Dr. Ganesan Ravishanker, Wellesley’s new Chief Information Officer (CIO) overseeing the college’s library and information services, is relaxed in a button-down Oxford shirt as he introduces himself to the Friends Steering Committee. “Call me Ravi,” he says, flashing his engaging smile, while explaining that he values collaboration and doesn’t believe in hierarchies.

He begins with a glimpse into his own background: the little boy who was born in Sri Lanka, orphaned at age six, and – with his sister – joined his aunt and uncle’s family of eleven children. His memories of playing cricket, making music with his family, and participating in weekly prayer groups speak of a childhood of love and security. When he was the sole family member to pass the High School final examinations, family friends offered to further his education in India.

So at age 16, Ravi set off to an unfamiliar land for his undergraduate studies at a small college in southern India, followed by his master’s degree at the esteemed Indian Institute of Technology at Madras. His field was quantum chemistry, and its application required devoting many hours to performing intricate computer calculations on molecules. As advances in technology proliferated, the young scientist adapted instantaneously, presaging his future vocation.

When one of his professors introduced him to colleagues from Hunter College [of City University of New York], Ravi emigrated to the United States, earned his PhD at Hunter, and subsequently followed one of his mentors to Wesleyan. He remained there for 23 years, rising to be head of Information Technology Services – a position he also held at Pace University before arriving at Wellesley. Ravi and his wife, Nalini, (a professor at University of Connecticut) have two grown sons. They reside on campus, with frequent visits to their Connecticut home.

Ravi stands symbolically by Wellesley’s time-honored book collections while holding an iPad with cover customized for the College Trustees.

**TURN TO PAGE 3 FOR MORE OF DIANE’S CONVERSATION WITH RAVI.**
Dear Friends,

Since the last newsletter, the Steering Committee of the Friends of the Library met in January during Wintersession when the campus was fairly quiet and sounds were muffled by the snow covering the ground. We met again in March. Spring was not quite in the air!

In January, we had the pleasure of meeting Dr. Ganesan (Ravi) Ravishanker, the College’s new Chief Information Officer. In a follow-up letter to the committee, he acknowledged the dedication and tremendous support over the years of the Friends of the Library. Among the topics that we discussed was the $100,000 Centennial Gift from the Friends of the Library, named “Innovations in Reading and Scholarship: A Library Fund for the Future.” Ravi and his staff will form an advisory committee to evaluate proposals. It will consist of staff from Library Collections and Instructional Support Groups. No time is being wasted! Ravi and his staff have already conceived of an important and potentially ground-breaking study, “Serving Academic Library Collections on Ebook Readers,” that will examine the use of electronic readers by students and faculty. There is scant information on the usefulness of such devices in academic settings, although some university presses now issue books in both electronic and print formats. Other projects will surface in coming months and we will report on the projects in these pages. The spring program held in April introduced Ravi to members of the Friends and members of the College community. We received a taste of the complexities of managing the College’s information needs.

By the time you receive this mailing, you will find that the Friends of the Library has added Facebook to the Friends of the Library website. Using social media may attract young alumnae to the Friends of the Library. We need to explore new ways to increase membership and this possibility is promising. Ravi promised support from the library to keep the Facebook site current and we appreciate Kristy Grinder’s work on this as well. Stay tuned for further developments!

I had the pleasure of attending the symposium sponsored by the Grace McNeil Slack Program in American Art and Historic Deerfield in March. Molly Eckel ’12 presented an excellent talk, “Sarah Wyman Whitman: Book Design in Boston at the Turn of the 20th Century.” Molly is a French/Art History major and is pursuing her research in Special Collections in the Library with Ruth Rogers’ guidance.

Thank you all for your continued support of the Wellesley College Libraries! I hope those of you who will be at Reunions in June stop by the Library and take in the changes in the spaces that have occurred in the past few years.

Sincerely yours,

Georgia B. Barnhill ’66
Q: What are your initial impressions of Wellesley’s library and its adaptation to the digital age?
A: I am very impressed with the Wellesley Library and its long traditions and history. As a space, it is welcoming and heavily used, and the staff is dedicated to upholding the library’s traditional values while trying to adapt to the changes that are drastically affecting those traditions. I observe this very carefully, because those of us from the technology world can learn a lot from the best practices of library service delivery.

