

The Flyleaf

Friends of Fondren Library Vol. 41, No. 4

Summer 1991



Books of summer



A LETTER TO THE FRIENDS

Dear Friends:

We hope you're enjoying your summer, and looking forward to another year of activities for the Friends of Fondren Library.

Plans for new programs and next year's gala are underway. Save the evening of April 4, 1992 for the Fondren Saturday Night gala, which promises to be a very special event indeed.

The board of directors is taking a break for the summer, and will resume monthly meetings in September.

Officers of the Friends of Fondren Library for 1991-92 are as follows:

Mrs. Elaine Illig Davis, president; Ronald W. Blake, vice president, membership; Charles D. Maynard, Jr., vice president, programs; Mrs. John R. Hurd and

Mrs. William H. Merriman, vice presidents, special event; Paul T. Hlavinka, secretary; J. Richard Luna, treasurer; and David S. Elder, immediate past president.

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Directors, 1994 - Glenn Blake; Dr. Nell Cline; Mrs. Jan Domenico; Mrs. Frank B. Ryan; Frank C. Shelden.

Ex-officio officers are: Beth J. Shapiro, University

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Managing Editor, Betty Charles. Editor, Judy Elswick. Computer consultant, Tim Freeland. Communications Advisory Committee: Ferne Hyman, Jan Norris, Bud Rorschach, Joan Ryan, Judy Elswick. Ex-officio members: Nancy Boothe, Betty Charles, Beth Shapiro.

Cover:

Whatever one's summer interests - gardening, birdwatching, travel - a host of good books stand ready to provide a fund of information relating to those interests. Or, alternatively, to shield one's face while drowsing in the sun.

PHOTO BY TOMMY C. LAVERGNE

RICE UNIVERSITY FONDREN LIBRARY

Founded under the charter of the university dated May 18, 1891, the library was established in 1913. Its present facility was dedicated November 4, 1949, and rededicated in 1969 after a substantial addition, both made possible by gifts of Ella F. Fondren, her children, and the Fondren Foundation and Trust as a tribute to Walter William Fondren. The library recorded its half-millionth volume in 1965; its one millionth volume was celebrated April 22, 1979.

THE FRIENDS OF FONDREN LIBRARY

The Friends of Fondren Library was founded in 1950 as an association of library supporters interested in increasing and making better known the resources of Fondren Library at Rice University. The Friends, through members' contributions and sponsorship of a memorial and honor gift program, secure gifts and bequests and provide funds for the purchase of rare books, manuscripts, and other materials that could not otherwise be acquired by the library.

THE FLYLEAF

Founded October 1950 and published quarterly by the Friends of Fondren Library, Rice University, P.O. Box 1892, Houston, Texas 77251, as a record of Fondren Library's and Friends' activities, and of the generosity of the library's supporters.



Librarian; Neal F. Lane, Provost; Betty D. Charles, Executive Director.

The year-end report, recently presented by outgoing President David Elder, shows the organization's membership has increased to 1,287, while the annual gala netted \$43,000, the largest amount in its history.

In continued funding of special areas, The Friends of Fondren Library provided \$4,000 for the contemporary literature shelf, \$3,000 for audiovisual purchases, and \$1,700 for collection additions honoring speakers and event honorees.

Speakers and their topics for 1990-91 were Stephen Fox, "The Architecture of Rice University and Its Influence"; J. Dennis Huston, "Reading Drama with

Help from Film," and Brent Tarver, "New Pioneers in the Field of Medical Research."

The Friends' Homecoming Honoree was Kay Dobelman, while the Fondren Saturday Night event honored Dick and Mary Ellen Wilson.

Both the annual Schubertiad, co-sponsored with the Shepherd Society, and the Student Art Show, co-sponsored with the Alumni Association, were very successful.

We'd like to thank all the members of the Friends of Fondren Library for your support and participation as we look forward to another wonderful year.

Sincerely yours,
Mrs. William H. Merriman III
Secretary

'Natural soul of the urban landscape'

Bird-watching is a time-honored summer activity, "said to be exceeded in popularity in this country only by gardening," writes Rice alum B.C. Robison in his new book, *Birds of Houston*, published by Rice University Press.

A member of the Friends of Fondren Library, Robison formerly wrote the "Texas Naturalist" column for the Houston Post.

"... (S)o many people have asked me about the birds they routinely observe in town that I came to realize there was no guidebook primarily for the beginning birder who wants to learn to identify birds in Houston. Some of us need simple information like the name of the big black bird with the long tail that struts around the grocery store parking lot...."

A sizable collection of field guides and educational volumes on birds is found in the library. In addition to recent works, the collection includes early Audubon series and books by naturalist Edmund Selous (one with notes in the margin by Julian Huxley).

"Birdwatching does not have to be a big production... let birds happen to you," Robison says. "(T)hey are the natural soul of the urban landscape. They enhance the city and the lives of



The cattle egret is often found in pastures with grazing cattle.

those who watch them. Observing birds, however, can arouse mixed feelings. To me an unidentified bird is an annoyance. If I see a bird, I want to know what it is."

