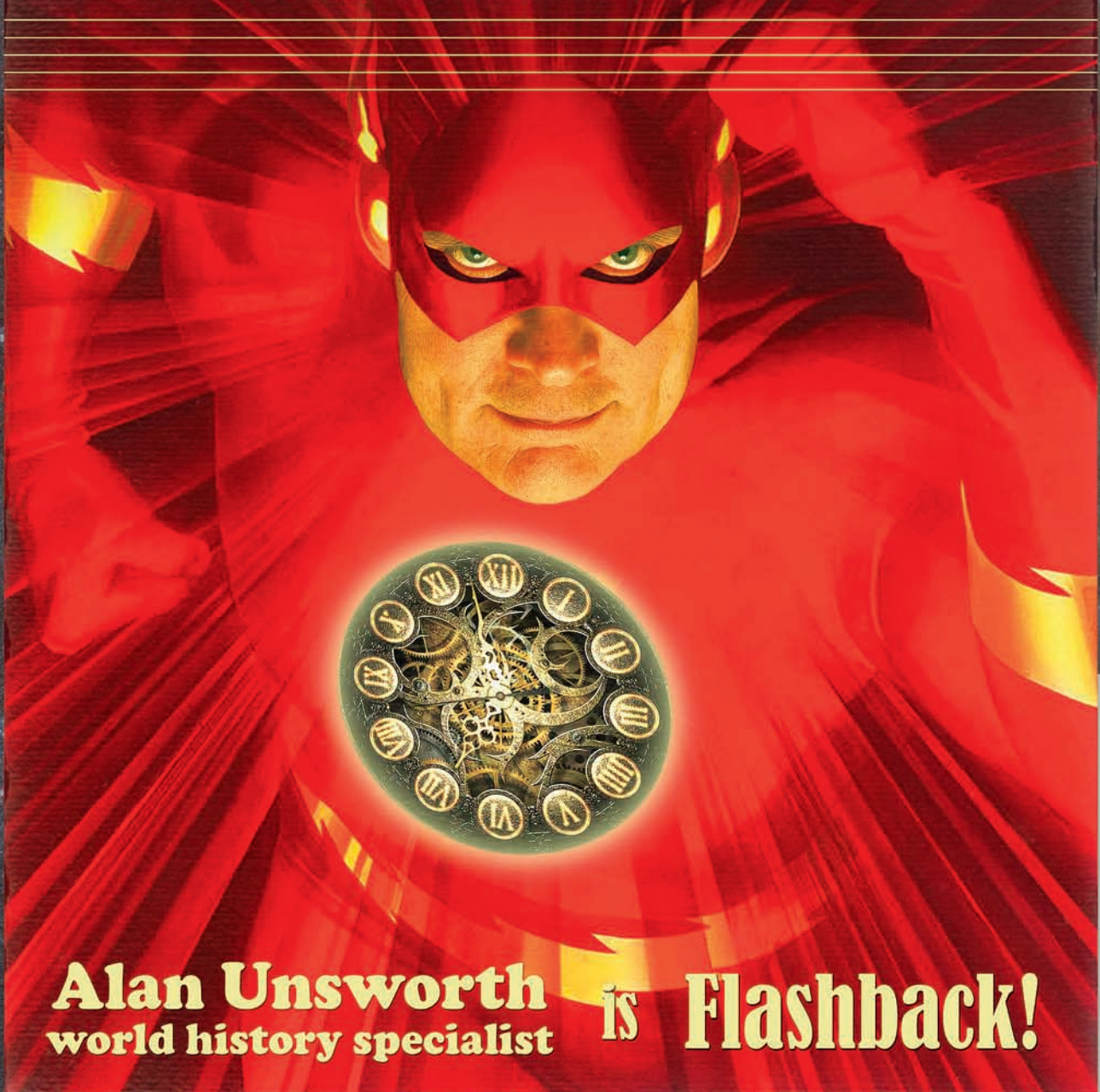


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JUNE

LEAGUE *of* LIBRARIANS



Alan Unsworth world history specialist **is** **Flashback!**

In a League of Their Own

Here they are to save the day—or at least the research project. Rochester librarians call on their inner superheroes as part of a new effort to let students know how to find help.

By Kathleen McGarvey

IT'S A BIRD, it's a plane, it's . . . a subject librarian. For students in hot pursuit of information, librarians who know a collection inside and out can save the day. But often, students don't even realize that finding the appropriate librarian is a critical step for their research projects.

