View Earth from Above in Smithsonian Traveling Exhibition at the Folsom Library

Each day, high above the clouds, dozens of sophisticated imaging satellites circle the Earth. These high-tech machines are capable of capturing extraordinary conditions and events that are nearly impossible to document from the surface of the planet. These remarkable images, which reveal the awesome beauty of the planet’s surface through the “eyes” of a space satellite, are on display in a new Smithsonian traveling exhibition. Our library is thrilled to announce that we will be showcasing it!

Earth from Space opens at the Folsom Library on December 1 and will remain on view through January 27, 2008. The exhibition will then continue its national tour through 2009. The Folsom Library is one of only 15 host institutions that are privileged to offer this fascinating display free of charge to the public.

Featuring 40 beautifully detailed satellite images of the planet—from the swirling arms of a massive hurricane and the grid-like pattern of Kansas farmland to the triangular shadows cast by the Great Pyramids and the sinuous channels entering the Arctic Ocean, Earth from Space illustrates how satellite imagery is gathered and used to expand mankind’s understanding of life on Earth. It also explores the remote sensing technology used to gather the images and discusses the individual satellites whose images are on display. A Magic Planet digital video globe—a digital display with a sphere-shaped screen—complements the traveling exhibition. The animations on this tool will allow visitors to observe the global extent of images returned from orbiting satellites.

Earth from Space was developed by the Center for Earth and Planetary Studies at the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum, in collaboration with the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES). Andrew Johnston, a geographer at the National Air and Space Museum's Center for Earth and Planetary Studies and author of Earth from Space (Firefly Books, 2004), is the exhibition’s curator.

(continued on page 5)
The Rensselaer Research Libraries welcomed new and transfer students to its annual open house on August 24. Approximately 200 students came to meet the staff; tour the library; try out eBooks, eJournals, and other online services; and enjoy free pizza and beverages. Students were also able to make ice cream sundaes and chat with the staff of the Center for Communication Practices, located on the first floor of the library. Staff from Telecommunications were on hand as well to pass out goodies and answer any phone questions.

All of the students who took the tour were entered in a prize raffle. Prizes were donated by local vendors Price Chopper, Wal-Mart, and Mocha Blend Café. Campus vendors, such as the Rensselaer Campus Computer Store, the Rensselaer Book Store, and the Library Café, contributed, too, as did some of the vendors the library deals with regularly. These include Northeast Region IEEE, EBSCO Information Services, Elsevier Incorporated, Chemical Abstracts Service, and SPIE. More than 80 prizes were awarded. They included gift cards, flash drives, pedometers, book bags, t-shirts, backpacks, duffel bags, travel blankets, and mugs.

Students were encouraged to enter guessing games involving library-related questions. One of the lucky winners was freshman Ross Williams who won a flash drive for coming the closest with his answer to the question, “How many electronic articles were downloaded from the library’s online resources last year?” Williams answered 876,453. The correct number is 876,103. Rob Graham won the DVD *The Art of 16 Bars* with his guess of 21,706 to answer the question, “How many times were DVDs checked out of the library last year?” The correct answer is 19,827. Haris Klan’s answer to “What was the total number of searches in the library’s online catalog last year?” earned him a CAS duffel bag and travel blanket. The answer is 576,827, and Klan guessed 570,008.

Acting Director of the Rensselaer Research Libraries Bob Mayo said it was a pleasure to overhear a student remark to a friend on his way out of the building, “I really like this library!”
Friends and Library Share Plaque

On September 21, Bob Mayo, Acting Director of the Rensselaer Research Libraries, and Cynthia Smith, Assistant Dean of Students and Chair of the Friends of Folsom Library, attended the 12th Annual Cultural Pride Night. On behalf of the Friends of Folsom Library and the Rensselaer Research Libraries, Mayo and Smith accepted a plaque from Lambda Upsilon Lambda Fraternity. The plaque was given “with great appreciation and gratitude in acknowledgement of their steadfast commitment and support of the Rensselaer community and genuine efforts to take positive steps to ensure equality and success.”

Every year for the past several years, the Friends and the library together have matched money given by the fraternity to the library. The money is used to purchase books about Latinos and Latino culture. Over 200 books have been purchased with the fund. The plaque is displayed on the wall outside the library’s conference room.

Web Exhibit Worth Checking Out

Rensselaer’s Architecture Library has a noteworthy Web exhibit—*An Introduction to Armenian Architecture*. It’s dedicated to the memory of the late Vazken L. Parsegian, Professor Emeritus of the School of Engineering at Rensselaer. Dr. Parsegian was also Chairman of the Armenian Educational Council and Director of the Armenian Architecture Photographic Archives Project.

In addition to descriptions and beautiful photographs of several monuments, a list of Armenian-related sites is provided. These include sites about Armenian history, arts, culture, and language. Check out the Web site at [www.lib.rpi.edu/ArmenianArchitecture](http://www.lib.rpi.edu/ArmenianArchitecture).

