

HUNTER'S CLARION

The newsletter of Hunter Library at Western Carolina University

Research offers insight into US reading trends

"To Read or Not to Read: A Question of National Consequence," produced by the Office of Research and Analysis of the National Endowment for the Arts, presents some of the most reliable, currently available statistics on American reading rates, literacy, and reading characteristics. Here are some findings of the report:

- Employers now rank reading and writing as top deficiencies in new hires (reading and writing skills were ranked by 63 percent of employers as "very important"—significantly above mathematical and foreign language skills).
- Good readers generally have more financially rewarding jobs.
- Less advanced readers report fewer opportunities for career growth.
- Good readers are three times more likely than nonreaders to visit museums, attend plays or concerts, and create artworks of their own.
- Poor readers are much less likely to exercise, play sports, or attend sporting events.
- 18-34 year olds, who have the lowest reading rates of any age group, also show sharp declines in civic participation.
- Good readers volunteer more and do more charity work.
- Deficient readers are far more likely than skilled readers to be high school dropouts.
- Deficient readers are far more likely than skilled readers to be out of the workforce.
- Poor reading skills are endemic in the United States prison population.



BY DANA SALLY | DEAN OF LIBRARY SERVICES | DSALLY@WCU.EDU

As we move further into the digital age, and as we increasingly engage and interact with intellectual content through digital technologies, a national discussion is taking shape around the collective effects of such behaviors on human intellectual development and capacity. To give you some notion of the tone and content of these discussions, two recent contributions to the debate—one by Nicholas Carr in *The Atlantic* and one by Mark Bauerlein in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*—are respectively entitled "Is Google Making Us Stupid? What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains," and "Online Literacy Is a Lesser Kind."

Though I do intend to say more in my next contribution to this newsletter about the relative merits and contributions to literacy of printed and digital text, I don't intend to weigh in on either side of the current debate in what follows. For the present, I want simply to call attention to a rather disturbing national trend that is related to this growing dialog about reading and literacy and their implications for us as individuals and as a society.

According to the November 2007 research report released by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), Americans are spending much less time reading than ever before. As a result, the report points out, reading comprehension skills are eroding

at alarming rates. It's not just that we are not reading as much as in the past, but we are also not reading as well. What is more, the report draws very compelling statistical correlations between these declines in reading and reading comprehension and serious negative consequences for our individual and collective civic, social, cultural, and economic lives.

Perhaps what is even more compelling for those of us in higher education is that the NEA report, "To Read or Not to Read: A Question of National Consequence," sheds interesting light on reading trends and the consequences of these trends for young adult readers. For example, the study shows that nearly half of young adults ages 18-24 read no books for pleasure; that reading is declining as an activity for teenagers 13-17 years old; that the percentage of college graduates who read literature has significantly declined over the past 20 years; and that teens and young adults spend even less time reading these days than people in other age groups, whose reading and reading levels are also declining.

The truly troubling aspect of these declines in reading is that they are closely correlated to the following disturbing consequences:

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JOSEFINA NIGGLI

Twenty-five years after her death, rediscovery of her life and works

BY GEORGE FRIZZELL | HUNTER LIBRARY, SPECIAL COLLECTIONS | FRIZZELLG@WCU.EDU

Josefina Niggli was a WCU faculty member who devoted much of her life to stage, screen, and students. Now, twenty-five years after her death, she is herself in the spotlight. A renaissance of interest is taking place among scholars and researchers in her literary works and her life.

Three books about Niggli have been published in the past year:

- Coonrod Martinez, *Josefina Niggli, Mexican American Writer: A Critical Biography* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2007)
- *Josefina Niggli, Mexican Village and Other Works* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2008)
- William Orchard and Yolanda Padilla, *The Plays of Josefina Niggli: Recovered Landmarks of Latino Literature* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 2007)

The renewed attention to the life and works of “Miss Niggli,” as she was known to her students, is a summation of talent, ability, and creativity. The introduction to the book published by the University of Wisconsin Press describes her as “one of the most successful Mexican American writers of the early twentieth century.”

Niggli was born in Monterrey, Mexico, in 1910. Her parents were of European descent with Texan connections. She was raised in Texas in the wake of the Mexican Revolution, but would later draw upon her Mexican heritage for inspiration in her novels, theatrical plays, and television scripts.



Mexican Village, published in 1945, was adapted into the motion picture *Sombrero* featuring Ricardo Montalban, Cid Charese, and Yvonne De Carlo, in 1953.

