301

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