Library Purchases Student’s Artwork for Permanent Display

Last year John Kolb, Rensselaer’s Vice President for Information Services and Technology and Chief Information Officer and an ex officio member of the Board of the Friends of the Folsom Library, became aware of mechanical engineering student Nelson Bruns’ art talent. Kolb recommended him to Acting Library Director Bob Mayo as a possibility for an exhibit in the Folsom Library. Mayo checked out Bruns’ Web site and was immediately impressed. He contacted Bruns, who welcomed the opportunity to showcase his talent and went so far as to create a concept, “More Bars in More Places,” specifically for the space in Folsom Mayo had in mind. With a go-ahead from Mayo, Bruns returned home to Gray, Maine one October weekend to spend in his family’s stainless steel fabrication business where he created the piece. With help from three Bruns Bros. employees—Mike Bruns, Stevie Stanley, and Blayn Gray—the three collectively spent 90 hours constructing the formation. After transporting the pieces, Bruns and helper Doug Longnecker assembled and installed the impressive 7 1/2 feet by 3 1/2 feet sculpture on a prominent wall on the second floor of the Folsom Library.

The sculpture brings together stainless steel with rare earth magnets to create a “floating” pipes design. The pattern of bars flows toward and away from the viewer on the curved frame attached to the main rectangular frame. Bruns was taught by his father at an early age that anything can be made from stainless steel and he enjoyed experimenting with bits and pieces. He started playing with magnets because they are found in so many everyday things—stereo speakers, navigation equipment, electric motors, pacemakers—and sees a sort of “magic” in them. He said, “The magic in ’More Bars and in More Places’ is an inch gap between the bars. The bottom pipes are held down by stainless steel cables and held up by magnets. This provides the viewer a sense of bars floating in space. It never hurts to have a little magic floating around!” The colors are produced by heating the metal with a torch and allowing the “personality of the metal to come to life.”

(continued on page 2)
Sculpture
(continued from page 1)

Bruns is a junior studying mechanical engineering. As a youngster, he enjoyed making jewelry out of sterling silver and experimenting with stainless steel in his family’s place of business outside of Portland. His first large stainless steel sculpture was a kaleidoscope he built as a gift for his high school in his senior year. Last year, Bruns took a sculpture class from Professor Larry Kagan, whom he credits with renewing his interest in sculpture and 3-D design. Positive reactions to his works inspired him to create more sculptures. You can check out some of his handiwork at http://www.nelsonbruns.com.

Because the sculpture has had such a popular reception by members of the campus, Mayo decided to ask the Board of the Friends of the Folsom Library to consider purchasing it for the Library. The Board unanimously agreed to the idea and voted to dedicate it in memory of former Chair Elect Shirley Molloy, who passed away recently. (See story on page 5.) Bruns has agreed to create a commemorative plaque that will be hung next to the artwork.

The Promise of New York Screening at Rensselaer

The Friends of the Folsom Library, along with the Community Advocates and WRPI, were proud to host the Capital Region premier of a documentary by alumnus Raul Alvarez ‘01 on February 14th in the auditorium of the Biotech Building. Alvarez, who professionally goes by the name Raul Barcelona, traveled from Manhattan for the showing and subsequent interview by Professor Ellen Esrock. He also answered questions from an engrossed audience composed of students, faculty, staff, and members of the community. The event was free and open to the public.

Filmed by Alvarez, the documentary takes viewers along for an eye-opening ride as four unconventional Big Apple denizens compete with Mayor Michael Bloomberg in 2005 as he runs for a second term. The film reveals the roadblocks some of these novice candidates run into—lack of sufficient funding, powerlessness to be included in debates, inability to get enough signatures to qualify to get on the ballot, disinterested media, and an apathetic public. There were several humorous moments that got the audience chuckling, but there were also a few uncomfortable scenes that made some of us squirm. One in particular was a prolonged and almost scary stretch in which one candidate tried to outwit and outwait police when they showed up at his apartment to take him in for questioning after he made what they deemed an inappropriate phone call to the media.

Born in Spain to Cuban exiles, Alvarez developed a strong desire to express himself artistically during his teenage years when his family relocated first to Florence, Italy and then to Houston, Texas. He used art as a means to overcome not just his teenage angst, but the language barrier as well. Despite his artistic inclinations, he followed his parents’ advice to pursue a career that would provide him with a stable financial future. After receiving a degree in electrical engineering from Rensselaer, he almost took an engineering job with a space robotic contractor for NASA. His artistic desires, however, were overwhelming, and Alvarez moved to New York City to pursue his dream of filmmaking. We hope The Promise of New York is just the beginning of a long and rewarding career for Alvarez.
RECOGNIZE THESE RENSSELAER BUILDINGS?

YOU WILL, IF JOIN US FOR THE FASCINATING LUNCH HOUR LECTURE

“THE PHANTOM RENSSELAER OF YESTERDAY”

THURSDAY, MAY 28, 2009
HEFFNER ALUMNI HOUSE

OVER ITS 285 YEAR HISTORY, RENSSELAER HAS CARRIED OUT OPERATIONS IN AN EXTRAORDINARY NUMBER OF FACILITIES IN THE CITY OF TROY AND ON THE CAMPUS.

CARL WESTERDAHL
FORMER ALUMNI DIRECTOR AND RENSSELAER HISTORIAN
AND
AMY RUPERT
ASSISTANT INSTITUTE ARCHIVIST

WILL TAKE YOU ON A GUIDED TOUR OF RENSSELAER BUILDINGS (SOME PERHAPS HAUNTED!) THAT NO LONGER EXIST.