While renowned for her writing and her Hollywood career in film and television, Niggli eventually sought the teaching profession. In 1956 she was appointed to the faculty of WCU (then known as Western Carolina Teachers College) as a teacher of drama, playwriting, and acting. She retired in 1975 and remained in Cullowhee, living quietly in her home near campus until her death in 1983.

Steve Carlisle, associate dean of the Honors College and a WCU graduate, was among her protégés. Carlisle was studying history in the late 1960s, only a few classes shy of graduating, when he met Niggli while visiting a friend in the theatre department. “I changed my major to theatre that day,” he said.

Carlisle graduated two years later and went on to a successful show business career where Niggli’s teachings served him well in Los Angeles and New York. “She trained us in a style that was appreciated and understood and opened up a world of theatre that is usually taught only to students who attend the great conservatories,” he said. “She was the greatest teacher I ever had, and it’s wonderful to see her finally getting her due.”

The Special Collections unit of Hunter Library houses the Niggli collection of manuscripts, which was used in the production of the new books honoring and recognizing her literary genius.



Media on the move

The media collection of more than 13,000 CDs, DVDs, and videos is attracting a growing audience of users in its new location on the first floor of the library.

“The move gave the collection higher visibility and made it easier for users to find what they want,” said Dan Wendel, library assistant.

The media collection contains more than 5,000 audio CDs, including classical, popular/contemporary, jazz, Appalachian, and world music, books on tape, and language instruction in Cherokee, Greek, Spanish, and Russian. More than 8,000 DVDs and other videos in the collection range from documentaries and popular and foreign films to a variety of television shows.

For many years, the collection shared space on the first-floor mezzanine with the Curriculum Materials Center, which houses instructional materials, professional resources for teachers, and books for children and young adults. The student computer lab, formerly in the space now occupied by the media collection, has moved to the ground floor.



Mountain Heritage Center's books are in online catalog

Looking for online information about the books in the WCU Mountain Heritage Center collection?

You can now find records for all 426 titles in Hunter's online catalog at www.wcu.edu/404.asp, thanks to a joint project between the library's Cataloging Unit and the Mountain Heritage Center.

The cataloging of the books follows another successful collaboration between Hunter and the Highlands Biological Station that made information about the station's collections more accessible to the university community through the online catalog.

"Getting our collection cataloged was a great accomplishment for us," said Peter Koch, education associate at the Mountain Heritage Center. "The library's Cataloging Unit did the work. They whisked the books over to Hunter and returned them to us with all the information about the collection now easily available online."

"Some of these books are related to southern Appalachian museum science and artifacts, such as quilts, furniture, and textiles, and are useful to museums in our region as well as our own university community," he said. "Museums will be able to look at the Mountain Heritage Center as a resource, and the online record is a good way to help them do that."

Works on history, biography, arts and crafts, ecology, Native American peoples, and humor of the region all are part of the collection. Examples of books that can be accessed through the online catalog for the first time include *Songs and Tunes of the Wilderness Road: Arrangements for Appalachian Dulcimer* by Ralph Lee Smith with Madeline MacNeil; *The Encyclopedia of Traditional Appalachian Square Dancing* by Bill Nichols and Garland Steele; and



Carolina Metalworkers: Coppersmiths, Pewterers, Tinsmiths of North Carolina and South Carolina by Quincy Scarborough.

In addition to books specifically on Appalachian topics, the Mountain Heritage Center also has a strong collection of titles that may help to further explain the history and culture of the region. For example, *Home Building and Woodworking in Colonial America* by C. Keith Wilbur helps explain how early Appalachian settlers built their homes and furniture. *Researching Scots-Irish Ancestors: The Essential Genealogical Guide to Early Modern Ulster, 1600-1800* by William J. Roulston is about the history of the people who settled southern Appalachia. Records on these books were not previously available at WCU or through ABC Express.

Stranded on a snow day? Top picks

Looking for an exciting read to help get you through the winter? Here's a handful of top-shelf titles available in Hunter Library's Leisure Reading Collection.

Serena

By Ron Rash

The latest novel from Ron Rash, WCU's Par- ris Distinguished Professor of Appalachian Culture, tells the story of North Carolina lumber baron George Pemberton and his wife, Serena, whose pursuit of wealth and revenge mars the land and the lives of those around them.

