

OVIATT FRIENDS

Friends of the Oviatt Library

Spring/Summer 2011

One-of-a-kind Exhibition: Tony Gardner's Swan Song

Some came to view the Library's rarely seen treasures.

Others came to hear the keynote speaker, Stephen Tabor of the Huntington Library. But many long-time friends of the library, those truly in the know, came to honor the Oviatt Library's multi-talented, long-serving Curator of Special Collections, Tony Gardner, who



recently announced his retirement, and to ogle his latest, and perhaps his last, creation for the Library—an exhibit featuring unique gems from the Library's archives. But for whatever reason, they came; and none left disappointed.

Tabor, Curator of Early Printed Books at the Huntington, provided an appropriate prelude for the exhibit by tackling an oft-asked question: Why should we care about unusual works—usually called Special Collections—tucked away in difficult-to-access, environmentally controlled vaults? Why not digitize them and discard the often old and fragile originals, thus freeing precious space and eliminating the need for a special environment? Tabor's response to the question he had rhetorically posed was that, "One copy can never fully represent an edition," and he documented this assertion with example after example of multiple copies of a single work that differed significantly in detail. In the early

era of printing, he noted, when errors were found or changes judged necessary, presses were stopped, changes were made, and printing resumed. But the error-bearing pages were not discarded—paper was much too precious for such extravagance—and the result was books, even from the same printing that differed in subtle ways. Moreover, type was reset completely after each run, typically of a few hundred books, at which time it was commonplace to insert new materials or modify the original. Even more variance resulted from the common practice of re-binding books, sometimes intermixing pages from different printings. Online facsimiles or surrogates, Tabor acknowledged, "... can be tremendously useful and certainly convenient, but... only from the early printed versions, with all their imperfections can a researcher come close to understanding the author's mind." Electronic copies are here to stay, but they can never

replace the original materials, the sort of thing that makes up a library's Special Collections.

Following Tabor's thought-provoking comments the assembled dignitaries and Library friends repaired to the Tseng Family Gallery where, while savoring an enticing medley of crudités, they ogled an eclectic assortment

of unique, rare, one-of-a-kind ephemera plus portions of some of the Library's smaller collections. Among the items Gardner opted to showcase in his ultimate exhibition were such singular treasures as: A hand-written, eyewitness account of the 1881 gunfight between the Earps and Clantons at the OK corral in Tombstone, Arizona, arguably the most famous gunfight of the Old West; an 1855 letter by abolitionist John Brown in which he vowed to continue fighting to keep Kansas territory slave-free; a fragment of a Torah scroll (Numbers 2:22-32:13), hand written on parchment; a copper-electro printing plate for Mark Twain's *An Idle Excursion*; and a 1755 edition of Samuel Johnson's *A Dictionary of the English Language*, in which for the first time he included examples of each word's usage drawn from works of the Elizabethan Period.

Also on view were such unexpected jewels from minor collections as: Colorful paintings and

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ink-on-paper sketches by Haitian artists depicting voodoo rituals, all a part of the Dolores Yonkers collection; gorgeous gilded bronze animals, kettles and pots from the Western Zhou-Han period, pieces from the Tseng Family collection of Chinese antiquities; a watercolor, an acrylic-on-canvas painting, and a woodcut print by acclaimed artist and former CSUN student, Florence Ferman, all of them from a lesser-known branch of Ferman's larger and oft displayed ceramics collection; and a gorgeous velvet dress worn by American opera soprano Helen Traubel, its pleats adorned with steel beads and sequins, rather incongruently juxtaposed with the avid fisherwoman's favorite Centaure fishing reel (minus the pole, which, as noted on the accompanying placard, was too long for the display case).

