

# Kaleidoscope

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## Haunted or Not?

Olin Early

By Ross Atkinson

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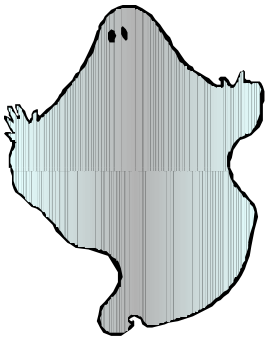
I am a morning person, and for some years it has been my custom to come to work very early on Saturday mornings. The quiet and solitude are both relaxing and invigorating, and make it possible to get a lot of work done quickly. There is, however, one occasional drawback: Olin, when totally deserted, can be irritatingly eerie. Sounds one never notices when the building is occupied become amplified when it is empty. The doors in the stairwell echo when they close—and I don't know how many times I have been startled to hear a door closing on another floor of the stairwell, only to realize it was the one swinging slowly shut that I had just come through myself. The clock in the Olin offices is especially irksome, being one of those that makes no sound for a long time, and then suddenly pops; deciding that this sound has been made by the clock, rather than by something more sinister, sometimes takes a few seconds.

I normally have no problem with these things, as long as I have had enough sleep—but because of the ridiculously early hour I insist on getting up, my imagination can on occasion become—well, overactive. One manifestation of this is the “what would I do if” game I sometimes start playing, as in: what would I do if I were sitting at my desk at 6:00 a.m., with no one else anywhere in the building, and the office printer outside my door started printing all by itself? What would I do if the message on the paper said, “If you listen carefully, you will hear me coming up the stairs”? What would I do if the door to the outer office (which I admittedly always lock after myself) began to shake violently, even though I could see there was no one outside? Perhaps I would barricade myself in my office—and finish my work, on the assumption

that nothing, be it natural or supernatural, should be allowed to interfere with the posting of the CExec notes. (After all, someone might want to read them.)

One Saturday morning, as I was working in my office, I heard a distant buzzing. I went out into the stairwell to investigate. It turned out to be a door alarm two floors down, in the basement, across from Interlibrary Services. I went down and closed the door, and was able to turn off the alarm with my master key. I looked around the general area, but found no one. That door, I said to myself, has to have been opened by someone—or, as they say in the old horror movies, by **something**. As an officer of the library, I reluctantly decided that I had no choice but to do an immediate and thorough search of the building. While the Olin stacks were easy enough, the Kroch stacks were somewhat unnerving—although I admittedly find that to be the case even when the building is occupied. No windows, air blowing constantly—a bit like wandering through a large, purple submarine. But the spookiest place in the empty building is unquestionably the tunnel under Uris, back by the shipping department—partially because there are shadowy interstices everywhere, partially because no one would likely go back there at this time except to hide; but mostly because the tunnel resembles nothing so much as the passageway in the original movie *The Thing* where they melt down the monster, using an ‘arc of electricity,’ into a little pile of steaming spinach. Checking that area was, I must admit, very unpleasant. Past

*Continued on page 2*



the shipping room, there is no direct corridor that you can see down. There are rather twists and turns—dimly lit passages leading to half open doors. I

thought I could see things moving out of the corner of my bifocals, but when I looked, they were no longer there. What was I afraid I might find? A troll? A five-foot long cockroach? Or perhaps the shade of Willard Fiske—condemned to wander restlessly the basement of Uris, until the funding for the Romansh collection is restored. In any case, I found, to my relief, no one—and, more to the point, no **thing**—but at least I could report to David Corson that I had looked.

