Library building planning on fast track

Because funding was approved for design drawings and producing engineering and construction documents, the process of building a new library on the Monroe Park Campus is on a fast track. Here’s the timeline: A "Request for Proposals" was issued May 4 to solicit offers from architect/engineering firms for the design. A pre-proposal meeting was held May 22 for firms interested in bidding on the project. The informational session drew a large group of representatives from architecture firms. A number of companies with deep experience in library design were present as well as some smaller firms and even several high-profile architects who have designed widely admired landmark buildings on campuses. Proposals came in by June 6. Evaluation is under way. Because the award of the contract requires Board of Visitors' approval, the recommended firm will be presented to the board at its August 2012 meeting. Design work will begin in August, pending BOV approval. The university hopes to have sufficient design work finished by November to create an accurate construction cost estimate that will be used for the funding request for construction to the General Assembly for its 2013 session. The schedule for actual construction depends on whether funding materializes. Anticipating an optimistic scenario for funding, the new library will open in fall 2015.

Also ... a transformational renovation is under way on the second floor of Tompkins-McCaw Library for the Health Sciences. The floor is expected to be open for use in August. ... And, at Venture Richmond’s late May Forum on downtown building projects, the library plan was mentioned. More.

National grant to save rare Richmond films a first for Virginia universities

VCU Libraries has been awarded funds from the National Film Preservation Foundation to preserve select films from the Harris H. Stilson film collection. Grants were awarded to 35 projects--including preservation of a newly discovered film by composer John Cage--in 22
states. VCU is the first university in the commonwealth to receive a grant from the prestigious foundation. Stilson (1868-1934) was a Richmond streetcar conductor, later a motorman, and amateur photographer and film documentarian. His films offer a rarely seen visual record of Richmond 1929-31. "The Stilson work is a unique treasure," said Wesley J. Chenault, head of Special Collections and Archives at James Branch Cabell Library. "Film footage of the city is rare and our research suggests that these films are among the oldest, if not the oldest, held by any local or regional cultural institution in the commonwealth." More.

History of the VCU seal: In his July 2 update to the university, President Michael Rao, Ph.D., unveiled a new university seal and explained the importance of such symbols. He wrote:

"As we move into the ranks of nationally competitive universities, it is more important than ever that we communicate with one voice in a strong, compelling and consistent way that conveys our unique character and academic quality.... Toward that end, a new university seal and brand mark have been developed and approved by the Board of Visitors. The new seal and brand mark are the result of quantitative and qualitative surveys and significant input from members of the university community, including students, faculty, staff and alumni. ... The new university seal ... reflects the unity of VCU while maintaining its grand historical significance."

A new Web page in Tompkins-McCaw Library's Special Collections and Archives section details the history of the MCV and VCU seals and institutional symbols. Research was provided by VCU Libraries' Jodi Koste and Ray Bonis. History of the seal.
Cold War remembrance: The Richmond Times-Dispatch editorial page June 24, 2012, featured a cartoon of a historic moment, the June 24, 1948, start of the Berlin Blockade, an early crisis of the Cold War. The cartoon is from the Fred O. Seibel Papers, held by VCU Libraries' Special Collections and Archives. More.

Flashback Fridays: The VCU Alumni Association's Facebook page each Friday is featuring a photograph of the university's past. Most photos are from VCU Libraries' Special Collections and Archives.

Friends of Library giving levels 2012-13
Longtime supporters will see fresh new Friends of the Library and giving Web pages. New leadership giving levels set by the Friends of the Library board effective July 1 are:

$1 - $99  Supporters
$100 – $249  Friends
$250 – $499  Sponsors
$500 – $999  Sustainers
$1,000 – $2,499  Fellows
$2,500 – $4,999  Benefactors
$5,000 – $9,999  Librarian’s Circle
$10,000 +  Rams Society

Donors at the $100 or above level are eligible to receive borrowing privileges, invitations to Friends-sponsored events and admission to the preview of the annual book sale. A gift to the VCU Friends of the Library is an unrestricted annual gift, tax deductible as allowed by law.
Update your information: Do you have a new email address or address? Please update your information by contacting Antonia FD Vassar (B.A. '05/A), assistant director of development, at (804) 827-1165.

Stay in touch: Like us on Facebook to keep updated with the latest in library news. Follow us on Twitter, too.

Thank You, Thank You, Thank You
Thanks to our Friends of the Library donors for their support of the VCU Libraries. Please consider making your annual gift today.

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