Toys for Tots Program

For the fifth year in a row, the Folsom Library is a campus collection site for the Toys for Tots campaign. From now until December 10, there will be a collection box in the library where folks can drop off a new, unwrapped toy. United States Marine Corps Reservists will pick up and distribute the toys to needy children in our community in time for Christmas.
History of Friends of Folsom Library

The Friends of Folsom Library is 30 years old this year, so it’s appropriate that we take a look back on how it came about.

James C. Andrews, Director of Libraries at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute from 1972 to 1985, led the construction of a new library building. The library, named the Richard Gilman Folsom Library after the Institute’s former president because of his outstanding contributions to Rensselaer, was opened in 1976. One year later, Andrews established the Friends of Folsom Library. The Board of Directors of the Friends of Folsom Library held their first meeting on Saturday, May 27, 1978, under the leadership of Chairperson Fannabell S. Fixman.

Rensselaer’s other library, the Architecture Library, is located in the Greene Building. It started out as a departmental library when the School of Architecture was opened in 1929. The Architecture Library was incorporated into the Rensselaer Research Libraries when the collections from both libraries were combined in the 1980s.

The Friends of Folsom Library is a group of community leaders, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends of Rensselaer dedicated to strengthening and enlarging both of the libraries’ collections, acquiring rare books and manuscript materials, expanding technological services, and enriching the total cultural environment of the region.

One of the most important purposes of the Friends organization is to give members and potential members a more complete understanding of the resources and needs of Rensselaer’s libraries, as well as to explore avenues for educational, cultural, and technological service to the university and the community.

During each academic year, the Friends of Folsom Library, under the leadership of its Board of Directors, sponsors a variety of cultural and informational programs. For the most part, these programs are open to people throughout the Capital District. It is hoped that such public exposure for Rensselaer’s exceptional libraries and the Friends organization will attract an extra measure of recognition and support.

The Friends organization is funded by contributions made by the Friends of Folsom Library members and a quasi-endowment account established in 1981.

Radio station WRPI is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. To help commemorate this milestone, WRPI memorabilia, taken from the collections of the Institute Archives, are on display on the second floor of the Folsom Library. Among the items are program guides; news articles; bumper stickers; photographs from the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s; and the 1957 FCC application for FM broadcast.

Happy 50th Anniversary, WRPI!

“Outside of a dog, a book is a man’s best friend. Inside of a dog, it’s too dark to read.”
- Groucho Marx
The exhibition is made possible by Global Imagination. Additional support is provided by the U.S. Geological Survey and the Smithsonian Women’s Committee. The Friends of Folsom Library is proud to be a local sponsor of this exciting exhibition.

An educational companion Web site—www.earthfromspace.si.edu—contains an online version of the exhibition, as well as additional images and information. It also provides numerous educational resources, including lesson plans, classroom activities, Web site links, and available publications.

The Smithsonian’s National Air and Space Museum maintains the largest collections of historic aircraft and spacecraft in the world. It is a superb center for research into the history, science and technology of aviation and space flight, and commemorates the development of aviation and space flight. The Center for Earth and Planetary Studies, a scientific research unit within the museum, performs original research and outreach activities on topics covering planetary science, terrestrial geophysics, and the remote sensing of environment change.

SITES has been sharing the wealth of Smithsonian collections and research programs with millions of people outside Washington, D.C. for more than 50 years. SITES connects Americans to their shared cultural heritage through a wide range of exhibitions about art, science, and history, which are shown wherever people live, work, and play. Exhibition descriptions and tour schedules are available at www.sites.si.edu.

The Friends of Folsom Library is planning a reception for the exhibition’s opening on Monday, December 3, at 4:00 pm. Refreshments will be served. A Family Day is scheduled for Saturday, January 19, from 12:00 noon to 4:00 pm. NewsChannel 13 meteorologist Jason Gough will be our guest speaker. He’ll talk about how he uses remote sensing satellite technology in his job forecasting the weather.

San Francisco

The San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge is visible as it crosses San Francisco Bay, one of the work’s great natural harbors. Detailed, high-resolution images reveal buildings, automobiles, and other evidence of densely developed urban centers.

IKONOS satellite by GeoEye, October 1999

Pyramids

The Giza Pyramids were constructed around 2500 BC as monumental tombs. The largest and oldest pyramid was originally over 480 feet high and is made of 5.7 million tons of limestone.

QuickBird satellite, DigitalGlobe, February 2002

Library Trivia

Americans make some 3.5 billion visits to school, public, and college libraries each year. This is about three times the attendance at movie theatres.
Question: What has 40 beautiful color photographs of the Earth taken from numerous scientific satellites orbiting our planet; contains a Magic Planet digital video globe; is educational, fun, and inspiring; is free to the public; and is coming to the Folsom Library soon?

Answer: See our cover story!