Walter V. and Idun Y. Berry Collection

The Library has been selected by the Walter V. and Idun Y. Berry Foundation as the permanent home for the Berrys’ collection of photographs, newspaper clippings, ledgers, maps, correspondence, and reports related to their mining venture on Saxon Mountain in Georgetown, CO and Walter’s invention of a cast copper jet head for open hearth oxygen lances at Berry Metals Company in Pennsylvania, PA.

Seeking a publicly accessible home for the collection, Walter R. Borneman, President of the Berry Foundation, cited the Wood Mining History Archive as “a natural fit” as the collection chronicles a classic Colorado mining boom & bust story, as well as information on the development of oxygen lances, which revolutionized the Steel Industry. While these documents provide information on the day-to-day workings of a small, independent mining operation in the 1930s and ‘40s and the family’s metal business, they ultimately illuminate the indomitable entrepreneurial and philanthropic spirit of Walter and Idun Berry. While Idun and Walter both passed away in the late 1990s, their Foundation continues to change the world by funding postdoctoral fellowships in children’s health at Stanford University.

The Berrys tapped Mines’ expertise by employing and mentoring a number of Mines’ students. Marv Kay ’63, recalled “A whole bunch of guys worked for Walter...there were Sig Eps and guys from Mining and Geology. I drove a truck all over that mountain a couple of summers.” Other ventures saw the Berrys explore opportunities in oil and gas, forming Berry Energy, Inc., now under the leadership of Mike Cruson ’64, PhD ’73, also a director of the Berry Foundation, and Art Pansze, ’63, PhD ’71.

Walter and Idun’s influence extends through the Mines’ family tree and has inspired successful businesses and partnerships across Colorado and beyond, including Prowers Gas (partners Pansze, Cruson, Bob Writz ’64 and Chuck Shultz ’61) and Frontier Constructors (Dyke Howell ’63 and Dan McFadden ’63, pictured above).
Information Literacy Abroad: www.pi.ac.ae

This spring Lisa Dunn, Head of Reference, accompanied a Mines project team including Dr. Ron Miller, Dr. Chet Van Tyne, and Dr. Warren Spaulding to Abu Dhabi, UAE. Funded by a grant from the Petroleum Institute (PI), the project team’s activities were designed to support the PI’s efforts to achieve ABET (Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology) accreditation.

Team activities included: workshops for PI faculty and staff on assessment, examples of classroom activities for students, and providing feedback about current PI classes. Lisa spent time with PI Library faculty and staff exploring information literacy projects, toured the Habshan and Arzanah Libraries, and interviewed PI students. Teaching information literacy concepts supports ABET accreditation criteria of lifelong learning, ethics, and global awareness.

Lia Vella Joins the Library Staff as a Reference Librarian

Lia is a transplant from Oregon, having previously worked at Oregon Institute of Technology, Crater Lake Science & Learning Center, and John Day Fossil Beds National Monument. She has a Master of Library and Information Science degree from the University of Washington. In the past, she has taught literature and writing composition in university and high school settings, and her PhD dissertation investigated utopian literature and the progressive movement in America. She enjoys researching the answers to people’s questions, playing the violin, and writing for her blog, and she is looking forward to exploring all the wonderful bicycling and hiking opportunities in Colorado.

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Arthur Lakes Library Hides a Piece of History

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Near the back of the Arthur Lakes Library on the first floor, a rather large model steam locomotive sits, going largely unnoticed. Last week, petroleum engineering junior Paul Szuhay spent his afternoon cleaning the case and the engine itself. While many of us have noticed that the model is there, few know the story behind it, or that the locomotive is actually a fully-functioning live-steam model, capable of running with nothing more than coal and water.

The model was donated to Colorado School of Mines in 1970 by a friend of former president Lester Thomas, Edward Field Harrison. Harrison was a model train enthusiast and mechanical engineer working in Denver, and probably built the model sometime in the 1950s. Szuhay, along with a Master of International Political Economy of Resources (MIPER) student Matt Shafer, are on a quest to find out more about the history of the model.

Szuhay, a native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, grew up fascinated by trains, everything from the classic Lionel H.O. scale trains to the full-size steam locomotives such as were used on the New York Central and Pennsylvania Line railroads in the 1920s. “What hooks me,” he said, “is that supposedly the locomotive came with a set of 12 passenger cars.” Szuhay has been talking to locals, searching courthouse records, and talking to school administrators, trying to find out more about the train in hopes of eventually finding the 12 passenger cars to complete the set. He commented that it is kind of a legend that the cars even exist, but it would be great to find them.

One Mines alum told Szuhay that the locomotive was run for the 1973 E-Days, albeit under compressed air power, not coal and steam. While many would like to see the engine run under its own steam again, Szuhay cautioned that, after sitting for at least 21 years, the boiler may have developed microscopic fractures and could explode if fired. The best option, he said, would be to have the boiler x-rayed to find any stress fractures. If none are found, then the boiler could be fired.

Harrison, the builder of the model, was what Szuhay classified as not just a hobbyist, but one obsessed with modeling, “If you imagine Edward Harrison, in his machine shop turning these gears and casting these wheels, that’s beyond a hobby, that’s obsession.” Szuhay mentioned that he will be meeting with a man who says he was good friends with Harrison, and Szuhay is hoping to find out more about Harrison discover if there really was a passenger car set with the locomotive.

Ideally, Szuhay would love to have the locomotive become a more prominent display here at Mines, and he would like to be involved in a restoration project at some point in the near future. The “discovery” of this working train engine model makes one wonder how many other pieces of Mines history are lurking in the shadows of this storied and mysterious school. “That locomotive, for all the people that don’t even know it’s there, is a great asset to the school, even just to display.” This working model exemplifies what Mines is about - science and technology, engineering at its best.

As the student body grows, so do the space requirements to support learning. In collaboration with Student Support & Academic Services, the Library has become a satellite location for student peer tutoring on campus. The tutoring area is located on the north side of Floor 1. Tutors are proficient in core curriculum & multiple upper-level courses. Colin Terry, Learning Services Coordinator, says,

“Tutoring in the Library has been wildly successful.”

More info http://academicservices.mines.edu
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Contributions to Arthur Lakes Library make us a world-class source for information in the study of engineering and applied science related to the earth, energy and the environment.

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