Tyler Hinman Challenges Campus Community

Three-time American Crossword Puzzle Tournament champion Tyler Hinman wowed an audience with his amazing skill at the January 29th Tyler Hinman Challenge, sponsored by the Friends of Folsom Library. Hinman, a 2006 Rensselaer graduate who majored in information technology, completed a Friday New York Times puzzle in an amazing five minutes, 46 seconds. He also shared clips from the 2006 feature documentary Wordplay, in which he co-starred. The film featured New York Times crossword puzzle editor Will Shortz and a host of celebrities and others who talked about their interest and skill in, and passion for, doing crossword puzzles.

Hinman offered crossword puzzle enthusiasts some tips on honing their skills. As shown in the film, Hinman won the American Crossword Puzzle Tournament for the second year in a row in March 2006. However, on March 25th of this year, Hinman won the title for the third year in a row! At the age of 20, he became the youngest champion in the history of the competition. The tournament, which is the nation’s oldest and largest crossword competition, was founded in 1978 by Shortz. Hinman has been solving puzzles since ninth grade, and he has been creating them for nearly as long. At the age of 15, he was the youngest person ever to publish a puzzle in The New York Times.

Attendees at the Tyler Hinman Challenge were given an opportunity to solve in advance a challenging RPI-related puzzle that Hinman created just for the event. Correctly completed puzzles were handed in before the presentation, and five winners received either a DVD of Wordplay or a book of New York Times crosswords.

Friends of Folsom Library Marks 30 Years

It was in 1976 that then Director of the Library at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, James C. Andrews, established the Friends of Folsom Library. The group’s mission is to “assist users and prospective users of the Folsom Library in becoming better acquainted with and promoting support and improvement of the library and its efforts to meet the changing needs of the future.” As stated in the organization’s by-laws, the Friends of Folsom Library strives to “enhance understanding of the function of the Folsom Library within the university and public communities and demonstrate its potential as a resource for development of human values that contribute to the betterment of society.”
The Library Café was featured in the February 2007 issue of *Fresh Cup Magazine*, a trade publication for the beverage industry. The article, “Java Fix Goes Public: Library Cafés Brewing New Profits,” by Lisa Wynn, notes Folsom’s Library Café’s huge popularity and wonderful service provided for library patrons and others. Coffee bars and cafés have worked for large bookstore chains such as Border’s and Barnes and Noble for quite a few years now; it was only a matter of time before academic and public libraries caught on to the idea that people like to be comfortable and sip or nibble on something while reading or studying.

Library staff can attest to the big draw the café has made since it opened in the fall of 2005. The café entices members of the campus to take a break in a nice atmosphere. Cozy table and chair setups; comfy overstuffed chairs; wireless Internet access for laptops; a sound system that provides a variety of music; and greenery in cherry wood planters (donated by Friends) add up to a wonderful place to take a break from studying and doing research. And in the warmer months, patrons can enjoy their beverages and food at a table on the patio outside the café or at one of the tables on the balcony overlooking downtown Troy and beyond.

There definitely are advantages to a library that incorporates a café in its building. It not only enhances the library’s appeal and lures in patrons, but it’s also favorable for the business supplying the beverages and food. In our case, it’s Sodexho, the campus’ food service company. According to David Gaul, Hospitality and Marketing Director for Sodexho, “Operations overall at the café have warranted the addition of two extra people to handle the continual demand each day.” The café increased sales by 48% the first year and has had tremendous growth since then. Gaul stated that “customers are extremely happy with the new offerings, which include a made-to-order specialty sandwich station, an espresso bar, homemade lemonade, and pastries baked on site.”

Ah, yes, the pastries. Humongous chocolate chip, peanut butter, and oatmeal-raisin cookies are baked on the premises at least twice a day. The aroma of baking cookies wafting through the Folsom Library causes the folks on the main floor to hunger after one! The hearty soups and chili they make daily are also mouth watering.

Gaul also noted that the café staff often reflect on how tiny the space used to be and what a pleasure it is to work with a new, large, and modern facility.

