

BELL TOWER



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Bring the books

**“When you come, bring the cloak which I left at Troas with Carpus, and the books, especially the parchments.”
2 Ti. 4:13**

Most people believe that the internet is a good, positive influence on culture. It enables us to easily communicate; it enables us to quickly find information; it enables us to socially interact. Most have purchased a gadget, reserved a hotel room, booked a flight—some have even found a spouse—on the web.

But unlike earlier technologies, such as maps and the printing press, which propelled mankind’s culture and collective wisdom, some researchers are beginning to notice negative effects on the advancement of culture because of the internet. Nicholas Carr writes in his new book, *The Shallows*, that the internet is destroying mankind’s ability to focus intently and to concentrate on a complex line of thought.

A webpage, with imbedded video, audio, animated graphics, and nearly endless hyperlinks, all work together to fragment our ability to remain focused on any singular concept. The capacity to conduct deep thought on a topic is declining, along with the analytical skills of critiquing, synthesizing, distinguishing, and analogizing. The internet, Carr argues, “diminishes the ability to know, in depth, a subject for ourselves, to construct within our own minds the rich and idiosyncratic set of connections that give rise to a singular intelligence.” Carr, 143.

Although Carr’s conclusions have yet to withstand years of scrutiny, his thesis does seem to carry truth in everyday experience. If you use the internet more than casually, have you noticed a decreased ability to remain focused on a singular task? Are you able to pick up something and focus on it to completion, whether it’s a jigsaw puzzle, the directions to put together your new coffee table, or a full book?

Or, are you easily distracted? Do you have to check your favorite blog, then your email, then the news headlines, then your email again, followed by your cell phone? Do you die a thousand deaths when it takes more than seven seconds for a web page to load?

As the College Librarian, the chief information professional of Geneva College, I believe that the solitary act of reading counteracts the shallows that Carr describes. Reading transports one into the deep. I believe that the value of simply reading a book—the reader’s extended dialogue with ideas—directly fosters the development of mankind’s ability to acquire information and to nurture that information into wisdom.

And the ability to conduct deep reading fosters the ability to

conduct deep thought. Without the ability to conduct deep thought, culture will not progress, and the individual Christian scholar’s ability to glorify God through the work of his mind will stagnate, just as fruit on a vine will decay if left unpicked.

One of my goals is that the Library will serve as the key advocate and catalyst for reading. I will fight to advance the notion that reading, and its corollary of deep, analytical thinking, is essential to educate a diverse learning community. We will advance reading by providing the space; we will do it by providing the resources; we will do it by supplying the service; and we will do it by continually encouraging that everyone become lifelong readers.

Consider the apostle Paul in his second letter to Timothy. Despite all of his problems, all of his travels, all of his pressing needs, Paul still wanted his books. In the words of C.H. Spurgeon,

How rebuked are they by the apostle [who think reading is unnecessary]! He is inspired, and yet he wants books! He has been preaching at least for thirty years, and yet he wants books! He had seen the Lord, and yet he wants books! He had had a wider experience than most men, and yet he wants books! He had been caught up into the third heaven, and had heard things which it was unlawful for a man to utter, yet he wants books! He had written the major part of the New Testament, and yet he wants books! The apostle says to Timothy and so he says to every preacher, "Give thyself unto reading."

The man who never reads will never be read; he who never quotes will never be quoted. He who will not use the thoughts of other men’s brains, proves that he has no brains of his own. Brethren, what is true of ministers is true of all our people. You need to read. . . . Paul cries, "Bring the books"—join in the cry.

-John Doncevic

Nicholas Carr, *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to our Brains* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2010). (QP 360 .C3667 2010)

C.H. Spurgeon, Sermon, “Paul—His Cloak and His Books” (1863), *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit: Containing Sermons Preached and Revised in 1863* (Pasadena, Texas : Pilgrim Publications, 1969), 668. (BX 6333.S6 M42 1969)



McCartney Comings and Goings

Robert (Bob) Triance retired from Geneva College after over a decade-long stint as the Library's library technician. Bob is especially fond of squirrels and long walks, and plans to spend afternoons strolling along the Ohio River in nearby Beaver.



Bob Triance near his office door adorned with balloons that were crafted by Jay Brenner, from Physical Plant



At his reception, Professor Emerita Ann Paton admonished Bob to enjoy his retirement

The McCartney's new library technician is **Abbi Gregg, '10**. Abbi graduated in May from Geneva College with a B.A. in history. Abbi is a caricature artist (look for some of her artwork in future issues of the *Bell Tower*).

Abbi is primarily responsible for handling McCartney's periodical collection. Please feel free to find her if you have any question about a Library's journal or newspaper!



Abbi Gregg, '10, McCartney's new library technician

Research Sleuth Winner!

Last issue's Research Sleuth question: A Geneva College alumnus had a son who is a famous golfer. He won the **British Open**, and finished second in the **Masters** and the **U.S. Open**! Can you name the golfer?

Answer: Champion golfer and noted golf course architect **Tom Weiskopf** is the son of Geneva alumnus, Thomas Weiskopf, '36. Student **Greg Williams** was the first person to solve the sleuth.



Thomas Weiskopf, '36, center, captain of the 1936 team (from the 1936 *Genevan*)



The 1937 Geneva Golf Team. Notice the McCartney Library bell tower in background (from the 1937 *Genevan*)



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