The library has adapted to the digital age via its vast collection of electronic resources ranging from journal articles and e-books to the ability to stream movies. However, there are areas where more progress is needed, especially in the digitization of special collections and archives.

Q: When you arrived in November, you challenged the library staff to put into place several initiatives by January 31. What were they?
A: We completed over 20 initiatives by Jan 31. The IS staff is extremely bright, hard-working and smart. Notably, we made significant changes in supporting classroom technologies. Faculty browser bookmarks now stay for the entire semester, and the software that professors choose to install does not vanish after a short time. We opened the Helpdesk for longer hours to offer better support, and we developed Mobile Apps that include class schedules, class lists, bus schedules and the College’s event calendar.

We also rolled out the use of a new learning management system for the entire college called Sakai, and we implemented VPN (Virtual Private Network), allowing our users to connect to the College’s technical resources from their homes. Finally, we increased the Internet connection from 160 Mb to 1 Gb.

Q: What are your immediate goals for the Library?
A: They include the implementation of Summon, a better discovery tool, and choosing an institutional repository for the College – a project being led by staff from archives. We are also seeking stronger library collaborations with Babson and Olin colleges.

Q: What role do e-books and e-textbooks play in the lives of current Wellesley undergraduates?
A: Wellesley makes available about 500,000 e-book titles through licensed collections, individually purchased titles, or digitized versions of out-of-copyright books that we own. Some users read or print only a page or two; others read entire e-books online. We hope to gain better understanding of use patterns through an e-book proposal that FOL is funding.

cTextbooks are an area where we have not engaged at all. I was involved in a nationwide e-textbook pilot study at Pace. The results were mixed and surprising: Regardless of age or discipline of study, students preferred physical textbooks with only limited use of e-textbooks. We plan to follow this area closely.

Q: Even as information technology explodes, you report increased class usage of Wellesley’s Special Collections. Will primary-source material online ever replace primary-source material examined in person?
A: In many cases, personal examination is critical and would be hard to replace electronically – cases where the touch and feel are important. Conversion to electronic material can be so content-oriented that much ancillary evidence of ownership – such as handwritten notes, types of binding, and (in the case of old magazines) adjoining ads – is lost. However, with the increasing shift to born-digital material, it will be interesting to see how this whole area evolves.

Pam Turner ’65, Ruth Rogers, Gigi Barnhill ’66, and Ravi at his Friends of the Library-sponsored program and reception on April 12.
Information Services: Plurmers or Strategic Partners?

On Tuesday, April 12, the Friends of the Library hosted a welcome reception for Chief Information Officer Ravi Ravishanker. Ravi spoke about the challenges of merging libraries and technology to provide services that support all aspects of the College: primarily the core academic mission and administration, and to a lesser extent, the student life experience.

Ravi discussed the range of library and technology services and drew parallels between traditional library services and technological services. He highlighted several differences:

- Libraries typically manage information produced by others, while technologists typically manage content created by an institution’s members.
- Books are usually authored singly or by a few people, proofed, edited and cataloged. Major programs or technology systems may be authored by hundreds, proofed only when errors occur, and are rarely cataloged.
- Libraries are very open; privacy is taken seriously, and physical security is imposed where appropriate and needed. Both security and privacy are major issues in technology.

Ravi used the model of a house to illustrate the ways in which library and technology services are changing. There is the fundamental operational level without which service delivery cannot succeed. This is akin to “plumbing” and includes cataloging, interlibrary loan, and databases. However, now that users have many accessible choices for their “houses”, the focus must shift to “architecture”, or people’s experiences using library and technology services for things like instructional support and research.

Fast paced and highly disruptive technological changes combined with financial challenges require Library & Technology Services to partner in College strategic planning, to transition from a focus on “plumbing” to a focus on “architecture”.

Ravi outlined a broad strategy for this transition. Library & Technology Services will continue to innovate, be creative and agile, and develop sustainable frameworks, so that administrative offices have secure, easy access to information, the student experience is enhanced, and alumnae are engaged.

Friends who attended Ravi’s presentation particularly enjoyed a YouTube video included in the presentation. For those who were unable to attend, the Powerpoint file, which includes the link to the video, is available for download online here: [http://bit.ly/mBA3b2](http://bit.ly/mBA3b2)

The Friends of Wellesley College Library thank Ravi for an informative, engaging presentation, and look forward to following the growth and development of Library & Technology Services under his leadership.