The Library Café is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 9:00 pm during the school year and 8:00 am to 3:00 pm during the summer. It is closed on weekends.
Women’s Studio Workshop Book Art

In conjunction with National Library Week (April 15-21), the Friends of Folsom Library sponsored a presentation given by Ann Kalmbach, Executive Director, and Tana Keller, Artistic Director of the Women’s Studio Workshop (WSW). The workshop is a visual arts organization located in Rosendale, NY, that specializes in printmaking, hand papermaking, ceramics, letterpress printing, and photography. The topic of the presentation was artists’ books, which is a means in which artists incorporate the traditional aspects of books in an art form that communicates their vision. The books can take on many forms. Some are produced using photographs and papers that are handmade at the studio. Some are printed on letterpress or are silk-screened. WSW is the largest publisher of hand printed artists’ books in the country. To date, artists have produced over 150 inventive books with the use of the studio’s equipment and technical expertise.

Kalmbach and Kellner spoke to an interested audience, many of them students. They showed slides of artists at work in the various studios at the workshop, some of the shows they have presented, and the outreach programs in which they are involved. The speakers also provided the story behind some of the books in their collection. They said many university libraries and museums collect WSW artists’ books and that five universities are repositories—Yale, University of Delaware, Indiana University at Bloomington, Rochester Institute of Technology, and Virginia Commonwealth University.

In conjunction with the lecture, the Folsom Library is fortunate to be able to display some of the beautiful books created by artists associated with the Women’s Studio Workshop. The display is in the lobby and will be up until June 24, 2007.

A series of workshops designed to offer women experience in these arts are offered in the summer at the Rosendale studio and at their new studio location in Italy. You can learn more about the workshop or request a Women’s Studio Workshop Summer Arts Institute 2007 catalog by visiting http://www.wsworkshop.org/.
Longtime Friend and Board Member Passes Away

It is with great sadness that we say good-bye to longtime Friend Stephen Wiberley, who passed away on March 17, 2007. Wiberley was a major advocate of the Institute’s library system and served as Acting Librarian from 1970 to 1971 when the library was housed in the former St. Joseph’s Chapel. He was one of the driving forces in getting the Folsom Library built. He was an active member of the Friends of Folsom Library for almost 30 years, chaired the Board of Directors at one time, and served as a Board Member until a few years ago when his health started failing.

Wiberley was born in Troy and graduated from Williams College in Williamstown, MA, in 1941. During World War II, he served in the United States Army and worked on the Manhattan Project. He returned to Troy and earned his M.S. and Ph.D. from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in 1948 and 1950, respectively. He remained at the Institute for 39 years to teach chemistry and other courses as well as hold various positions, including Dean of the Graduate School (1964-1979), Vice Provost (1969-1979), and Chair of the Chemistry Department (1983-1988). Wiberley retired as professor emeritus in 1989 but remained an active Professor Emeritus for another ten years.

For many years Wiberley, along with his wife, Betty, served on the Board of Trustees of the Rensselaer Newman Foundation. He chaired the committee that guided the erection of the Chapel and Cultural Center and worked closely with another Friend, the late Rev. Thomas Phelan, to bring this important gathering place to the campus and community.

Wiberley co-authored two books: Instrumental Analysis (1954) with John Harley and Introduction to Infrared and Raman Spectroscopy (1964, 1975, 1990) with Norman W. Colthrup and Lawrence J. Daly. He also wrote his memoirs, No Ivory Tower, which was published in 2005. He shared some humorous excerpts from his memoirs at a Lunch & Learn program held in the Folsom Library two years ago. Wiberley was not only a Friend, but he was also a friend to the entire campus community.

Friends Notes Passing of Two Members

It is with regret that we acknowledge the death of two long-time Friends.

**Michael M. Abbott, RPI Professor Emeritus of Chemical Engineering,** died peacefully in his sleep on May 31, 2006 after a battle with pancreatic cancer.

