

PRESS RELEASE

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THE RARE BOOK & MANUSCRIPT LIBRARY
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
2-4-15 For immediate release

♥ SPEED DATING IN THE RARE BOOK LIBRARY ♥

Dating Dante, Romancing the Romantics, & Flirting with Flyleaves

Yes, it has happened: Speed Dating has come to the Rare Book & Manuscript Library at the University of Illinois. But it is not exactly what you think. On Friday, February 13 from 3:30 to 5:00pm ten book-loving students will offer six minute presentations on a variety of remarkable books or and manuscripts. Each of them have discovered and researched a rarity that “speaks to them,” or perhaps we should say a book “that makes their spines tingle.” Guests—and all are welcome—are invited to wander from treasure to treasure every six minutes. After ‘speed dating’ an amazing book, newly enlightened book friends can socialize while enjoying refreshments and heart-shaped pizza.

“We are a pretty “hip” library,” says director Valerie Hotchkiss, “with lots of hands-on teaching with primary resources and popular blog and Tumblr sites, but we hadn’t tried speed dating yet—and with Valentine’s Day coming up, we felt inspired.”

Sophomore Alex Villanueva is among the presenters and he calls his treasure, a 1590 illustrated book about the Roanoke community (before they disappeared), “a beautiful book. It’s my new favorite book in the world—in the new world, I mean!” Similarly, senior Nicole Contreras, who will help guests “date” the first edition of *Alice in Wonderland*, expresses her awe at being able to get to know such a book, “I can’t wait to show this book to other people,” she says.

The Rare Book & Manuscript Library at the University of Illinois is known for its innovative PUBLIC programming. They regularly offer lectures, workshops, exhibits, concerts, and even plays in the library. Children’s events, such as a Mad Hatter Tea Party and an Aesop’s Fables story time have also taken place there. And the Rare Book & Manuscript Library is well known for its annual Bloomsday event at a local pub and its yearly birthday party for William Shakespeare. “Our goal,” says curator Caroline Szyłowicz, “is to make the ideas that are in our books come to life in new and exciting ways, emphasis on exciting!”

Come date a rare book on February 13, 3:30 -5:00pm in the Rare Book & Manuscript Library.

For further information, contact vhotchki@illinois.edu or 217 333 3777