Gardner, who is retiring after nearly four decades at the Oviatt, has spent the past quarter century as Curator of Special Collections. After earning a BA in History at CSUN, an MLS from UCLA and an MA in Middle Eastern history from the U of Arizona, Gardner joined the Library staff in 1974 as catalog librarian. It wasn't until thirteen years later that he took over Special Collections on a part-time basis, graduating to his full-time overseer position as the collection grew in size and importance. But Gardner's time at the helm of Special Collections was not always easy. In a missive announcing the archivist's retirement, Sue Curzon, Library Dean, reminisced about Gardner's role in the after-

math of the Northridge earthquake when he, flashlight in hand, led a team into the pitch-black, fractured library to retrieve rain-soaked books, most of them unique and rare, for delivery to professional freeze driers, thus saving them from destruction. Then, Curzon said, for six years as the Oviatt Library was rebuilt, "Tony expended extraor-



ordinary effort to fully restore the Special Collections and Archives," all while working in portable bungalows and a plastic library dome.

Once the rebuilt Library again opened for business, Gardner turned his attention to the hidden treasures he loved so much, seeking wherever possible to share them with the public. This he accomplished through exquisite exhibits, primarily of the Library's larger archives. Most recent among his exhibitions were such eye-catching gems as: *The Sun that Lights the Rainbow*, a treasure trove of works about the life and time of Elizabeth I; *The Making of the Book*, an exhibit depicting the art of hand book binding from the time of Gutenberg to the present; *Celebrating Comic Books*, a display that drew upon the Library's collection of vintage comics to trace the evo-

lution of this uniquely American art-literature; *Wish You Were Here*, an assortment of documents related to travel from ancient to modern times; and *Now Give Three Cheers: The Timeless Magic of Gilbert and Sullivan*, an assemblage of books, scores and ephemera related to the comic duo's life works, all from the newly acquired David Trutt collection.

As an authority on rare collections, Gardner has often been called upon to explain the intellectual process, the historical research and the intellectual content of particular exhibits. This, said Curzon, "... he always did with grace and humility." Moreover, in his capacity as archivist, Gardner, said the dean, "...was an active participant in Faces of L.A. and in the Los Angeles Preservation Network, entities re-

sponsible for preserving documents relevant to local history." Of her soon-to-retire colleague, Curzon added, "We are going to miss Tony immensely. Not just because of his incredible knowledge about matters pertaining to the preservation of our special collections, but his unfailing courtesy to our users and colleagues, his patience, diplomacy and calmness in the face of any issue, his warmth and caring about people, and his reasoned judgment." Such accolades suggest that Gardner leaves big shoes to be filled and will be difficult to replace!

Gus and Erika Manders and the Friends of the Library sponsored the reception and exhibit. Most items on display were donated to the Library, their sources indicated on accompanying labels; to those donors the Library offers a special thank you, for without them there would be no Special Collections. —jdole

Library Student Employees Garner Awards

The 10th Annual Student Employee Awards Ceremony last June saw four students honored for their service to the Library. Named *Outstanding New Employee* was **LaTosha King**, while **Parin Sutaria** took the award for *Outstanding Long-term Employee*. The *Outstanding Library Support Services* honoree was **Amy Suddleson**, whereas the *Outstanding Patron Service Award* went to **Hoda Firouzian**.

For their exemplary service, more than \$10,000 in scholarships was bestowed on student employees. **Yue He** took the *Mary Cleary Scholarship for International Students*; **Samantha Barton**, **Angela Bell**, **Chamero Mack** and **James Mansfield** received the four *Lois and Ralph Prator Scholarships*; **David Morck** and **Karine Panosian** took home the *Karin Durán Scholarships*; **Darline Barron** won the *Friends of the Library Scholarship*; **Hannah Pedraza** and **Andy Villalobos** were honored with the *Ann and Dave Perkins Scholarships*; and **Hua Yang** went away with the *Virginia Elwood Scholarship*. Said Library Dean, Sue Curzon, this ceremony “is one of my favorite events because it gives us a chance to honor our many excellent student employees who do so much to make the library run smoothly. But the awards would be impossible but for the generosity of the scholarship donors. For their contributions I am deeply grateful, as I’m sure are the students.”

Samantha Barton, a student employee in the Library’s Teacher Curriculum Center, has been honored with one of the

CSU System’s highest awards: the 2010 *William R. Hearst/CSU Trustees’ Award for Outstanding Achievement*. The honor is for students who demonstrate “superior academic performance, exemplary community service, and significant personal achievements.” A secondary education major with plans for a teaching credential and a Master’s degree in Kinesiology, Samantha has earned a laudable 3.99 GPA yet has found time to coach volleyball and basketball at a local park, run PE workshops at elementary schools, and be a university ambassador and a peer mentor at CSUN.