Abbott was born in Niagara Falls in 1938 and grew up near Youngstown, NY. After earning his undergraduate and doctoral degrees at RPI, he decided to stay on to teach. He was revered by colleagues and students alike and was the recipient of the first Outstanding Teaching Award given by the Rensselaer Alumni Association in 1994. He was selected to receive the David M. Darrin Counseling Award by members of Phalanx and also received the Trustees’ Outstanding Teacher Award. Abbott was an internationally recognized expert in thermodynamics and co-authored four textbooks, including Introduction to Chemical Engineering Thermodynamics by J. M. Smith, H. C. Van Ness, and M. M. Abbott. It is the best-selling chemical engineering text of all time and is in its seventh edition.

(continued on bottom of page 5)
The Friends of Folsom Library is an active group that includes community leaders, faculty, staff, and alumni dedicated to strengthening and enlarging the collections, acquiring rare books and manuscript materials, expanding technological services, and enriching the total cultural environment of the Rensselaer community. During each academic year, the Friends sponsor a variety of activities and informational programs that have a direct positive impact on the Folsom Library’s role on campus.

Friends of Folsom Library - 2007 Membership Year

Yes, I want to be a …

_____ Friend ($50 Suggested)
_____ Sustaining Friend ($100 and up)
_____ Organization Membership $_________

Enclosed is my contribution of $_________

Thank you! Your gift is tax deductible. Please make check payable to Friends of Folsom Library and mail it with this form in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Please list your name(s) exactly as you wish listings to appear in print:

Name(s):_________________________________________________________

Class:_________

Address:______________________________________________________________________

City:__________________________ State:_____________________

Zip:___________________

The Friends of Folsom Library is an active group that includes community leaders, faculty, staff, and alumni dedicated to strengthening and enlarging the collections, acquiring rare books and manuscript materials, expanding technological services, and enriching the total cultural environment of the Rensselaer community. During each academic year, the Friends sponsor a variety of activities and informational programs that have a direct positive impact on the Folsom Library’s role on campus.

Edward P. Jones

Winners of the writing contest competition received their awards from novelist Edward P. Jones during the ceremony in the Darrin Communications Center on April 18. Before reading two selections from his most recent work, Jones handed out a total of 24 prizes to the top three undergraduate and graduate entries in the categories of fiction or drama, essays, poetry, and electronic media.

Jones is the New York Times bestselling author and Pulitzer Prize winner for fiction for *The Known World*. He has also been given the National Book Critics Circle Award, the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award, and the Lannan Literary award for *The Known World*. He also received a MacArthur Fellowship in 2004. His first collection of short stories, *Lost in the City*, won the PEN/Hemingway Award and was short-listed for the National Book Award. Jones has taught fiction writing at several universities, including Princeton University.

**Friends Notes Passing of Two Members**

(continued from page 4)

Vivien McNaughton passed away on January 30, 2007. She was born and raised in Meridian, MS. She received an undergraduate degree from St. Mary’s College in South Bend, IN, a Master’s degree in English literature and a Ph.D. in American literature from Columbia University. Early in her career, McNaughton taught at the College of Mount St. Vincent in Riverdale, NY. She also was a professor at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute where she taught English literature from 1966 until her retirement in 1987.

McNaughton and her husband, Robert, Professor Emeritus of Computer Science at RPI, had been members of the Friends for several years.
Friends’ Board Changes

Susan Clarke passed the gavel to Cynthia Smith, incoming Chair, at the Friends’ combined Spring Board of Directors/Annual Meeting held on May 23, 2007.

Clarke served as Chair of the Friends of Folsom Library for the past two years. During her tenure as Chair, her leadership continued the Friends’ commitment to enhancing patrons’ access to DVDs, books, and magazines for leisure reading. Clarke also participated in membership drives and program planning. Before retiring from RPI, she was Vice President for Administration for eight years (1986 - 1994) and four presidents—Daniel Berg, Stanley I. Landgraf (acting), Roland Schmitt, and R. Byron Pipes. She supervised physical facilities, human resources, contracts and grants, purchasing, resident life/student housing, day care, security, and parking.

Smith, Assistant Dean of Students at RPI, takes over as Chair of the Friends Board of Directors for the next two years. This year she was instrumental in getting American Crossword Puzzle Tournament champion Tyler Hinman to appear on campus for a crowd-pleasing presentation.