Book Arts Workshop

On Saturday, April 2, the Friends of the Library sponsored its annual Book Arts Workshop, taught by Book Art Program Director Katherine McCanless Ruffin.

Workshop participants learned how to make an elegant, flexible hard bound screw post photo album with book cloth and decorative papers. This workshop covered all the steps of making an album, and the practical concerns involved in mounting photographs and prints.

Participants had the opportunity to include letterpress printed title pages embellished with calligraphy in the hand-made albums.
What Are We Reading?

“What Are We Reading” is a regular feature of this newsletter. To share what you’re reading, please contact newsletter editor Amanda Zoellner ’03 at azoellner@alum.wellesley.edu. We look forward to receiving your submission!

I recently read *Half the Sky* by Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009). It is a challenging book in which they relate many of their encounters with the abuse and oppression of women all over the world and their observations of what one might do to make a difference in combating these ills. A compelling call to action!

Dot Widmayer ’52

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After reading *The Omnivore’s Dilemma* by Michael Pollan (New York: The Penguin Press, 2006), I came to look at my grocery shopping and my eating habits in an entirely new light. The author has put in a lot of research, which he combines with anecdotal stories about aspects of the food chain, and the food distribution chain. It is enough to make one become a locavore. We read about corn (and its way into the fast food meal), about grass (and its way into the meat meal), and about foraging for one’s food. The members of our book group all find that this book has made the biggest and most enduring impression on us. Oh yes, and we particularly enjoyed a meal out with our spouses at a restaurant where the chef utilizes many local food products.

Sue Saul ’65

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Emma Donoghue’s *Room* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2010) is a book which I particularly enjoyed reading this year. I had avoided it because the reviews, although favorable, summarized the plot as being the story of a five-year-old boy and his mother, imprisoned in a small, square room. Sounded like some pretty grim reading, and that corner of my life had already been appropriated by the morning newspaper. Upon reading it, I found an imaginative and compelling story that carried me swiftly through its engaging descriptions of a resourceful mother and her son, confined in space but not in possibilities. It has some dark moments, yes, but its overall impact is one of humor, the amazing capacities of the human spirit, and a new perspective on the way we look at the world.

Maud Chaplin ’56

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The *Transgender Child* by Stephanie Brill and Rachel Pepper (Berkeley, California: Cleis Press, 2008) offers concise, reliable information for those parenting or caring for transgender children in any capacity. While the book covers topics like the mechanics of gender transitions, medical care, and legal issues, the meat of the book is its excellent research-based parenting and caregiving advice. I’d recommend this book to anyone who wants to learn more about gender variant children.

Amanda Zoellner ’03
Friends on Facebook

The Friends of Wellesley College Library has its own Facebook page, thanks in large part to the research efforts of Susan Saul ’65, Chair of the Electronic Access Committee. Kristy Grinder created and maintains the community organization page for the group. Over the next few months, Library & Technology staff will help Kristy incorporate regular updates from the Library and the College, and link to other related pages.

The Facebook page is a starting point for several of the Friends’ aims, including connecting to a larger group of young alumnae and alumnae who are located away from the greater Boston area. The page also provides more opportunities to share news, beyond occasional e-mail updates and the biannual printed newsletter.

Those who are already Facebook members can find our page by searching for “Wellesley College Friends of the Library”. To help spread the word, “like” the Friends of the Library. When your friends see that you’ve “liked” us, they may do it as well, and then our circle of friends gets bigger. If you don’t have a Facebook profile and prefer not to have one, Kristy is also consulting with Library & Technology staff to make the page visible to everyone, without requiring a Facebook login.

Feel free to post your own reading recommendations, photos, or notices of programs that other

Wellesley College Friends of the Library

Community Organization - Wellesley, Massachusetts

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The Wellesley College Library will benefit each time you make any purchase at Amazon.com by starting your online shopping at our Buy a Book page at: http://www.wellesley.edu/library/friends/buyabook.html. Don’t be fooled by the word “books”; any purchases you make (gardening supplies, electronics, toys, Kindles, etc.) will benefit the Friends program.

The Friends of Wellesley College Library have become an Amazon Associate. A portion of the proceeds for anything you buy when you start here will benefit the WC Friends of the Library to enrich library resources.

