



WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

WALTER P. REUTHER LIBRARY
ARCHIVES OF LABOR AND URBAN AFFAIRS
& UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

NEWSLETTER VOL. 18

FALL 2014

As the largest labor archives in North America, the Walter P. Reuther Library has been witness to a great deal of change. In the last year, the Reuther has seen more change than usual, with departures and arrivals among our staff, significant improvements to our building, new collections acquired and opened, and an increased level of professional involvement at home and at the national level.



In April 2014 the Reuther Library Director, **Elizabeth Myers**, left to become Director of Special Collections at Smith College. Beth joined us in September, 2012. She had previously been the director of the Women and Leadership Archives at Loyola University Chicago. In her short time at

the Reuther, Beth implemented a number of financial and structural improvements, including a new roof, new blinds, and a new Reading Room, and left the library even stronger than before.



Carolyn Davis, who began work at the Reuther Library in 1979, passed away on April 8, 2014. In her 35 years at the Reuther Library, she served as Librarian, Associate Director, and Access Archivist. Her long career included service as a member of the Special Library

Association's Labor Issues Caucus, a board member of the Community of Industrial Relations Librarians, and a president of the Association of African American Librarians.



Virginia Thomas, Director of the Arthur Neef Law Library at Wayne State University, was appointed Interim Director for the Reuther, and has served ably in that role during the search for a new Director. **Erik Nordberg**, Executive Director of the Michigan Humanities

Council, has been chosen as the next Reuther Library Director, and is scheduled to begin in October 2014. Erik previously served as University Archivist and Head of Archives at Michigan Technological University.



Michael O. Smith, who retired on August 15, 2014, held every position at the Reuther Library from student assistant to director. He came to the Reuther in 1983 as a Wayne State University graduate student, and later served as Processing Archivist and Reference

Archivist, before being appointed Reuther Library Interim Director in 2002 and Director in 2004. He held this position until 2011, and then transitioned to an Archivist position with responsibility for the records of the UAW and the Jewish Community Archives.

This summer the Walter P. Reuther Library of Labor and Urban Affairs was awarded a grant totaling \$109,152 from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission to improve the description of and facilitate the discovery and promotion of 1,660 oral histories of individuals directly involved in the labor, civil rights, and social justice movements. Donated to the Reuther or conducted by staff members over the last 40 years, these stories bring a new perspective to the American experience through the lives and work of such prominent national figures as Cesar Chavez and Grace Lee Boggs, organizations like the NAACP and the UAW, and unknown rank-and-file workers, immigrants, pioneering professional women, and minority urban dwellers.

The Walter P. Reuther Library received a generous gift of \$35,000 from a faculty member. These funds allowed for a complete renovation of the Reuther's Reading Room, the first such renovation since the building's 1975 construction. Improvements include carpentry and paintwork, new chairs and tables, new carpeting, and a new countertop for the reference desk.



In 2014, eight Ph.D candidates were awarded the Sam Fishman Travel Grant. This research grant provides up to \$1000 towards travel and research costs for faculty, students, independent scholars, and union members whose research projects require the use of the Reuther Library's extensive labor collections.