Dewey: The Small-Town Library Cat Who Touched the World

By Vicki Myron (with Bret Witter)

More than just the story of the courageous kitten discovered in the book-return drop of the Spencer Public Library on a bitterly

cold winter morning in 1988, this book weaves together the stories of Dewey himself, the library that took him in, the town that embraced him, and the giant heart that made him famous.

Twilight

By Stephenie Meyer

Recently adapted into a major motion picture, this book follows seventeen-year-old Bella as she leaves Phoenix to live with her father in Forks, Washington. She soon meets an exquisitely handsome boy at school for whom she feels an overwhelming attraction, but comes to realize he is not wholly human.

More Information Than You Require

By John Hodgman

Finally, a how-to book we can use! The "I'm a PC" guy from the MAC commercials gives

us insight into all kinds of great stuff like "How to tell the future using a pig's spleen" and "How to be a famous minor television personality."

The Unfortunate Miss Fortunes

By Jennifer Crusie, Eileen Dreyer, and Anne Stuart

A collaboration by three well-known writers, this is an amusing tale for the fantasy fan who is looking for a love story.

Your Heart Belongs to Me

By Dean Koontz

This thriller has it all: romance, suspense, and heart surgery.

For more great books and reviews, check out the Leisure Reading Collection on the Web at www.wcu.edu/5674.asp.



Read On

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“All of the data suggest how powerfully reading transforms the lives of individuals—whatever their social circumstances. Regular reading not only boosts the likelihood of an individual’s academic and economic success—facts that are not especially surprising—but it also seems to awaken a person’s social and civic sense.”

—DANA GIOIA | CHAIRMAN,
NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

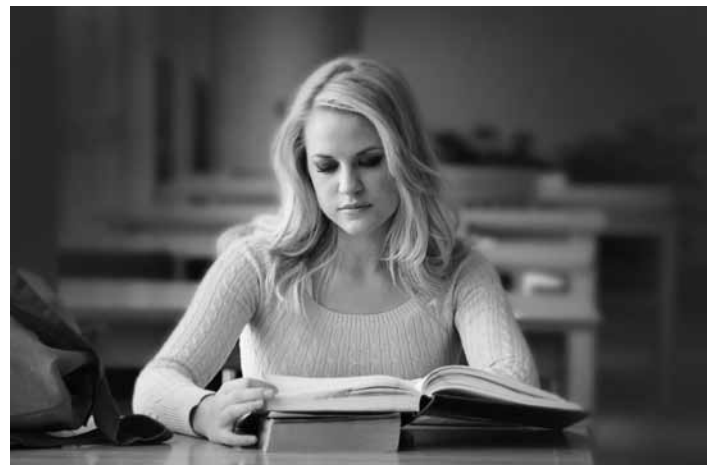
Reading scores for 17-year-olds show a significant downward trend since 1992, reflecting a widening gap between male and female high school seniors; and reading proficiency rates are stagnant and declining in adults of both genders, and at all educational levels, including college graduates.

Though these summary findings alone are cause for general concern, the most compelling finding of the report for those of us concerned with learning is that “reading ... correlates strongly with academic achievement.” This is the one finding that clearly should rivet our attention.

Specifically the report finds that voluntary readers are better readers and writers than nonreaders; that children and teenagers who read for pleasure on a daily or weekly basis score better on reading tests than infrequent readers, and that frequent readers also score better on writing tests than nonreaders or infrequent readers.

Of course, boosting scores on standardized tests is not the ultimate goal, measure, or end by which literacy levels should be judged valuable, beneficial, and important. Literacy levels have vital ties and implications to our national civic, social, and economic lives. The NEA report points out that advanced readers accrue personal, professional, and social advantages that deficient readers are at a much higher risk of missing out on.

For those of us in libraries who spend our professional lives in service to the discovery and delivery of intellectual content, the findings of the NEA report confirm and bolster long-held beliefs about the benefits of reading. They cement even more firmly the link between advanced literacy and improved intellectual development and all that comes in its train. This report and its findings are a clarion call for the age-old imperative of libraries: Read!



To read more

“Is Google Making Us Stupid? What the Internet is Doing to our Brains” by Nicholas Carr, published in *The Atlantic* is available at www.theatlantic.com/doc/200807/google.

“Online Literacy Is a Lesser Kind” by Mark Bauerlein, published in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, September 19, 2008, is available at <http://wncln.wncln.org/record=b1695114~S1>.

For the complete report of the National Endowment for the Arts’ “To Read or Not to Read: A Question of National Consequence,” go to www.nea.gov/research/ToRead.pdf.



