NOW MORE THAN EVER . . . .

2002 continued as a rocky year for investments of any kind and Murphy Library Endowment Fund proved to be no exception. The balance at the beginning of the year was $197,944. The ending balance was $171,430, which represents a significant loss compared to previous years (see the chart at the end of this article). The good news is that the Endowment and Recognition Committee was able to approve $10,845 for library related projects during the year.

The primary mission of Murphy Library is to support the university's dynamic programs of teaching, research and public service. Now more than ever, donations to the Endowment Fund can make a significant contribution to this goal. We are especially grateful to those who contribute on a regular basis. This includes many UW-L employees who donate through payroll deductions and other means.

In addition, an impressive list of fundraising efforts—mainly administered by library staff—contributes to the financial health of the fund. Sales of La Crosse in Light and Shadow and Michael Blaser's print August Moon continue to provide steady income. Other fundraising activities include the monthly Library Jeans Day, grocery receipts program and the second Barnes and Noble book fair.

The combination of donations and fundraising brought in over $6,700. As in past years, a majority of the funded projects have served to boost our collections. In addition, Murphy Library has launched a digitization effort that will provide greater access to specialized materials. (See accompanying articles.)

Steady growth of the Endowment Fund is mainly attributable to the generous support of donors from the La Crosse area and beyond. Our bottom line attests to the fact that contributions are the backbone of the fund, especially in bad economic times. The contributions of friends, UW-L employees, and library staff signify a belief that the library is central to the teaching and research mission of the university and an important educational and business resource in the community.

The university has truly benefited from the generous contributions that come from people like you. The staff of Murphy Library would like to take this opportunity to offer our most sincere thanks. Your tax-deductible donations make a major difference in providing the library with the means to keep up with our users' ever-changing information needs.

If you have questions about the Fund or wish to make a contribution, please contact Cris Prucha, Department Chair, (608) 785-8637.

ENDOWMENT FUND HELPS PRESERVE LA CROSSE HISTORY

The Special Collections Department of Murphy Library received funding from the Murphy Library Endowment Fund in 2002 to digitize two unique sources of La Crosse history.

Parade Film, circa 1913

In 2001, Special Collections received a 35 mm film clip of an early 20th century La Crosse parade from another university department. With financial assistance from the Murphy Library Endowment Fund, the film was sent to a professional lab to preserve the original and make preservation copies. Negative and positive copies were made, as well as DVD and VHS versions.
The film clip is only 1 minute and 39 seconds, but packs a wealth of visual information into a short time frame. Most of the participants in the parade are men. One pennant carried by some boys reads “Retail Merchants Association.” Judging by the age of the cars and street signs, Special Collections thinks the film is part of a Labor Day parade organized by the Retail Grocer’s Association in 1913. A major clue is a newspaper article reporting that this parade was filmed and that copies “were sent about the state to advertise the beautiful, happy, prosperous city of La Crosse.”

The digitized version can be viewed at: http://www.uwlax.edu/murphylibrary/Departments/parade.html.

Wisconsin Labor Advocate
The second item digitized is the only known copy of the complete run of Wisconsin Labor Advocate, a newspaper published in La Crosse in 1886-1887. La Crosse was a hotbed of labor political party activity in the 1880s and this was one of at least four area labor-related newspapers from that time.

What makes the Labor Advocate noteworthy was its editor and owner—George Edwin Taylor, an African-American. As a black business owner, he was an anomaly in La Crosse in the 1880s. Taylor got his start working at other La Crosse newspapers. The last existing edition of the paper dates from August 6, 1887. He left La Crosse soon afterwards.

He maintained a life-long interest in politics, becoming involved in an all African-American political party, the National Liberty Party. In 1904 he accepted the nomination as its Presidential candidate. In doing so, Taylor was the first candidate of a national African-American party for the U.S. presidency.

The entire run of the newspaper was scanned, converted to TIFF and JPEG versions, and put on CDs. It also was scanned with OCR (optical character recognition) to enable keyword searching of the text. The digital version is available at http://www.uwlax.edu/murphylibrary/digitization/WiscLaborAdv/n01p01.html. We are looking for volunteers to make corrections to the OCR text. If you are interested, please contact Murphy Library or click on the Volunteering button on the web page above.

COLLECTION ENHANCEMENTS
Murphy Library’s book and multimedia collections have benefited immensely over the years from Endowment funding. The Library’s budget for materials has remained static despite significant inflation for materials in all formats. This has resulted in a decrease in overall purchasing power. So, endowment monies are used to help erase collection deficiencies and create new collections. The funding has also helped enhance parts of the collection directly related to new curricular needs.

Recent Endowment funds were awarded to further develop Latina/Latino resources, many of which had a Midwestern emphasis (see accompanying photo of library exhibit). Since new faculty from various disciplines are now teaching in this area, having more resources for students was critical.

Funding was also requested for a newly created History of Archaeology course. These monies were used to replace, update, and expand Murphy Library’s valuable and unique collection of archaeology materials.