The most startling experience I had coming in early was of much shorter duration. I had climbed the stairs and walked into the administrative offices, not noticing in my usual bleary somnolence that the door was unlocked. This was back when the outer office was rather theatrically subdivided by a formidable, semi-opaque, plastic screen, behind which were arranged large, comfortable chairs for visitors. (I never did understand the purpose of that screen. What secret things did we expect our visitors to do behind it?) When I flipped on the light switch, I could see shadows jumping up behind the screen, as if the current were connected not only to the light but somehow also to the chairs. Two—or maybe three—men, whom I had never seen before, then ran out from behind the screen, past me, into the stairwell and down the stairs. Did I try to ask them who they were? I can't remember. I know I just stood there looking after them. They left nothing behind but silence, punctuated by a dull drumming which, upon closer inspection, turned out to be my heart beating. I made my way slowly to my office, and after some thought, decided that this was an extreme situation that warranted extreme action: an e-mail to Pat Schafer. Pat, of course,

quickly got to the bottom of it: there were (as I had known, otherwise I would have called Security) workmen in the building, laboring through the night, and apparently a few of them had felt the need for a brief snooze break. They had decided that the visitors chairs were particularly suitable to their purpose—understandably never expecting anyone to show up for work at that hour (get a life!) on Saturday morning.

If nothing else, therefore, my matinal experiences in Olin have taught me not to assume that I ever necessarily know what is waiting beyond the next door. Not that I am overly cautious or in any way superstitious—but, since we are on the subject, what harm could there be in creating a small line in the budget for Romansh Studies? Just to be safe.

*-- Ross Atkinson is Deputy University Librarian.*

## Tales of the Ghost of Jennie McGraw

*By Bethany Sifer*

One Saturday morning back in April of 2000 I arrived a half hour early to Uris Library in preparation for opening the building. I followed the usual routine ... turned on the lights, powered up the desk computers, and turned on the back office equipment. I went to the back circulation area to the key box to retrieve the cash register key and heard someone out photocopying at the public photocopiers around the hall out of view. A chill went up my spine as this surely meant someone was in the building with me and must have been locked in overnight. Very few staff have front door keys to Uris Library and no one had signed in authorizing them to be in the building after hours on this particular day. I thought for a moment how I would confront the individual and ask why they were in the building after hours. Library policy dictates that we

ask for their identification, search their belongings, and ask for an explanation as to how and why the individual managed to be in the building after hours. Not all patrons are receptive to this so I needed to think of the proper non-confrontational wording before I approached. As I went around the corner to confront the individual, I realized there was no one standing at the copier and yet the copier continued copying as if someone were there. As I walked closer, the air felt very heavy and cold. The copying ceased. There were no copies waiting in the tray ... there wasn't even a piece of paper under the lid. I turned the other copier on as I would have with this one had someone or something not already done so.

On several occasions when the building is closed and the supervisor and another staff member are the only ones known to be in Uris Library, they report having heard the patron elevator go up and down the floors, stopping at a floor from time to time, the metal gate opening, then slamming shut, and the elevator proceeding to move up or down to other floors.

Level 2 of Uris Library is a large storage room. Staff rarely ever go down there and when they do, they take a buddy with them. It's dark, damp, and dusty down there. There are two doors that lead to level 2 and the second one is always kept locked. Although one panel of lights is left on at all times, it's still very dark and the only way to turn the other lights on is to walk in a ways in the dark and then turn the others on. As part of their closing rounds, the supervisor and the closing staff member go down just to make sure the door is locked and no one is hiding in the stairwell trying to get locked in the building (fraternity pranks). A few times in the spring 2001 semester this door was mysteriously unlocked and yet no one had gone down there during the day that we know of. Those of us who have been in that room try to make our visits as brief as possible. It feels as though the portraits down there are watching and shift their eyes as you move from one area of the floor to the other.

*-- Bethany Sifer is administrative supervisor in O/K/U Circulation.*

# A Visit from the Twilight Zone

By Robin Messing

I was walking through the sixth level stacks of Uris Library on October 4, 1986 when I saw it: a lone envelope sitting on a carrel desktop, address side down. There was no other evidence that anyone was using the desk. There were no books or papers scattered about. There wasn't a single book bag or jacket anywhere in sight. Just one lone envelope, sitting there unattended.