Don't repeat this, but...

The issue of gossip is much-debated this summer, often centering on the recent unauthorized biography of former First Lady Nancy Reagan.

A long line of presidents' wives have felt the heavy blow of the pen; Mary Todd Lincoln was perhaps among those hardest hit, while Eleanor Roosevelt and Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis captured the imagination of the public, yet simultaneously piqued its curiosity.

Even non-celebrities sometimes find themselves scrutinized far beyond the level of comfort – and the never-ending debate on gossip continues.

One of these debates – albeit tongue-in-cheek – is recorded in *The Gossip Society*, an original handwritten manuscript purportedly produced by the Sisterhood of the Gossip Society of Gloucester, England in 1803-04. It is found in the Woodson Research Center of Fondren Library.

The work is alleged to be a product of its members' meetings and correspondence. "More likely," notes a Woodson archivist, "it is the work of one

person satirizing the situation of elderly spinsters who had no meaningful occupation and whom society considered to be gossips in nineteenth-century England."

The manuscript's six alleged "old maid" members soon agreed that tales of scandal had diminished their Christian charity, while dissertations on politics failed to promote the public good, "for, it was certain, the changes we had proposed in the administration had not taken place, nor had the minister adopted any one of our new modes of taxation."

"As to our gossip...we were conceited enough to fancy, that if it were somewhat defined and improved...some of our sage descriptions might prove useful to the rising generation...."

"(W)e dare to flatter ourselves that, as these precepts will never be delivered in an authoritative and dogmatical tone, but in the true spirit of friendship and Christian charity....our gossiping disposition will rather be encouraged than repressed."



PHOTO BY BETTY CHARLES

Art exhibit

The Preview of Student Art Exhibition was sponsored in April by the Friends of Fondren Library and the Arts Committee of the Association of Alumni. Recipient of the Pittman Prize was senior Adrienne Patton, an art and art history major.

Authors sought

Rice-affiliated authors will be honored Tuesday, January 14, 1992, at a program hosted by the Friends of Fondren Library.

Plans are underway for the event, which honors members of the Rice alumni, faculty and staff who have authored books published in 1991.

We are seeking to complete this list of Rice authors. If you are one, or know of one, please notify the Friends' staff by calling 285-5157 or by mailing the information to Friends of Fondren Library, Rice University, P.O. Box 1892, Houston, Texas 77251.

Please include the author's name, address and phone number; book title; publisher's name and location, and date of publication. Also please note the author's affiliation with Rice (faculty, staff, alumni, Friends' member) and name of co-author, where applicable.

FONDREN LIBRARY

Building Hours – 1991

(May 1 - August 25, 1991)

Building hours

Monday-Friday7:45 A.M.-8:00 P.M.
 Saturday10:00 A.M.-6:00 P.M.
 Sunday.....Closed

Business Information Center (BIC)

Monday-Friday8:30 A.M.-5:00 P.M.
 Saturday & Sunday.....Closed

Reference Desk,

Woodson Research Center,

Computer Reference Area (CRA),

Center for Scholarship & Information (CSI)

Monday-Friday9:00 A.M.-5:00 P.M.
 Saturday-SundayClosed

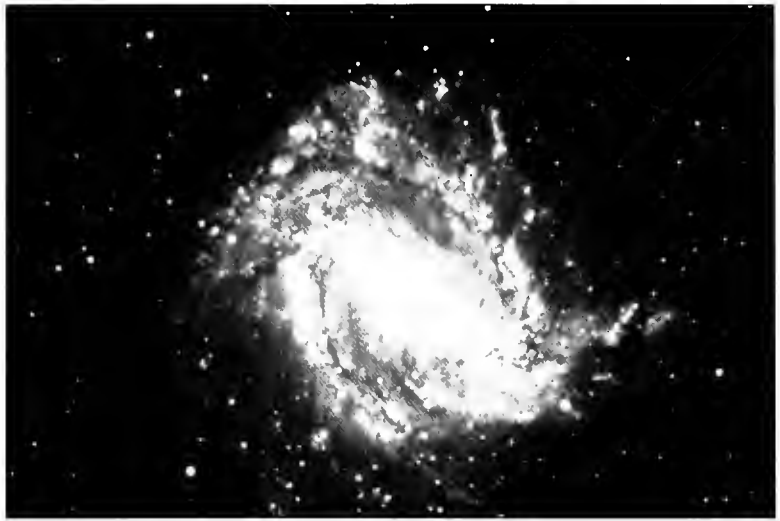
Brown Library

Monday-Friday9:00 A.M.-5:00 P.M.
 Saturday1:00 P.M.-5:00 P.M.
 SundayClosed

All libraries will be closed July 4-7

Messier 83

This spiral galaxy is considered one of the most "dynamic-looking" galaxies; typically, most large galaxies appear to be spiral-shaped, and are tens of thousands of light years in size. Messier 31 (the Great Galaxy in Andromeda) is the nearest giant galaxy similar to the Milky Way, composed of some 100 billion stars. It may be viewed with binoculars in late summer toward the east, in the Andromeda constellation.