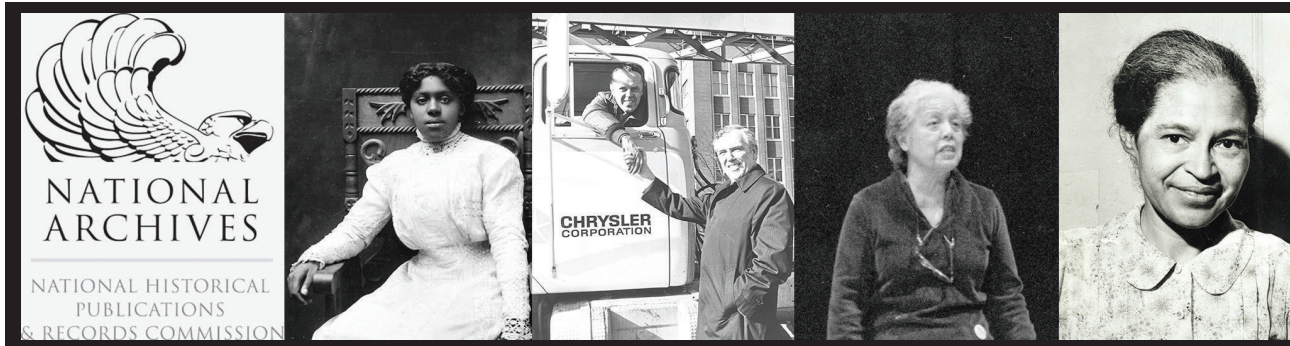
GRANTS & AWARDS

The Ronald Raven Annual Award, a scholarship and internship program made possible by Wayne State University alumnus Ronald Raven, provides three WSU archives students per year with a \$600 stipend and an opportunity to gain hands-on experience processing university records and manuscripts at the Reuther Library.



Each year the Albert Shanker Educational Research Fellowship, established by the American Federation of Teachers, provides \$500 to two graduate students or faculty members to allow them to travel to the Reuther Library and perform research into the history of education.

The oral histories of Carrie Burton Overton, Douglas Fraser, Grace Lee Boggs, Rosa Parks, and many others will be made more accessible to researchers through a grant from the NHPRC.



INSTALLATIONS & EVENTS

In 2013, after a hiatus of two years, the Reuther Library restarted its exhibits program. In the past year, our conference rooms have hosted symposia, colloquia, and professional meetings, while our galleries have displayed art and artifacts from the history of labor and the culture of southeast Michigan.

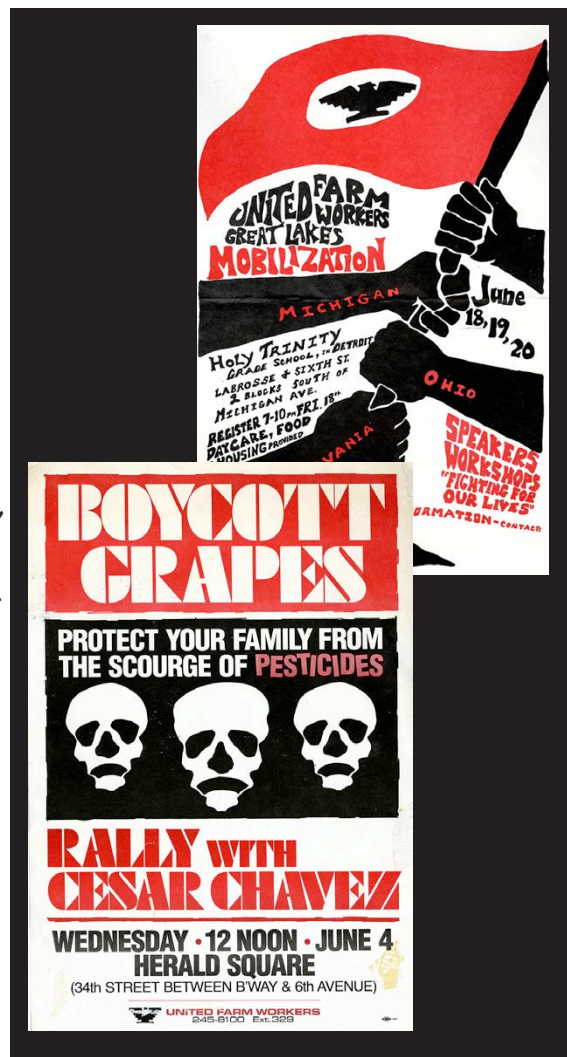
In September 2013 the Reuther Library hosted the Wayne State University Symposium on Scholarly Editing and Archival Research, an interdisciplinary conference inviting new perspectives on current practices in the editing and presentation of literary texts in all media. Event participants included several Reuther staff members.

On October 4, 2013 the Reuther Library hosted a reception for the opening of *Dance Pioneers: Michigan's 20th Century Movers*, a new exhibit on display in the Woodcock Gallery. Harriet Berg, an alumna of Wayne State University and founder of the Michigan Dance Archives, spoke at the opening reception. The photographs, images, and

items in the exhibit were drawn from the Dance Archives, and focused on dancers, arts professionals, and prominent figures who promoted dance in Michigan and nationwide.