Pictured (l-r): LaTosha King, Parin Sutaria, Dean Susan Curzon, Amy Suddleson, Hoda Firouzian



Angela Bell



Hannah Pedraza



David Morck



Pictured (l-r): Darline Barron, June Frankenberg, Anne Kogen



Karine Panosian



Andy Villalobos



Back row (l-r) Sheila Reback, James Mansfield, Betsy Stelck, Joanne Christansen
Front row (l-r) Samantha Barton, Linda Nyquist, Ruth Lupul, Yue He, Chamero Mack, Susan Curzon



Hua Yang

Karin Durán: A Celebration of a Life

Most guests came dressed in contemporary styles, but a few wore 1960's garb—tie-dyed T-shirts, a Dashiki, a flowing, ankle-length seersucker skirt, sandals, headbands, bead necklaces—all harkening back to an era for which Karin Durán had a special fondness. But however they dressed, more than 150 crowded the Library's presentation room and spilled into the foyer and adjacent areas. They came to honor Karin, a woman who had departed this mortal stage much too early, and as a result denied her many friends a chance to say 'thank you' for her kindness, her guidance, her concern, her generosity. But they were there to party, not to mourn! It's how Karin had wanted it.

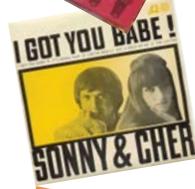
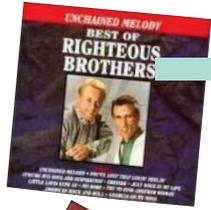
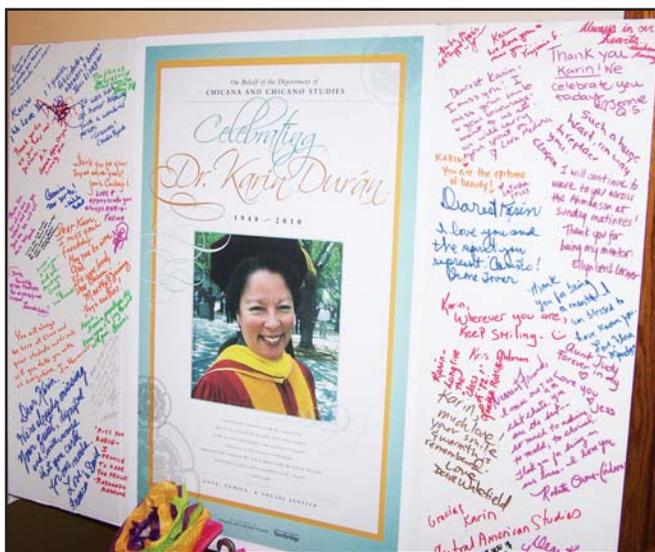
And what a party it was! Ten-year-old Ricardito Paz sang, his mariachi tunes eliciting laughter and hoots of appreciation. Student Vanesa Arribe swirled and pranced in her floor-length crimson skirt as she executed a traditional Mexican dance. A small ensemble of students performed to a tune from *Hairspray*, a Karin favorite. A DJ spun platters from the '60's. And, of course, there was food: taquitos, quesadillas, chips with natilla and guacamole. And on the walls were myriad LP albums by such '60's icons as the Doors, the Beach Boys, the Beatles, and Led Zeppelin.

Though there was a festive air, a serious side to the get-together was also apparent: an acknowledgement that someone important who had accomplished much in her life had left the

stage, and that her ever-cheerful, other-centered countenance will be sorely missed. Altar-like displays of photos and memorabilia bedecked the room and foyer, each the product of an organization Karin had touched: The Teacher Curriculum Center, a Library unit she oversaw for more than three decades; Comision Femenil, a group dedicated to helping Latinas in the San Fernando Valley, of which Karin was a founding member and a participant for a quarter century; the Nativity School, a Catholic elementary school for low-income students on whose board she served and whose library she helped build; the Associated Students of CSUN, who counted her among their ardent supporters; and the Department of Chicana/o Studies, to which for 35 years she contributed her expertise as an instructor. And in a show of deep appreciation, the Associated Students and Comision Femenil created scholarships in Karin's honor.