Marsha Baker (right) works with Heidi Buchanan to bring students' peace lit displays to the library.

MAKING PEACE, NOT WAR, A LITERARY FOCUS

Hunter Scholar Award supports Marsha Lee Baker's research

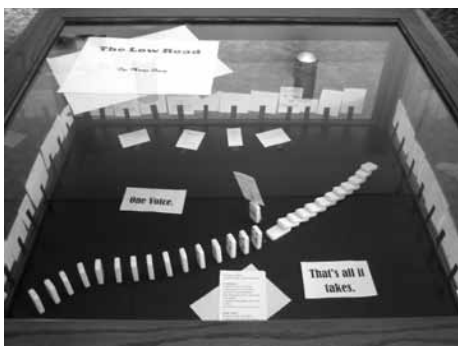
As Hunter Scholar for 2008–09, Marsha Lee Baker, associate professor of English, has become a familiar face at the library. She's often seen working quietly in her downstairs study carrel, talking to reference librarians, or helping her students design displays at the library entrance that were inspired by peace literature read in her class. When her yearlong research is complete, Baker will have made substantial progress toward one of her greatest goals—to produce a book-length anthology of American literature written in a nonviolent tradition.

"Hundreds of American literary collections exist that can be studied according to the nation's periods of war—before and during the Civil War, during and after World War I and World War II, or the Vietnam War—but no collection has been published for American literature in a nonviolent tradition," she said. "An anthology of these works would help us see what kind of literature is produced when we as Americans are in a nonviolent frame of mind."

At Hunter, Baker works closely with Heidi Buchanan, reference librarian, in using a sophisticated selection of search engines, databases, and library resources for her research. The work of graduate research assistant Sally Hansen also has been instrumental. Hansen created an online "Peace Lit" wiki where Baker collaborates with students in her "Journey in Literature" course.

"All of the resources provided to me, from the wonderful help I've received, to the freeing up of time and energy to focus on the project, have been great blessings," said Baker. "When it's finished, the anthology will make peace literature more accessible to everyone who wants to read it."

A publishing contract is expected in 2010 for the collection, to be entitled *Imagining Peace: American Literature in a Nonviolent Tradition*.



Friends weekend in Atlanta features art, music, archaeology

Art, symphony, and archaeological discoveries will highlight the annual Friends of Hunter Library Weekend in Atlanta this month. Participants will tour exhibits at the High Museum of Art and attend a performance of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra while in the city January 24. Among the highlights will be the rare opportunity to see an exhibition inspired by one of the greatest archaeological finds of the 20th century. Titled "The First Emperor: China's Terracotta Army," the collection, not often seen outside of China, includes life-size terracotta warriors and other works that provide insight into the legacy of China's First Emperor, Qin Shihuangdi, who reigned from 221-210 BC.

Bill Kirwan, retired university librarian, coordinates the Friends Weekend in Atlanta, now in its seventh year. For information about the Friends of the Library, call Library Administration at 227-7307.



Apply now for 2009-10 award

Sponsored by Hunter Library, Graduate School and Research, Educational Outreach, and the Office of the Provost, the Hunter Scholar Award was created in 1987 to encourage WCU faculty scholarship. It provides release time and other support for faculty research that is based on extensive use of library collections. Applications for the 2009–2010 award are due February 2. For information, go to: www.wcu.edu/6831.asp.

Welcome, new staff

BY RACHEL BLEICH

Anna Craft is the new metadata librarian in the Cataloging Unit. In this position, she is involved with the Craft Revival Project, compiling photographs and information into a database to help people find what they are searching for in the collection. She also works on electronic finding aids for Special Collections. Craft earned her undergraduate degree from Mary Washington College and her graduate degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She came to library work by accident, after accepting a position at the North Carolina State University library to work with special collections and digital projects. The experience convinced her to continue working in the same field. Hunter Library has "good people to work with and good people to learn from," she said.