On July 30, 2014 the Reuther Library hosted a Pre-Conference Symposium organized by the Metro Detroit Archivists League. Thirty archivists attended talks by professional archivists, librarians, and archives students from the Reuther Library, The Henry Ford, and the University of Michigan. Reuther archivists **Alexandra A.A. Orchard**, **Deborah Rice**, and **Casey Westerman** were among the speakers at the event.

A selection of posters from the United Farm Workers collection is currently on display in the Reuther Library's Leonard Woodcock Gallery. These posters, which date from the 1960s, 1970s, and early 1980s, depict important campaigns and events from the early history of the UFW, and showcase the graphic compositions of a variety of artists and illustrators.





The papers of U. Utah Phillips, folksinger and labor activist, were donated to the Reuther Library in 2013. The collection documents a career that spanned four decades and included songwriting, storytelling, political activism, his involvement with the Industrial Workers of the World (“the Wobblies”), and correspondence with musicians ranging from Johnny Cash to Ani DiFranco. Utah’s daughter Morrigan Phillips is seen here with archives technician Dallas Pillen, who processed her father’s papers.

The Reuther Library recently opened the Ramon S. Scruggs, Sr. papers for research. Scruggs, an influential civil rights figure in the business community, was the first African American member of management at both Michigan Bell Telephone Company and AT&T. Spanning fifty years, the Scruggs papers consist of materials relating to his social activism, political engagement, and community work.

Those interested in researching cultural movements and activism of the 1960s and 1970s still gravitate to the records of the United Farm Workers Union (UFW), and to the personal papers of Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta. The UFW and its supporters, including labor organizers, educators, clergy, students, and volunteers, led grape and lettuce boycotts and strikes across the United States and Canada. The Reuther Library has recently opened several collections of records focusing on boycotts in certain cities: Boston, Chicago, Miami, Minneapolis, and Winnipeg. Also included in these recently opened collections are the records of UFW Boycott Central, which highlights the UFW’s activities in Europe.

COLLECTION NEWS

The Reuther opened nine collections totaling more than 300 linear feet from the United Community Services (UCS) of Metropolitan Detroit. With its origins dating back to 1917, UCS was an umbrella organization for a wide range of social welfare agencies in the metro Detroit area, including child care, family, health, recreation, and community planning. After a series of mergers, the organization now operates as the United Way for Southeastern Michigan. The United Community Services Records document the delivery of social services in the Detroit metro area over the course of the 20th century.

Three high-profile biographies of Cesar Chavez were released in early 2014, each featuring research and audiovisual materials from the Reuther’s UFW collections. The documentary *Cesar’s Last Fast* debuted at the Sundance Film Festival in January. The feature film *Chavez* and Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Miriam Pawel’s *The Crusades of Cesar Chavez: A Biography* were both released in March.

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES AND ACCOLADES

This has been the most active year in recent memory for the professional staff of the Reuther Library. Reuther archivists have represented their library, their university, and their respective unions at the state, national, and international levels, sharing their expertise with peers and colleagues, and presenting papers, talks, and panel discussions.

Louis Jones received the History/ Humanities Award from the Wayne County Council for the Arts, History and Humanities on October 17, 2013 during its annual awards event.

Mary Wallace presented at the Ohio Regional Association of Law Librarians (ORALL) Annual Meeting in Perrysburg, Ohio on October 17, 2013. Her session was titled "Digital Preservation: How and Where to Start."

On March 28, 2014 two Reuther archivists participated in the Michigan Local History Conference. **Elizabeth Clemens** presented at the session

"Digital Challenges for the Analog-Minded: Reference, Research, and Accessibility Strategies for Visual Collections." **Kathleen Schmeling** served as moderator.

On April 26, 2014, **Troy Eller English** and **Alexandra A.A. Orchard** presented in the session "Working in Harmony: Conducting Your Role as a Contract Archivist" during the 2014 Midwest Archives Conference in Kansas City.

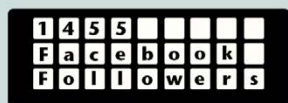
The Michigan Archival Association held its annual meeting at Mackinac Island on June 26 and 27, 2014. **Kristen Chinery** chaired a session on reference and assessment; **Daniel Golodner** spoke on oral history; **Elizabeth Clemens** gave a presentation on copyright in archives; **Paul Neirink** spoke about the ArchivesSpace collection management system; and **Casey Westerman** presented on the online promotion of archival collections in a session chaired by **Troy Eller English**.