The Board approved Shirley Molloy to serve as the Chair-Elect for the next two years. Molloy was employed at RPI from 1976 until her retirement in 1999. Under seven presidents—George M. Low, Berg, Landgraf, Schmitt, Pipes, Cornelius J. Barton (acting), and Shirley Ann Jackson—Molloy held the positions of Assistant to the President, Manager of Resource Development Services, and Secretary of the Institute.

The Board also noted that four positions on the Board have been vacated by Directors whose terms have expired. The Directors are Paul Hohenberg, RPI Professor Emeritus in Economics; Rosalind Judd, who has been active in charitable organi-
Friend Donates RPI Alumnus’ Latest Book on Railroads

It was through an interest in trains and railroads that Steven D. Smith joined the Friends of Folsom Library in May 1988. He attended a slide presentation on the history of the electric street railway given by William D. Middleton before a Friends meeting in the Folsom Library. Smith not only learned more about electric cars that day; he also learned what a worthy organization Friends is. In addition to his Friends association, Smith has also maintained a lasting friendship with Middleton.

This spring, Smith decided to make an additional gift by donating money for the Library to purchase a copy of the *Encyclopedia of North American Railroads* (2007), a comprehensive guide edited by his friend Middleton, along with George M. Smerk and Roberta L. Diehl. At 1,281 pages, this handsome book covers the history of major and minor railroads, biographies of leaders and lesser-known figures in the field, innovations, equipment, terms, technical aspects, and social commentaries.

Prolific author and editor Middleton graduated from RPI in 1950 with a degree in civil engineering. He did graduate work in engineering and journalism at the University of Wisconsin. As an officer in the U.S. Navy, Middleton served in a variety of Navy engineering assignments in Turkey, Morocco, the Pacific, and the U.S. mainland. Upon retiring from the Navy in 1979, he joined the University of Virginia at its chief facilities office, where he remained until retiring in 1993. He resides in Charlottesville, VA, with his wife. Over the years he has written extensively on rail transportation and engineering history. He is a tireless writer of 21 books and several hundred articles, most of them on railroads, electric traction, and metropolitan transit systems. Three other books he has written are *Landmarks of the Iron Road: Two Centuries of Railroad Engineering* (1999) and *Metropolitan Railways: Rapid Transit in America* (2003), and *Yet There Isn’t a Train I Wouldn’t Take* (2000), a collection of stories about favorite train journeys Middleton has taken. At present he and his son are at work on a biography of Frank Julian Sprague, considered the "father of electric traction."

Donor Smith is also a 1950 graduate of Rensselaer with a degree in biomechanical engineering. After a year as a test engineer for a company in New Jersey and two years of service in the U.S. Army, Smith heard that the American Locomotive Company in Schenectady was hiring engineers. Since he had been a steam locomotive enthusiast from an early age, the idea of working at Alco was appealing even though the age of steam had ended. He began a long career at Alco in 1953, first as an applications engineer and then as a technical writer. After completing a Master’s degree in technical writing at RPI, he worked as a technical editor in Alco’s nuclear power engineering department and later was editor of the *Alco Review*. Although Smith remained in the technical writing field until his retirement in 1990, he left Alco in the late 1960s to take a job for an industrial advertising agency in Pittsfield, MA. He is now retired and lives with his wife, Eva, in Camden, ME.

The Institute also received a matching donation from General Electric. Eva Smith is a GE retiree. Thank you, Steve and Eva Smith!

If you have a special book that you would like to donate to the Library, we’d love to hear from you.
From student to professor to director to president, Palmer Chamberlain Ricketts (1856-1934) devoted his entire adult life to Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. As the first modern president, he oversaw aggressive fund-raising, expansion of the physical plant, development of additional curricula, and recruitment of a more diverse faculty.

Learn more about this dynamo who was honored as “the most outstanding citizen of Troy” in 1933 by visiting the Folsom Library’s new Web exhibit at


Be sure to check out other items of interest on the Institute Archives and Special Collections’ site, including the library’s new online database. The database provides access to over 2,000 images and 300 Institute publications. Go to http://www.lib.rpi.edu/dept/library/html/Archives/.