I thought someone must have accidentally left the envelope there so I picked it up intending to bring it to the Lost and Found. Imagine my surprise when I saw my name neatly typed along with the current date on the address side of the envelope! Someone had obviously left the envelope there expecting me to find it or expecting that another staff member would find it and give it to me. But who? There was no other name or return address on the envelope.

I opened the envelope and found two articles copied from the *Cornell Daily Sun*. The first was dated March 11, 1976 and was entitled, "Students to Show Varied Talents In First Edition of Cornell Follies." The article mentioned several different acts that would be performed at the show. One sentence caught my eye because it was highlighted with a yellow magic marker: "One student performer, for example, will play tunes on his jaws, Kramer said."

The second article was published on March 22, 1976, just a few days after the talent show. Again, one sentence was highlighted: "There was even a man 'in litigation with the producers of last year's top grossing film' who sang songs with his jaws." The movie this sentence was referring to was *Jaws*. And the student both these articles were referring to was me.

I was shocked when I saw these articles. They were over ten years old and neither one of them mentioned me



by name. Whoever left the envelope for me to discover must have known that they were referring to me. But who would have known this and how would he or she have known this? I was not in the habit of discussing my hidden talents at work and I don't think any of my co-workers would have known that I had been in a talent show ten years earlier. Ten years is a long time in the life of the University. More than two generations of students had come and gone since I was in the show. There were very few people around in 1986 that could have known that I played tunes on my jaws in a 1976 talent show. I can only think of two possible explanations that could explain the envelope's mysterious appearance:

1) Someone could have made copies of the articles in 1976 and held onto them for ten years. The Mystery Person could have found out ten years later that I was working at Uris and left the articles for me to discover.

2) Someone ran across the articles while perusing the old bound copies of the *Daily Sun* that were kept at Uris Library. The Mystery Person, ten years after the event, realized the articles were referring to me and copied them, even though they never mentioned me by name.

Both scenarios seem highly unlikely. I still do not know who had copied those articles and left them for me to find one day, fifteen years ago. Perhaps it was someone from the Twilight Zone.

-- Robin Messing is a public services assistant in O/K/U Circulation.

# Second Annual Ergo Fair, October 9, 2001

The Team for Injury Prevention is sponsoring the second annual Ergo Fair on October 9 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Uris Library "Cocktail Lounge." Again this year the team is working with the Wellness program to present some interesting opportunities. The purpose of this fair is to educate library employees about workplace health and to encourage them to be proactive in achieving workplace health. The fair is designed so that the employee can spend as little or as much time as he/she chooses at each booth. Offerings include a health behavior assessment, healthy snacks, stretching at the desk with Denise Heimlich, consultation opportunities with Charles Curry, office yoga, a blood pressure clinic, a massage clinic, and some ergonomic/health related giveaways. Please come and enjoy this event co-sponsored by the Cornell University Wellness program.



# Rumors in the Stimson Morgue

By Rob Glase & Roger Clearwater



The dank underground air filled our lungs as we stepped into the dark basement of Stimson Hall. Our feeble flashlights barely lit our way as we crept deeper into the gloom. Our faces appeared ghastly, lit only with the pallid glow from far-off windows. The light was like a mockery of the crypt we now descended into. Our expressions were tense and braced for the unknown. We said nothing and listened to our footsteps echo through the labyrinth of chambers and passageways of a lost Cornell. How many dead had followed these hidden ways, never to return to the sunlit world? What horrors had been revealed here? What experiments had gone terribly wrong so far from prying eyes? Where did the bodies of those dead that had been brought here go? What was their final resting place? Did they have one? Were they still here, groping in the dark for some warmth to cling to, some heart to listen to, some life to end? What of the rumors? Cornell has one of the most extensive collections of brains. The largest brain, that of a mass-murderer, is displayed fluting in a jar of brine for all the world to see. But what of the bodies?