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A planet with a view

As an academic research library, Fondren Library's large astronomy collection is largely technical and, in some measure, historical. It supports faculty and students in a field which has received increased public attention as data from space becomes more familiar through the media.

Images from Earth also are spectacular, with summer and early fall offering excellent viewing in the Houston area, according to Reginald Dufour, Rice professor of astronomy. Special viewing areas are offered by groups such as the Houston Astronomical Society, which holds meetings of special interest groups at Rice. Each clear Saturday night, George Observatory at Brazos Bend State Park is open to the public for viewing objects through a large telescope.

Some of the objects which may be viewed with amateur equipment are shown here. (These long-

exposure photos, however, were taken by Dufour through observatory telescopes; many of his photographs have been published, including one which graces the cover of Timothy Ferris' *Galaxies*.)

For the amateur astronomer or those simply interested in reading about the field, a variety of books are available in bookstores. Some which also are found in the Fondren Library collections include: *Norton's 2000: Star Atlas and Reference Handbook*, by Arthur P. Norton; *The Unfolding Universe: A Stellar Journey*, by Lloyd Motz and Jefferson Hane Weaver; *Realm of the Universe*, by George O. Abell, David Morrison and Sidney C. Wolff; *Astronomy, the Cosmic Journey*, by William K. Hartmann; *Universe*, by William J. Kaufmann III, and *Astronomy: Fundamentals & Frontiers*, by Robert Jastrow and Malcolm H. Thompson.

Summer Milky Way

This photo of the Milky Way, in the constellations of Sagittarius and Scorpio, shows the direction toward the center of the galaxy we live in. Dark regions are not "holes" in the Milky Way, but rather giant dust clouds that obscure stars from view. Many clusters of stars represent relatively recently-formed groups of stars. If you could travel outside our galaxy and look back, the Milky Way would appear as a spiral shape.



PHOTO BY R. J. DUFOUR

Gardening as an art

Just as art has its “schools” of thought – impressionism, cubism, and so forth – landscaping also has its masters.

Dating back to the 1700s, books in Fondren Library document the trends and history of landscape and garden efforts, both amateur and professional.

In an 1840 volume, landscaping master Humphrey Repton noted landscape gardening has a variety of applications which fall within certain general rules, “to which this art is as much subject as Architecture, Music, or any other of the polite Arts.”

For less formal gardeners, various historic volumes deal with fruit and kitchen gardens, as well as

with ornamental efforts. Author George W. Cable offered *The Amateur Garden* in 1914.

“(T)he garden should never be more architectural and artificial than the house of which it is the setting, and this is why the garden should grow less and less architectural and artificial as it draws away from the house....The house is a part of the garden. It is the garden’s brow and eyes. In gardening, almost the only thing which costs unduly is for us to try to give our house some other house’s garden.”

A long list of modern garden books is found in the library, ranging from regional “how-to” volumes to books on exotic gardens throughout the world.

Wildflowers are beautiful and well-suited for gardens in this region, according to John L. Tveten. The small, lavender Powderpuff flowers bloom from April through November. Tveten’s upcoming wildflower book will be published by Rice University Press.



THE FRIENDS OF FONDREN LIBRARY



March 1, 1991 –
May 31, 1991

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The Friends of Fondren Library is most grateful to these new Friends for their interest and to the Friends of longer standing for their support and for renewing their commitments.

GIFTS TO FONDREN LIBRARY 

March 1 - May 31, 1991

The Friends sponsors a gifts and memorials program for Fondren Library that provides its members and the community at large with a way to remember or honor friends and relatives. It also provides Fondren the means to acquire books and collections beyond the reach of its regular budget. All gifts to Fondren through the Friends' gift program complement the library's university subsidy.

Funds donated through the Friends are acknowledged by the library to the donor and to whomever the donor indicates. Gifts can be designated in honor or memory of someone or on the occasion of some signal event such as birthdays, graduation, or promotion. Bookplates are placed in vol-

umes before they become part of the library's permanent collection.

For more information about the Friends' gift program, you may call Gifts and Memorials or the Friends' office (285-5157). Gifts may be sent to Friends of Fondren, Rice University, P.O. Box 1892, Houston, Texas 77251; they qualify as charitable donations.

The Friends and Fondren Library gratefully acknowledge the following gifts, donations to the Friends' fund, and donations of periodicals and other materials to Fondren. All gifts enhance the quality of the library's collections and enable Fondren Library to serve more fully an ever-expanding university and Houston community.

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W. BRENT TARVER, on the occasion of his lecture at its annual meeting, by the Friends of Fondren Library

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