What was missing was any prominent acknowledgement of Karin's many awards and honors, a not-surprising omission since her focus was always on others, not herself. But honors she had, and they deserve telling. In 2006, the University recognized her exceptional accomplishments with its *Extraordinary Service Award*. La Raza Alumni Association honored her with its *Outstanding Achievement Award*, and the CSUN Alumni Association awarded her its *Service to So-*

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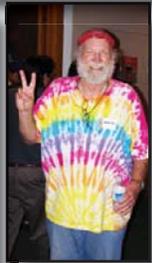


ciety honor. And Karin was a recent inductee into Phi Beta Delta Omega, an honor society for international scholars, a high honor indeed.

Karin Durán, librarian extraordinaire, was much more than an exceptional fount of information always willing to help all comers; she was also an exceptional human being, a fact made abundantly apparent by a montage of remembrances presented by co-workers, students, and friends in a video. A brief assortment of comments tells it all: “She mentored students, guided them and counseled them”; “She was an amazing woman, full of compassion and kindness”; “She never thought about students failing; she worked hard to help them succeed”; “*Si se puede*, it can be done. She exemplified that and she taught it”; “She was a life coach, a mentor, a mom, a confidant”; “She was the embodiment of the work of a librarian. Our conversations were always about how she could help me in my work”; “I called her my ‘higher power.’ A student would ask a question, and I’d say ‘I have to check with my ‘higher power.’ And I did. Dr. Karin Durán was my ‘higher power.’”

For all its potential as a downer, the commemoration was instead uplifting, even fun, just as Karin asked it be. Throw a party, she had said, and emphasize the ‘60’s, a period to which she closely related. And as they departed, the partygoers’ hearts were full, their remembrances fond, and their hands clutched a recipe for Karin’s best-known and often-enjoyed culinary creation: Karin’s Enchanting Enchiladas. It was Karin’s last gift to those she valued so much, and who in turn so much valued her.

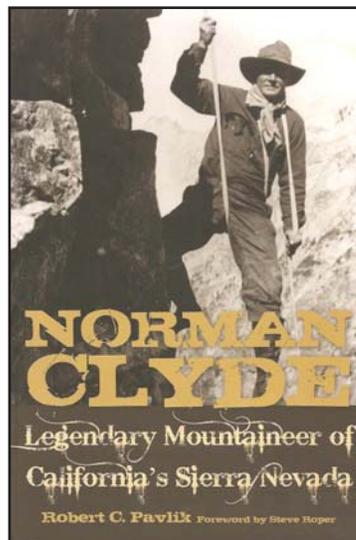
—jdole



Norman Clyde: Legendary Mountain Man

He was a loner, totally at home in the mountains’ solitude. He lived off the land and the occasional handout. Climbing was his passion, and for more than half a century, at a time when few people roamed the Sierra Nevada’s craggy wilderness and rescues were impossible, he scaled the sheerest of peaks solo. He was “...completely in tune with his chosen environment...a world of dazzling granite and glacial ice, deep blue sky and ominously towering thunderheads.”

So said Robert C. Pavlik of venerable mountain man Norman Asa Clyde, the subject of his newly published book, *Norman Clyde: Legendary Mountaineer of California’s Sierra Nevada*. Speaking at a Friends of the Library–sponsored luncheon in April, Pavlik verbally painted an indelible picture of Clyde as a “...backpack that walked like a man.” Though he tipped



the scales at only 140 pounds, Clyde’s pack, said Pavlik, “...commonly exceeding 90 pounds.” Described with awe by those who had hefted his monstrous load, Clyde’s pack typically contained, in addition to the expected paraphernalia for a trek into the wilds, an axe, often a hatchet, a cast iron skillet, a revolver, sometimes a rifle, even hardback books! “He was not one of those ‘go-light’ campers,” said Pavlik.