What was done with all the bodies? What of the underground passageways connecting Stimson Hall with Sage Chapel? This passageway, if it ever existed, would have allowed for the secret transfer of bodies from Stimson to the chapel. Could it be true, and if so, why was it made, at whose direction, and for what strange and unnatural purpose?

A sump pump snapped to life, and the noise jolted us out of our dark thoughts. We found ourselves in a dark and somewhat dank basement. Our great morgue was nothing but a storage space. Instead of bodies we found boxes filled with papers. No ghosts clawed at us in the dark rooms we moved through. Only the roaches scurried for cover. It seemed profoundly disappointing. What had we

expected? Had we thought of finding an older, more macabre Cornell? A sinister laboratory filled with unwholesome experiments? Perhaps we entertained having one of the cooler doors close behind us, trapping us in a shadowy hell forever? Whatever we expected the only ghosts we found were old computers and broken chairs covered with dust.

Isn't that the way of the world? Our expectations conjure up such grandiose images in our minds that reality could never hope to match. We are afraid of that which we can't conceive. A dark room can be horrifying because of what we can't see. Yet that same room seems boring in the light of day. A first day of work can give you butterflies in your stomach even if you know you are going to be licking envelopes. Death frightens us above all else, and is also our greatest mystery. But who is to say what death is actually like? Perhaps it is like our morgue: scary in concept but boring in reality. The only dead we found

were bugs and a bird of prey preserved in a jar.

The morgue in Stimson hall was built to serve the needs of the Cornell medical school. In 1898, the year the medical school was established, Cornell medical students had the option of taking the first two years of school on the Cornell campus here in Ithaca. This was true until 1908, when it was deemed that for medical instruction the proximity of the New York City area hospitals was too important to ignore, and only the first year of medical school was offered in Ithaca. It is unclear when medical instruction in Ithaca ceased altogether.

Stimson Hall is an absolute maze, and it was a challenge to look at the blueprints in the Kroch Library reading room and then to try to navigate the basement and cellar using only our memories (for some reason Rare wouldn't let us take the plans with us). The difficulty was compounded by the fact that the 1902 plans were altered in 1956 to reflect a revision, and a copy of the original 1902 plan no longer exists. Much of our information came from reading erased captions and tracing





erased walls on the plans. It was especially difficult to figure out which was the cellar and which was the basement. As an overview, the "morgue" contained the following rooms. Some of these rooms no longer exist, and some may never have. There is a large room in the cellar that contains three large specimen tanks. It is unclear what specimens they once contained, but now they hold a bunch of antiquated computer components. There are several rooms that have been labeled as "cold-storage," one of which holds a large wooden cooler. A portion of the old cold-storage space is now in the Kroch mezzanine; thus it is still used for keeping old lifeless things from further deteriorating. Adjacent to the cold storage space is an area that once held a constant temperature room. The constant temperature room was once the crematorium, according to the 1902 plans. Now it is a storage space. Somewhere in the same area was an embalming chamber, though today it is impossible to see exactly where. And what about the rooms for the dark experiments? A "special experiment room" was added to

the basement in 1948. According to the plans, it was a beetle experiment room, one that was sealed to keep the experimental beetles from escaping. Or perhaps it was sealed to keep people out of the room, or maybe to keep them in ....

We heard many rumors that we could not verify, but would like to spread as widely as possible. According to the custodial staff, the break room in Stimson was once the autopsy room. It is covered with those light green tiles found in operating theaters in hospitals, and there are drains in the floor. The space is obviously not part of the original building. As far as the rumored tunnels between Stimson and Sage Chapel, while we were unable to find any trace of them, we are now even more certain that they exist. Several people also claimed that there was another "morgue" somewhere in the upper floors of Stimson, but we found nothing. A reliable source claimed to have been in some sort of storage space that contained a huge collection of various specimens of a disturbing nature. He claimed the storage space

was in the upper stories of the building, but as we were unable to enter the area, we could not confirm this either.