So the librarians at Rush Rhees Library have stepped in to help with a series of initiatives to make themselves more visible to students. Among the recent innovations is a set of collectible trading cards that make finding a library expert a snap.

"One of our goals is always to connect the student with the subject librarian. We're always looking for ways to get in front of them," says Katie Clark, associate dean of public services and collection development for the River Campus Libraries.

Alan Unsworth

A world history specialist, Alan Unsworth, a.k.a. "Flashback," calls historical abstracts his "secret weapon" and lists among his superpowers the ability to capture opponents by placing them within historical context.



Clark got the idea when she met the head of the reference department for the library at Carleton College in Minnesota. She showed Clark a set of trading cards librarians had developed there. "Quite a few libraries are now doing it, based on what they did at Carleton," Clark says.


Initially, Clark and colleague Marc Bollman, a senior library assistant in the Art and Music Library, planned a series of cards based on pulp magazine covers—but when they invited librarians to develop their own characters, the project took on a life of its own. They found inspiration in figures from Fay Wray to Rosie the Riveter.

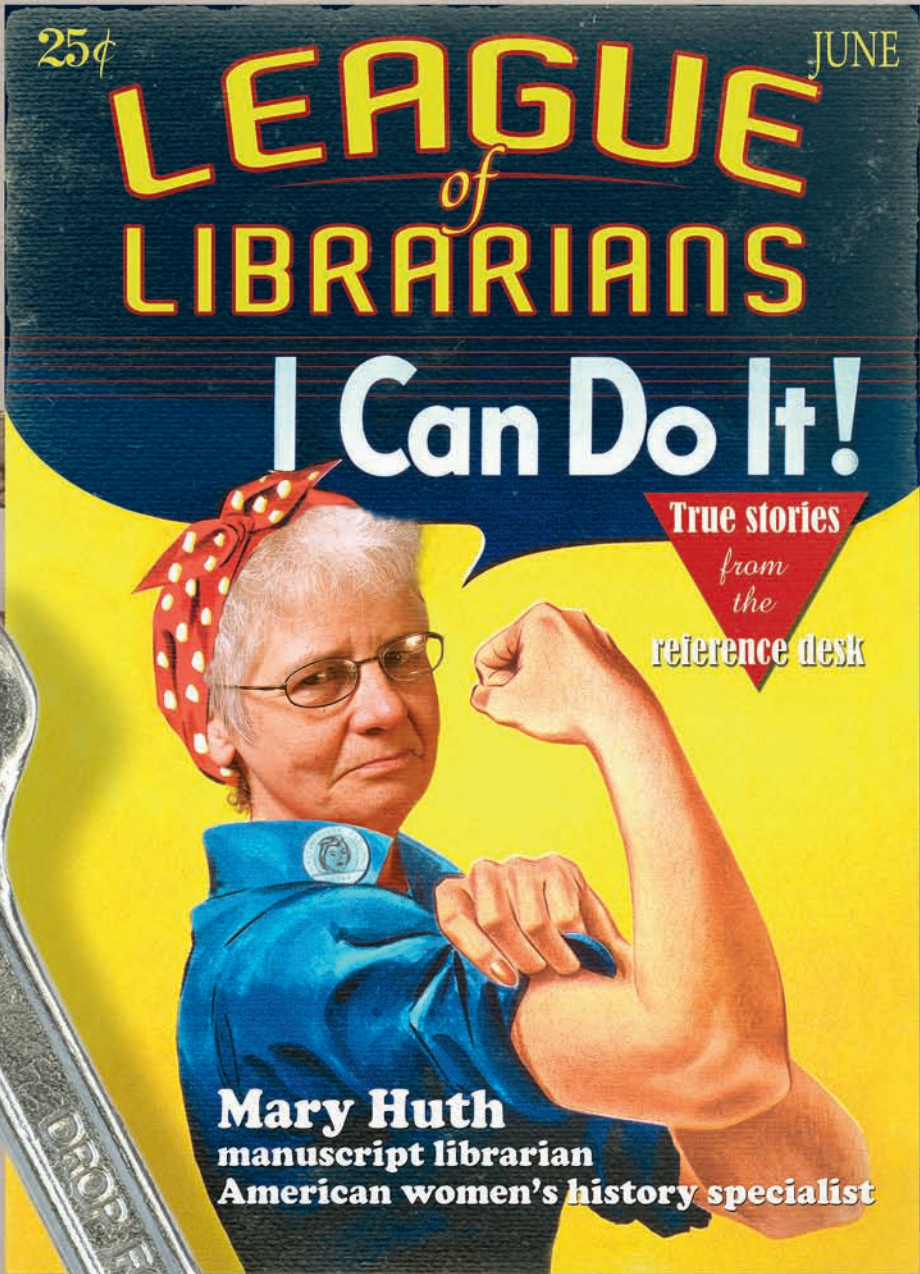
"I wanted something a little more all encompassing, something that would draw more on the librarians' own personalities," says Bollman. He knew he had tapped into their secret selves when several of them dressed as their alter egos for Halloween.