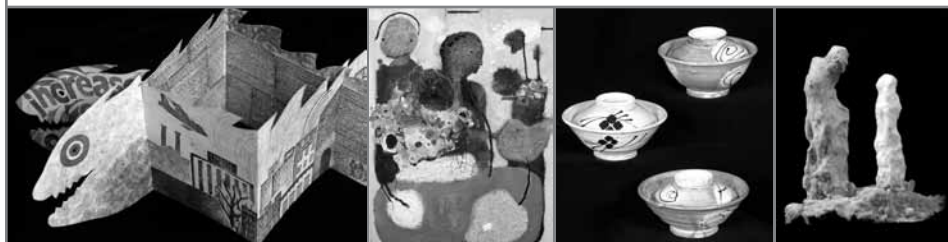
Tara Beth Weekes Gleason joined the staff on a full-time basis as the assistant evening circulation supervisor. No stranger to the library, Gleason was a student worker for four years. She came to WCU in 2004 from Walhalla, S.C., and immediately began working in Circulation as a student assistant. She continued this work until she graduated last May with a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology. She has enrolled in the WCU online Master of Science in Human Resources degree program, specializing in employee relations and training development. In her spare time, she enjoys hiking, camping, working on art projects, and spending time with her husband, Frederick Gleason, and seven-year-old stepson, Tanner.

Jason Brady is the new assistant in Special Collections. Many already know Brady from his time as a student worker and previous full-time positions in several library departments. He has been around WCU for almost his entire life, coming to campus when he was three years old with his mother, who was a student. When it was his turn to go to college, Brady also chose WCU, earning a degree in electronic engineering technology. He uses his organizational skills to sort and describe collections and help patrons. He enjoys Special Collections, where he is "exposed to a myriad of details and stories about our region's history on a daily basis."

2009 Faculty Scholarship Celebration Week FEBRUARY 16-20

Library seeks publications, creative works

Have you published a book or an article, created an artwork or audiovisual piece, or produced a scholarly work in collaboration with your students? Lend us your work for the annual Faculty Scholarship Celebration Week exhibit, sponsored by the Honors College, Office for Undergraduate Studies, Graduate School and Research, Coulter Faculty Center for Teaching Excellence, and Hunter Library. Please send or bring your items to Alessia Zanin-Yost in the library by January 15. If you have questions, contact Zanin-Yost at x3398 or azaniny@wcu.edu. Join us for a reception at the library as we honor the contributions of WCU faculty on February 18 at 4 p.m.



\$137,000 in grants awarded to Craft Revival

The Cherokee Preservation Foundation and the North Carolina State Library have awarded grants totaling \$137,000 to support the library's growing digital collection of early 20th century crafts. Known as the Craft Revival Project, the collection features images of craft objects, documents, and historic photographs, brought together online from an assortment of museums, craft schools, libraries, and historical societies throughout western North Carolina.

The new grants, \$90,000 from the State Library and Institute of Museum and Library Services and \$47,000 from the Cherokee Preservation Foundation, bring grant support for the project to a total of \$450,000 since it began in 2005. Project partners include John C. Campbell Folk School, Museum of the Cherokee Indian, Penland School of Crafts, Qualla Arts and Crafts Mutual, and the Southern Highland Craft Guild. University partners include the Mountain Heritage Center and Hunter's own Special Collections.

The Craft Revival website (<http://craftrevival.wcu.edu>) currently holds 3,000 images in its database and more than 100 pages of historical essays published on the site. "Western North Carolina's Craft Revival focused national attention on a regional movement that produced a wealth of objects, identified traditional skills, and revitalized handwork production," said Anna Fariello, project director. "This collaborative undertaking promises to become a significant resource for material culture studies."

Presentations, publications, and professional activities

Library Technical Assistant **Ruby Banerjee** taught a course, "Eclectic Indian Cooking," at the John C. Campbell Folk School last spring. The Folk School in Brasstown, North Carolina, is a partner in the Craft Revival Project housed at Hunter Library.

Information Literacy Coordinator **Heidi Buchanan**, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Studies **Carol Burton**, Reference Librarian **Ann Hallyburton**, and former Associate Library Director **Eloise Hitchcock** presented "Surviving SACS: The Librarian's Role in Reaccreditation" at the October 2007 North Carolina Library Association (NCLA) Annual Conference in Hickory.

Systems Librarian **Jill Ellern** joined a team from WCU in presenting on the topic of applying Ernest Boyer's model of scholarship to the tenure and promotion process. The presentation occurred in April 2008 at Guilford College in Greensboro, N.C.

Craft Revival Project Director **Anna Fariello** has been named museology specialist peer reviewer for the United States Fulbright Commission. Fariello is a former Fulbright Senior Scholar to Latin America. In October 2008, Fariello made a presentation on Craft Revival at a meeting of the Society of North Carolina Archivists held at Appalachian State University. Recently, she and graduate assistant **Jason Woolf** installed a display at the North Carolina Welcome Center on I-26, which features rivercane baskets and interpretive panels on rivercane, rivercane baskets, and the Cherokee Preservation Foundation basket project.