Clyde’s name, largely unknown among today’s generation of mountain climbers, was immediately familiar to mountain explorers of the early and mid-20th century. He was a fixture of the mountains, as much at home in its wilds as the wolverine he on occasion encountered, and his knowledge of his milieu was unmatched. “He was the only man I know,” wrote Thomas Jukes, Sierra Club member, in

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Clyde's obituary, "who gave himself up completely to a passionate love of the mountains. In return, the mountains spared him ... and let him die of old age in full view of its peaks."

In spite of his reclusive nature, Clyde was well educated, intelligent and widely read.

As a boy, he was home-schooled by his father, an itinerant preacher, from whom he learned to read the classics in Greek and Latin. He studied to become a teacher at Geneva College in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, said Pavlik, earning an A.B. degree in the classics. Later, he came within one course of completing a master's degree in English at UC Berkeley; literate in Spanish, French, Italian and German he adamantly refused to participate in an English class entitled "Dramas of the Romance Languages," insisting that "Italian plays should be read in Italian, French dramas in French, neither one in English." For eighteen years he taught school, first in North Dakota, then Utah and Arizona before brief stints at several California schools, the last in the Owens Valley town of Independence. There, Clyde was promoted to school Principal but, said Pavlik, "...when accused of shooting at students on Halloween, he resigned his post, moved his stuff into

his car and never worked a full-time job again." His only long-term job thereafter was as winter caretaker at Glacier Lodge in Big Pine Canyon for 20 years, shoveling snow from the lodge's roof, chasing vandals and keeping hunters at bay. But "...when the last of the snow had been shoveled he would climb up into the Palisade Basin and range among the high peaks of the Sierra until the weather drove him back down in the fall."

The Sierra Nevada was Clyde's main stomping ground and he loved its serrate peaks and deep valleys. But on occasion he wandered elsewhere, from Mount Robson in the Canadian Rockies to El Picacho del Diablo in Baja California and as far eastward as Yellowstone and the Grand Tetons. In a five-week stint in Glacier National Park he became the first to reach the summit of the "unscalable" Mt. Wilbur, building on its tip a 7-foot-tall rock cairn, easily seen from below, to demonstrate his accomplishment. Clyde was the first person, said Pavlik, to reach the tops of 130 peaks, standing literally where no other person had been before, and in his lifetime he summited more than one thousand mountains, many multiple times, among them the tallest promontory in the contiguous 48 states, Mt. Whitney, which he ascended more than fifty times. During winter Clyde occasionally traipsed through southern California's Transverse Ranges, on one excursion hiking through the San Gabriels and the San Bernardino Mountains, then across San Gorgonio Pass to San Jacinto, along the way ascending every major pinnacle he encountered. Then, said Pavlik, to mark the jaunt's end, "He relaxed with a few days of horseback riding."

Though out of touch with the civilized world for long stretches, Clyde was no hermit. In winters he frequently migrated to Los Angeles, often to Dawson's Bookstore, to stock up on reading material and to cadge equipment or food. According to Pavlik, Dawson's served as Clyde's "personal post office, storage area, bank, message center, meeting place, and library." And periodically, he traveled by bus to Pennsylvania to visit family, with whom he also sometimes corresponded by mail.

Clyde, said Pavlik, possessed an uncanny knack for knowing when and where to reconnect to civilization, sometimes for sustenance or camaraderie, sometimes to lend aid. "He would just show up at Sierra Club camps... join them for a day or two, accept a handout of food, do some fishing, perhaps climb with them, then just wander back down the trail." A Sierra Club member in Pavlik's audience confirmed from personal experience Clyde's penchant for uninvited appearances, noting: "In 1968,

when Clyde was 83, he simply appeared at a Sierra Club camp where I was safety instructor. Of course we fed him. But we also watched him cut down a small snag and build a fire in the middle of some glacial polish, to which the Sierra Club trip leader muttered, "What can I do? It's Norman Clyde!" Because of his sometimes unruly, even antisocial, habits, said Pavlik, some Sierra Club members likened Clyde's appearances at their gatherings to "... having a bear in the camp."