Please feel free to pass on any additional rumors to us, even if they are complete fabrications. As we have pointed out, the truth is boring, and we would like to create as much of a mystique as possible regarding the massive network of passageways and catacombs, dungeons and bottomless pits, housed in the basement and cellar of Stimson. That said, much of this article is based on actual information, but we stress the unconfirmed nature of many of our sources. One day we know that we will find the secret door that will take us into the sub-cellar complex. There, perhaps, if we are either lucky or unlucky enough, we will find the evil that is housed in the dark recesses of Stimson Hall. Perhaps we will find those brainless bodies seeking the warmth of a beating heart. Perhaps we will find the cells housing the giant flesh-eating beetles or some other unrealized horror. Until that day, we will remain blissfully terrified of the hidden secrets of the Morgue in Stimson Hall.

*-- Rob Glase and Roger Clearwater  
are both preservation assistants in  
Preservation & Conservation.*



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# Quintetto Giocoso

By Sarah Young



From left: *Elisa Evett, Jim Rundle, Sarah Young, Nilanjana Bhattacharjya, and Katy Gottschalk.*

When an ILR Extension faculty member approached me about reading some chamber music last winter, I had no idea where our conversation would lead. In addition to being a librarian, I am also a classically trained musician—my years of music study led me to perform with orchestras in such exotic locales as Spoleto, Italy; Miami, Florida; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and even Lodi, Iowa. I had racked up so many miles in my car and opened so many frequent flier accounts that the idea of rehearsing right here in Ithaca, let alone in my own living room, was quite appealing.

The phrase “chamber music,” or, “*musica da camera*,” originated in the Baroque period (1650-1750). Theodore Karp’s *Dictionary of Music* defines it as “music written for a small number of performers, each with an individual part.” Chamber music originally was intended to be performed in a room or small hall, often within a private home.

Our informal group, consisting of a string quartet and clarinet, has met in various living rooms here in town and

out in the country. We have spent hours ruminating over musical interpretations and puzzling over how best to execute certain passages. Along the way, we have enjoyed filling our homes with music and mirth. In that vein, we have dubbed ourselves *Quintetto Giocoso*.

We will be giving an informal concert this month, to share the fruits of our labor. Our members include the Labor Extension Coordinator at ILR Extension, a Musicology graduate student, the Director of First-Year Writing Seminars, and the Teaching Artist for the Southern Tier Institute for Art in Education & President of Music’s Recreation in Ithaca.

Program: Mozart and Brahms Clarinet Quintets

Sarah Young, Clarinet  
Jim Rundle, Violin  
Nilanjana Bhattacharjya, Violin  
Katy Gottschalk, Viola  
Elisa Evett, Violoncello

**First Baptist Church** (next to DeWitt Park) downtown Ithaca  
**Sunday, October 14, 2001 @ 3:00 p.m.** Reception to follow.

Admission is free.

*Can't make the above date?*

We will be giving the same concert at **Kendal of Ithaca on Wednesday, October 10<sup>th</sup> @ 7:15 p.m.**

-- Sarah Young is technical services librarian at ILR Catherwood Library.