Reference Librarian **Ann Hallyburton**, recently retired Reference Librarian **Nancy Kolenbrander**, and former Health Center Wellness Coordinator **Carolyn Robertson** published an article in the January-February 2008 issue of *Journal of American College Health*. Hallyburton also co-published with **Karen Lunnan**, head of the Department of Physical Therapy, and **Linda Eargle**, academic coordinator of clinical education in the Department of Physical Therapy, an article in the September 2007 issue of *ADVANCE for Physical Therapists and PT Assistants*. An article by Hallyburton and WCU nursing co-authors **Bonnie Garner** and **Sharon Metcalfe** has been accepted for publication in a 2009 issue of *Nurse Edu-*

cation in Practice. Hallyburton, who recently gained senior member status in the Medical Library Association's Academy of Health Information Professionals, also has co-authored with **Barbara St. John** an article to be published in an upcoming edition of the *Journal of Nursing Education* as well as a short "Teaching Tips" piece for a 2009 issue of *Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing*.

Head of Reference **Becky Kornegay**, Information Literacy Coordinator **Heidi Buchanan**, and Assistant Head of Cataloging **Hiddy Morgan** are under contract with ALA Editions, the publishing arm of the American Library Association, to write a book. The deal was spawned by the authors' November 2005 Library Journal article, "Amazing, Magic Searches: Subdivisions Combine the Precision of the Cataloger with the Freewheeling Style of a Googler," which has since been cited in reference textbooks and numerous library school syllabi.

Heath Martin, assistant head of Collection Development and Resources Development and **Dana Sally**, dean of Library Services, in collaboration with Amy Miller of Lightning Source Inc., delivered a presentation, "Monographs in the Age of Mass Digitization," at the 28th Annual Charleston Conference: Issues in Book and Serial Acquisition, on November 7, 2008, in Charleston, S.C. The presentation focused on current trends and future possibilities in the discovery and delivery of digital intellectual content. Martin also collaborated with **Amy Martin**, acting associate director of the Coulter Faculty Center, to present "Collecting SoTL: Library Resources at the State Comprehensive University" at the conference.

Beth McDonough, reference librarian, presented a session at the Library Instruction 2.0 Conference sponsored by the North Carolina Library Association and the North Carolina Chapter of the Association of College and Research Libraries November 2008, in Chapel Hill. The session, "Library Anxiety: Implications for Instruction," offered practical, research-based suggestions to improve effectiveness of information literacy instruction.

Susan Metcalf, reference librarian, published a book chapter, "El dia de los Niños/ El dia de los Libros goes to College," with Mardi Mahaffy and Irene Shown in *Thinking Outside the Book: Essays in Innovative Librarianship*, edited by Carol Smallwood. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2008.

Cataloger **Bob Strauss** edited the 2008 publication, *Erie Tales: Tales of Terror from Michigan*, presented by the Great Lakes Association of Horror Writers. Find more about the book at www.greatlakeshorror.com/anthology.html.

Suzanne Raether, interlibrary loan coordinator, published *We All Walk*, a compilation of photo/nonfiction work, with Asheville photographer Monty Tran.

Reference Librarian **Alessia Zanin-Yost** published "Visual Literacy Resources on the Web: A Look at What Is Available" in the September 2007 issue of *College and Research Libraries News*. She also delivered the presentation "The Holistic Development of Students: Information Literacy and Interior Design at Western Carolina University" at the January 2008 American Library Association annual conference in Philadelphia.



The focus of this year's Craft Revival research activity is the documentation of Cherokee baskets and basket makers and the production of a booklet, *From the Hands of our Elders*. In the photo, (circa 1950), Lottie Queen Stamper (standing) teaches a basket weaving class in Cherokee. Image courtesy of the Museum of the Cherokee Indian and the Craft Revival Project.

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www.wcu.edu/library

Library Hours

Monday–Thursday	7:30 a.m. – 1 a.m.
Friday	7:30 a.m. – 7 p.m.
Saturday	10 a.m. – 7 p.m.
Sunday	12 noon – 1 a.m.

Hours vary during holidays and semester breaks.

For information, go to:

www.wcu.edu/1643.asp

Java City in the library

Monday–Thursday	7:45 a.m. – 8 p.m.
Friday	7:45 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Saturday, Sunday	Closed

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