The back of each card lists the librarian's "superpowers, vulnerabilities, secret weapons," and other vital pieces of information. "Sometimes he is forced to use the terrifying power of Historical Context, or the fabled Wayback Machine, but he still maintains his public identity of Alan Unsworth, mild-mannered History Librarian," proclaims the card of world history specialist Unsworth, who doubles as library superhero Flashback.

At orientation, "parents were collecting full sets to give to their children," Clark says. "Kids are starting to recognize librarians by name because they know who we are from the cards," she says.

So do the trading cards reveal that librarians are really superheroes and wizards and the like at heart? "Well, it took a little bit of prodding" to convince some to go into character, Clark says.

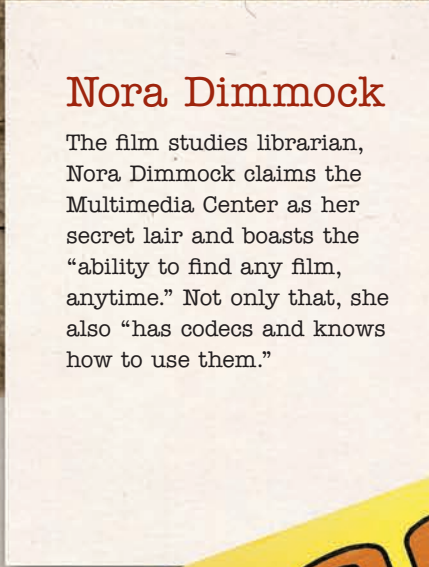
"But once Marc showed people what the cards were going to look like, they were in." 



Mary Huth
manuscript librarian
American women's history specialist

Mary Huth

Mary Huth, a manuscript librarian and American women's history specialist, is assistant director of Rare Books, Special Collections, and Preservation. She has the "ability to lift heavy manuscript boxes" and the "determination to answer even the toughest reference question."



Nora Dimmock

The film studies librarian, Nora Dimmock claims the Multimedia Center as her secret lair and boasts the "ability to find any film, anytime." Not only that, she also "has codecs and knows how to use them."



FORGERIES & ART INTRIGUE MARCH

LEAGUE of LIBRARIANS

Van Gogh's ear!
Was Gauguin to blame?

The case of the
missing Mona Lisa

Koons:
genius or charlatan

True stories
from
the
reference desk

Stephanie Frontz
art librarian

OCT LEAGUE of LIBRARIANS

True stories

from
the
reference desk

When Films
Fight Back!

Nora Dimmock
film studies librarian

Stephanie Frontz

Specializing in art, art history, architecture, photography, and visual and cultural studies, Stephanie Frontz is an art librarian and the head of the Art and Music Library. She “finds clues lurking everywhere, even the stacks,” she says, and has the power “to discern the title of ‘that big blue book.’”

Helen Anderson

An “ability to navigate the Forest of Information” is the superpower of Helen Anderson, who guides students seeking Russian studies or general humanities materials. Her secret weapon? Reading Russian, French, and Italian.



Barbara Alvarez

Barbara Alvarez manifests her superpowers in multiple guises as the modern languages and cultures librarian, an academic advisor, a writing tutor, and a research instructor. Alvarez calls the formidable MLA International Bibliography her secret weapon.



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JULY

LEAGUE *of* LIBRARIANS

True stories
from
the
reference desk

Suzanne Bell
economics & data librarian

Suzanne Bell

A "priestess of database incantations" who "can bend any database to her will" and "can banish all-nighters to the negative zone," Suzanne Bell is the economics and data librarian. Singing in the stacks is her idiosyncrasy, but she holds among her superpowers one especially to be coveted: She "reads professors' minds."

LEAGUE *of* LIBRARIANS

DEC

The Secret Stacks!

Barbara Alvarez
cultures librarian