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March 25 at 12:33pm • Like • Comment • Share
Friends of the Library Steering Committee Welcomes New Member

At the May 10 meeting, the Friends of the Library Steering Committee was pleased to elect to the committee Wilma Slaight, who served as the Wellesley College Archivist for nearly forty years. In her nomination statement, Wilma writes, “I care deeply about the Library and its place in the College.

“I served as the Wellesley College Archivist, working to support the College’s educational mission, and assisting administrative staff to do their work and manage the College’s records. During that time, the mission of the Archives remained consistent, but the tools we used to implement that mission changed. New technologies and their implementation had a big impact on our work.

“Since I retired in 2009, I have continued to use historical, technological and research skills in the volunteer work I have undertaken. I also have been involved in program planning for the Ashland Historical Society.

“I am especially interested in the work of the Programs, Gift Shop (Sales/Marketing), and Electronic Access committees of the Friends of the Library.”

The Friends of the Library proudly welcomes Wilma to the Steering Committee. We are happy to have a new Friend, and we look forward to her fresh ideas and contributions to the organization.

Is it time to renew your membership?

You may use the form below and make your check payable to Wellesley College.

Mail to: Kristy Grinder, Friends of Wellesley College Library, Wellesley College, Office for Resources, Green Hall 259, 106 Central Street, Wellesley, MA 02481.

Please choose a membership category:

___ Patron* $2,500  ___ Donor $250  ___ Endowment Fund
___ Benefactor* $1,000  ___ Sponsor $100  ___ Contributing Life Member
___ Supporter $500  ___ Contributor $50  ___ Young Alum $15 (graduates from past 5 years)

*Entitles Life Membership  **Entitles Durant Society Membership

Name: ___________________________________________ Class, if applicable: ______________
Street Address: ______________________________________
City: __________________________ State: _____ Zip Code: ____________
Phone Number: (______)______________ Email Address: ____________________________

Or, make your gift online at www.wellesley.edu/give, and choose “Friends of the Library” as your gift designation.

Thank you for your continuing support!

Friends of the Library Steering Committee Welcomes New Member

Honor with Books

A GIFT THAT CAN BE OPENED AGAIN AND AGAIN

✦ Honor a Graduate
✦ Celebrate a Birthday or Anniversary
✦ Recognize a Special Occasion
✦ Remember a Classmate

For each $100 gift to Honor with Books, the Library will place a bookplate bearing the name of the honoree, as well as your name, in a newly purchased book.

To request information from Friends of the Library:
Call 781-283-2872 or visit the Friends website:
www.wellesley.edu/Library/Friends
Student Library Research Awards

The Friends of Wellesley College Library sponsored the annual Student Library Research awards. The awards were created to reward those students who take the time to develop a thoughtful, methodical, and scholarly approach to the research needed for their papers and projects, as well as to encourage students to develop good research techniques. The selection committee received more entries than in recent years, and Maud Chaplin ’56, who represents the Friends of the Library on the selection committee, reported that all the submissions were of high quality.

- Katie Sheahon ’11 won the 300 level award for her FREN 349 paper, “La prostituée et la belle époque: comment les images de la prostituée soulignent les peurs de la dégénérescence de la société française au dix-neuvième siècle.” Supporting faculty: Venita Datta

- Caitlin Toole ’11 won the 100/200 level award for her WRIT 290 paper, “Fatally Faithful: The Implications & Consequences of Dennis & Lorie Nixon’s Conviction in Commonwealth of Pennsylvania v. Nixon.” Supporting faculty: Lynne Viti

- Mika Asaba ’13 and Karen Su ’13 won the First Year Award for their CS 114 paper, “The Democratization of Visual Art on the Web.” Supporting faculty: Panagiotis Metaxas

- Laura Marrin ’11 received an Honorable Mention for her POLS 350 paper, “Shaping U.S. Public Opinion on Armed Humanitarian Intervention Policies: A Case Study of President Clinton’s Framing of the Rwandan and Bosnian Genocides.” Supporting faculty: Stacie Goddard

The awards were presented at a reception on Monday, May 9. Thanks to Research & Instruction Librarian Laura O’Brien for organizing the 2011 awards, and a special thanks to retiring Research & Instruction Librarian Betty Febo, who approached the Friends of the Library with the idea for the award and worked to make it an annual tradition. More information about the awards is available online at http://web.wellesley.edu/web/Dept/LT/Research/award.psml.