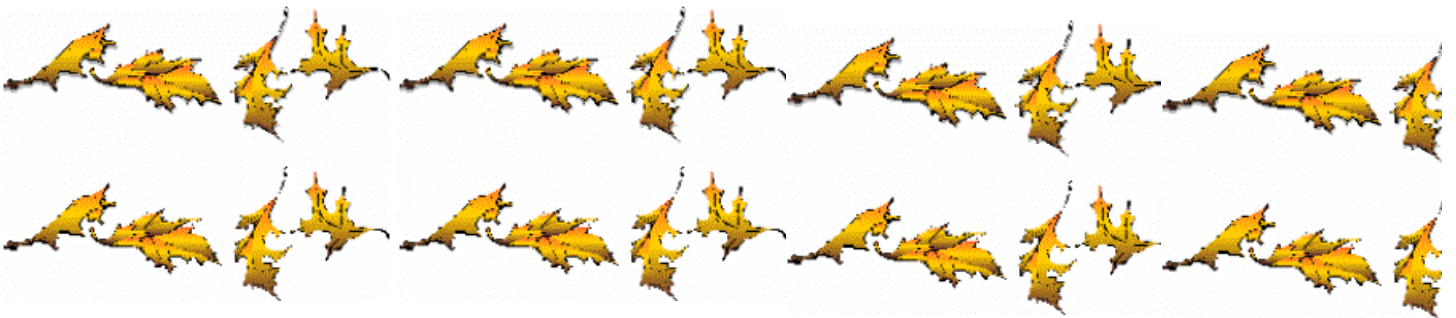
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# Unit in the Spotlight

## Library Accounting



Front from left: Jackie Morris and Heather Quick, accounts representatives. Back from left: Kelly Krause, accounts representative; Linda Westlake, director of Accounting Services; Ann Augustine and Susan Bristol, accounts coordinators. (photo by Christina Bucko)



# People News

September 1-September 30

## WELCOME

**Deborah Cook** is the new public services assistant in O/K/U Collection Management. For the past nineteen years she has been working in customer service at Tops Market in Cortland, New York.

**William DeForest** is the new public services assistant in O/K/U Circulation. He has an MA in Fine Arts and previously worked as a freelance illustrator.

**Rebecca McCleary** is the new collections assistant in O/K/U Reference. This year she earned her BA in history at Cornell.

**Megan Perez** is the new public services assistant in O/K/U Reference. He has a BA in philosophy from Southwestern University and is working on his Masters. Formerly he was an Investigator for the Civilian Complaint Review Board in New York City.

**Yuri Prokopenko** is the new public services assistant in O/K/U Collection Management. Previously he worked at The Bon-Ton.

**Thomas Riker** is the new public services assistant in O/K/U Circulation. He has a BA in English and rhetoric from the State University of New York at Binghamton and comes to us from the CBORD Group.

**Doris Smith** has joined the Management Library as their new public services assistant. She has a BA in applied science from the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada. Previously, she worked as a college affiliate for the College of Veterinary Medicine here at Cornell.

**Matthew Winberg** is the new public services assistant in the department of Interlibrary Services. Previous jobs include working at The Bookery, Finger Lakes Community Newspapers, and Cornell Cooperative Extension.

## TRANSFERS

**Michelle Cartland** has transferred from O/K/U Circulation to O/K/U Collection Management as a public services assistant.

**Michael Cook** has transferred from collection development in Mann Library to their public services division. He is the new Public Access Computing Coordinator and will be participating in reference, instruction, and consulting services.

**Lee Ringland** has transferred from the Mathematics Library to the Management Library as a public services assistant.

**Natalie Sheridan** has transferred from O/K/U Circulation to the Mathematics Library as a public services assistant.

**Nanci Trapani** has transferred from Interlibrary Services to the Fine Arts Library as a public services assistant.

## PROMOTIONS

**Susette Newberry** has been appointed to the new academic position of Visual Resources Archivist in the Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections. She has a PhD in the history of art from Cornell.

## GOOD-BYE

Good-bye and good luck to **Michele Martin**, Fine Arts Library, **Alison Reissman**, CTS-Cataloging, **Danielle Richardson**, Hotel Library, **Carrol Tavelli**, Technical Services Support Unit, and **Gregory Tomso**, Engineering Library, who recently left the Library.



## CONDOLENCES

In light of the events of September 11, the Kaleidoscope Committee would like to express our support and solidarity to everyone in the Cornell community for the horrible tragedy that affected us all. We would especially like to offer our most heartfelt condolences to anyone who lost a family member, a friend, or a loved one in New York City, Washington, D.C., or Pennsylvania.



Wednesday, October 31