Three Reuther Library archivists presented at the annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists on August 10-16, 2014. **Alexandra A.A. Orchard** and **Deborah Rice** spoke on the panel "Laboring for Access: Rearing Records in Labor Archives," addressing the subject of female archivists as the stewards of union archival collections. **Casey Westerman** presented a talk in the session "Life and Death in the Motor City," speaking on the privacy of individuals named in records open for research at public institutions.

On September 11, 2014, **Troy Eller English** was the keynote speaker for "Creating the Memories and Celebrating the Legacy of the Bold and the Brave: Building the Archives of Women Scientists and Engineers in Canada," a workshop hosted by the University of Ottawa. Eller English spoke about the collections of the Society of Women Engineers housed at the Reuther, collecting strategies and challenges, and researcher trends.

Reference archivist **Kristen Chinery** taught the workshop "Basic Archives: An Introduction to Collection Storage and Handling" on September 12, 2014 for the Historical Society of Michigan.

YEAR IN REVIEW



.....
33 BLOG POSTS
.....

27,142 BLOG
READS
.....

U
P
L
O
A
D
S

1,075 DIGITAL IMAGES

248 PUBLICATIONS

136 ABSTRACTS



In the last year, our collection archivists contributed 136 collection abstracts to our site, which brings our total to 1,508. These online abstracts have been connecting researchers to our collection guides since 2008. They continue to provide the primary means of discovery for all of our publicly available collections.

Our image galleries remain the most popular area of our site for visitors to explore. They account for the largest area of our site, occupying in the neighborhood of 7,100 individual pages. In total, this past year, staff contributed 1,075 image nodes across multiple galleries. In July 2014, **Elizabeth Clemens** opened 256 images in the “Stills from the World at War” online gallery in recognition of the centennial of the beginning of the First World War. Going forward, we hope that this new gallery will attract researchers as its development continues.

DIGITAL DELIVERY

The formula to increase web traffic year after year has changed little in over six years. We continuously post quality content that connects people to the materials in the Reuther Library. Our staff converts material data into usable pieces that have been carefully described and crafted. Our statistical increases, however modest, reinforce the belief that our work has been reaching a growing population of digital patrons.

REFERENCE TRACKING

In 2014 the Reuther Library implemented the LibAnswers reference system for all reference requests answered by Reuther archivists. This software allows us to collect statistical information, share answers to frequently asked questions, and refer queries to subject experts. To try out the system yourself, click the “Ask an Archivist” button on our website—we look forward to your questions.

Reuther Library Staff

Virginia Thomas, Interim Library Director

Bart Bealmear, Archives Technician

Stefanie Caloia, AFT Project Archivist

Kristen Chinery, Reference Archivist

Elizabeth Clemens, Audiovisual Archivist

Meghan Courtney, AFSCME Archivist

Troy Eller English, SWE Archivist

G. Aimee Ergas, Archives Technician

Daniel Golodner, AFT Archivist

Louis Jones, Field Archivist

William LeFevre, Senior Processing Archivist

Paul S. Neirink, Digital Resources Specialist

Alexandra A.A. Orchard, Technical and
Metadata Archivist

Dallas Pillen, Archives Technician

Deborah Rice, Audiovisual Archivist

Audrey Rumbers, Administrative Assistant

Kathleen Schmeling, Senior Processing Archivist

Gavin Strassel, SEIU Archivist

Mary Wallace, Audiovisual Archivist

Casey Westerman, University Archivist



www.reuther.wayne.edu



facebook.com/reutherlib



twitter.com/reutherlibrary

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

WALTER P. REUTHER LIBRARY

ARCHIVES OF LABOR AND URBAN AFFAIRS
& UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

5401 Cass Avenue

Wayne State University

Detroit, MI 48202

(313) 577-4024

Front page: detail of "The Battle of the Overpass," John Z. Gelsavage, 1957.

Fourteen paintings by the American artist John Z. Gelsavage are currently on display in the Library atrium. The 1957 series "This Union Cause" was commissioned by the UAW Education Department, and its colorful, vivid, and detailed paintings depict pivotal moments and important figures from the American labor movement, spanning the period from the early nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century.