SPECIAL ADDED ATTRACTION: FOR THOSE ABLE TO STAY AFTER THE TALK, RUPERT AND WESTERDAHL WILL LEAD AN HOUR AND A HALF BUS TOUR OF TODAY’S CAMPUS, FOCUSING ON THE FASCINATING STORIES BEHIND THE INSTITUTE’S MANY HISTORIC STRUCTURES.

BUFFET LUNCH WILL BE AVAILABLE FROM 11:30 A.M. TO 12:30 P.M.
LECTURE STARTS AT 12:00 NOON.
OPTIONAL BUS TOUR STARTS AT 1:15 P.M.
PRICE FOR THE LUNCH, LECTURE, AND OPTIONAL TOUR IS $10.
RESERVATIONS MUST BE MADE BY MAY 20.
CONTACT ADRIENNE (276-8329; BIRHCA@RPI.EDU) FOR INFORMATION OR TO MAKE A RESERVATION.

SPONSORED BY Friends of the Folsom Library
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Troy, New York 12180-3590
The Friends of Folsom Library is an active group that includes community leaders, faculty, staff, and alumni dedicated to strengthening and enlarging the collections, acquiring rare books and manuscript materials, expanding technological services, and enriching the total cultural environment of the Rensselaer community. During each academic year, the Friends sponsor a variety of activities and informational programs that have a direct positive impact on the Folsom Library’s role on campus.

### Did you know that?

During the academic year, the Folsom Library is open 117.5 hours per week and the Architecture Library is open 68.5 hours per week.

On an average day during the academic year, over 1,450 students, faculty, and staff enter the Folsom Library.

The Library has access to over 50,000 electronic books.

Over 1,500 books procured through the generosity of the Friends were borrowed from the Leisure Reading Room last year.

The Friends pay for 26 popular periodicals that are found in the Leisure Reading Room.

Over 18,700 books were borrowed from the Folsom Library and more than 4,300 from the Architecture Library last year.

The Library has access to over 34,000 on-line, full text journals each of which is available on our Web site.

There are over 11,500 DVDs and CDs in the Library’s collection.

The Friends of Folsom Library is an active group that includes community leaders, faculty, staff, and alumni dedicated to strengthening and enlarging the collections, acquiring rare books and manuscript materials, expanding technological services, and enriching the total cultural environment of the Rensselaer community. During each academic year, the Friends sponsor a variety of activities and informational programs that have a direct positive impact on the Folsom Library’s role on campus.
Former Board Member Passes Away

Former Chair Elect Shirley Molloy passed away on March 5th at St. Mary’s Community Hospice in Troy. She had been a member of the Board of Directors of the Friends of the Folsom Library since 2003.

Prior to her retirement in 1999, Molloy was employed at the Institute for 23 years. During that time, she worked as Assistant to the President or Secretary of the Institute under six presidents—George M. Low ’48, Daniel Berg, Stanley I. Landgraf ‘46 (acting), Roland Schmitt, R. Byron Pipes, and Cornelius J. Barton ‘58 (acting). She came to Rensselaer from NASA, having also served there as an assistant to George M. Low.

In 1999, Molloy was named the first recipient of the Trustees Medal, which was established to “recognize outstanding, dedicated, and unique service provided by an individual” to the Institute.

After retiring from Rensselaer, Molloy remained involved in campus activities. She was instrumental in the planning, design, and realization of the George M. Low ’48 Gallery in the building that was named after him. As a volunteer, she worked with the designers, the Institute, and the Low family to produce an extraordinary and befitting memorial to the former space leader and beloved Rensselaer president. Molloy was also an original member of the Board of Trustees of the Troy Children’s Museum, which started out as the Junior Museum in 2000 and was located in the converted Winslow Building on 8th Street. At that time, the Winslow Building was the only remaining building of the Rensselaer campus from the late 19th century.

Shirley Molloy was a widely admired and respected member of the campus community and will be missed by all whose lives she touched.

Friends' Board Changes

Board Chair Cynthia Smith passed the gavel to Chair Elect Ruth Gallagher at the Friends spring Board of Directors meeting held on March 18th. Smith served as Chair for the past two years, and during her tenure her leadership continued the organization’s commitment to enhancing patrons’ access to DVDs, books, and periodicals for leisure reading. She was also instrumental in spearheading the successful The Promise of New York showing and talk in February and The Tyler Hinman Crossword Challenge in 2007. Both events involved Rensselaer alumni returning to campus to showcase their triumphs since graduation.

Gallagher was employed at Rensselaer for 15 years, the last eight as Director of Purchasing. In 2000, she resigned her position but has continued to work with the Purchasing Department on a consulting basis. She is looking forward to working with the Board to help plan some exciting events and expand the membership base.

The Board regrets that it must say good-bye to two members. Kara Chesel, as Rensselaer’s Grand Marshall this past academic year, was an ex officio member. She graduates this May with a B.S. degree in Science, Technology, and Society. Congratulations, Kara, and may the best things you imagine all come true!

John Harrington is stepping down from the Board after five years of service. He is leaving his position at the Institute as Dean of the School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences for the last six years to accept the position of Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Fordham University, effective July 1. Congratulations and enjoy your new position, Dean Harrington!
MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN ABOUT

“THE PHANTOM RENSSELAER OF YESTERDAY”

THURSDAY, MAY 28TH
HEFFNER ALUMNI HOUSE
DETAILS ON PAGE 3.