It was a search in 1934 for a young San Francisco attorney, Walter "Pete" Starr, Jr., that forever cemented Clyde's name in Sierra Nevada lore, said Pavlik. Starr, a passionate mountaineer, had gone alone among the rugged peaks of the Minaret region to explore and collect data for a guidebook he was penning about the John Muir Trail. When he failed to return at an appointed time, Starr's father enlisted friends, mountaineers and a contingent of Sierra Club climbers to search for his son. Although the

"What can I do? It's Norman Clyde!"

search teams turned up numerable signs of Starr's trek—rock cairns marking trails, his ice axe and crampons, a bit of cloth, a cigarette butt—Starr himself was nowhere to be found. After several days of scrambling across the rugged terrain failed to produce the missing man, the official search was called off, its target presumed dead. Clyde, learning of the missing climber on his descent from the backcountry, joined the search, but feeling a need to bring closure to Starr's parents, continued searching alone after the official effort ended, "...gaining and losing thousands of vertical feet as he climbed and descended every peak." After more than a week of solo climbing, cued by the sound of carrion-loving blowflies, Clyde spotted Starr's body on a narrow ledge of one of the Minaret's highest peaks. Concluding that retrieval of the body was too risky, the dead climber's father entreated Clyde to bury his son among the rocks. Aided by Jules Eichorn, his friend and sometime climbing companion, Clyde entombed the young mountaineer's body in a crevice, packing its sides with stones. For this service, Starr's father paid Clyde, who at the time lived a hand-to-mouth existence, a modest yearly stipend for the rest of his life, and awarded Eichorn a scholarship to the University of California, Berkeley, enabling him to earn a degree in music.

With no regular job, Clyde supported himself by doing whatever came his way. Said Pavlik, he "...

was often called upon for rescues and body recoveries...(and) in 1942 aided in the recovery of bodies and papers from an Army Air Corp plane that had crashed in the eastern Sierra." He sometimes did mapping for the Geological Survey, "but always as a casual employee." Clyde also earned a modicum of remuneration from the many articles he wrote, more than 1400 in all, for the popular press and mountain journals, and for his services as guide, climbing instructor and general roustabout for Eichorn, by then a music teacher in Redwood City who took students each summer on backpacking excursions to the Sierra.

On several occasions, Clyde was honored for his mountaineering prowess and for his knowledge of the Sierras. Though no seeker of the limelight, he nevertheless enjoyed the accolades. His alma mater awarded him in 1939 an honorary D.Sc. degree and recognized his nature writing in 1962 with its distinguished service award. Though his relationship with the Sierra Club ran hot and cold—he was initially embraced, then rejected as too non-collegial, then welcomed again in his twilight year—the group, in recognition of his contributions to mountaineering, made him a recipient, at age 85, of its first *Francis Farquhar Mountaineering Award*, which he shared with Allen Steck. Clyde also took great pleasure in a biography he, with David Bohn's help, wrote of his life—*Norman Clyde of the Sierra Nevada: Rambles Through the Range of Light*—and appeared at the book signing "...shining clean" and quite proud of his life's work.

Clyde's legacy lives on, said Pavlik, in the many specimens he collected that now reside in UC Berkeley's Vertebrate Museum; in a Sierran peak, on the eastern boundary of Kings Canyon National Park, that along with a glacier, a minaret, a spire, a ledge and a meadow, now bears his name; in an exhibit about his life and accomplishments in the Eastern California Museum in Independence; and in the handful of books about his life. Without any doubt, the most notable of these books is Pavlik's own comprehensive treatise, about which Steve Roper, author and venerable alpinist, had this to say: "Pavlik has done an admirable job in bringing to light Clyde's extraordinary life...(in a) different age, one that (he) captures beautifully."

Pavlik, a graduate of CSUN, spent more than 15 years researching Norman Clyde's life, patching together his narrative from disparate archives and personal interviews. Pavlik is an environmental planner and historian with the California Department of Transportation.

—jdole

OVIATT FRIENDS

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California State University
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Congratulations

Dr. Joseph Moore!

2011

Oviatt Library Volunteer of the Year

*Joe, emeritus professor of Biology,
a long-time member of the Friends of the Library,
currently serves as Treasurer.*

