Minutes for LES Collections Discussion Group – ALA Annual
July 12, 2009 10:30-noon
Palmer House, Wilson Room

1. Welcome from Convener Faye Christenberry and solicitation of minute taker.

 2. Cataloging and Shelving of Graphic Novels
     Collecting graphic novels brings about many issues: Shelve in a special location or mix with the rest of the collection? Classify in PN or in other call numbers? How does the library help users find them? How do librarians select?

Approaches vary. Liorah (Wichita State) has only a gift for purchasing so narrowed the realm of graphic novels by choosing only nonfiction graphic novels that are personal histories such as memoirs, autobiographies, or realistic depictions of life (i.e. *Maus*, *Black Hole*). She selected after consulting reviews, websites, Gene Kannenberg's *500 Essential Graphic Novels* (New York: Collins Design, 2008). She decided to include *Barefoot Gen*, which appeared in 4 vols., because it tells a single story. She promoted by creating an exhibit. Reporter note: see online information about the exhibit at

http://library.wichita.edu/circulation/exhibit_graphicnovels.htm

She also created a packet of information for faculty about graphic novels and potential use in courses. At Wichita State, graphic novels are kept with fiction, mostly in PN6727.

Melissa (James Madison) noted that the demand in her library is mostly for graphic novels written for children or young adults; those titles are shelved in education, and the adult titles are in the circulating collection. She buys comic books as well as graphic novels. Their library has a canned search to pull all titles up in the catalog. She uses reviews to decide which titles to purchase. Currently no English faculty member is teaching, but that may change since other professors are interested. Annette buys two copies for Stanford, one for Special Collections and the other for the stacks. Some are shelved offsite.

Chad (NYU) recommended several useful websites:

ComiXology for ordering, reviews: http://www.comixology.com/

Comics Research for bibliography of book-length studies and other information: http://www.comicsresearch.org/

Diamond is useful for buying and getting reviews and offers core lists: http://www.diamondbookshelf.com/public/

DC Absolute are large format, archival quality publications from DC Comics. NYU is building a collection, but large formats are difficult to shelve and protect from damage. (Recorder's note: DC Comics has a list of 30 essential graphic novels at http://www.dccomics.com/sites/essential30/).   Having an enthusiastic cataloger helps bring users to the items.

When Michael buys graphic novels, he sends to Michigan State's large holdings in Special Collections. None of these circulate, so anyone needing a reading copy has to try ILL through the state consortium of public libraries. Buying a circulating copy for MSU poses certain difficulties. A new residential college has students

interested in the genre; fortunately the local public library has a good circulating collection.

Kristine (Purdue) relies on public libraries to acquire graphic novels.

Steve (University of New Mexico) reported on their new program which allows purchase of recent books under a certain amount if a user requests through ILL.

Faye said that the University of Washington has a similar program, but the books must be scholarly and published by a university press.

Discussion: YBP profiles some graphic novels. Important sources include Fantagraphics (http://www.fantagraphics.com/), Diamond Book Distributors, DC Comics

3. New Budget Environment

OhioLINK may cut the MLA International Bibliography; some institutions are placing science above the humanities. One difficulty inherent in consortia is that library needs differ; some libraries, mainly public, do not need abstracting and indexing tools. OhioLINK academic libraries are being discouraged from subscribing to the MLAIB if the consortium cuts but are being asked what they would have to buy even if the consortium canceled.

Planning is difficult. Melissa mentioned the stream of new cut targets; she's had to cancel standing orders and faculty are worried over the sustainability of electronic resources. Another problem is the fiscal year; many start in July but libraries don't get figures for months. To cope, libraries must have several plans to cope with various scenarios. The tactic of asking departments to help purchase materials or subscriptions was mentioned. Sometimes this leads to materials being accessible one place but not in others. Donation of issues from personal subscriptions leads to ethical and practical issues such as claiming and cataloging. One library handles the issue by asking for a donation so that the library can subscribe.

Many libraries are instituting deep cuts in serials. Washington is canceling 20% The problem on relying on packaged e-journals is that titles come and go. For instance, Project Muse has announced several title changes, the addition of new titles with others no longer available through Muse.

A & I databases: keep or cancel? Many libraries are discussing whether it's more important to have content or indexing. Resolution is impossible because users often can't find content without databases but then can't read what they've discovered (without ILL) if the library has canceled the journals.   Participants agreed that Wilson Indexes generally have awkward interfaces, one reason some libraries plan to cancel. At some libraries, usage of A & I databases is going down, but then the question of the reliability of statistics was raised since vendors aren't always open about how they count usage and may change their method to mask downturns. Some large vendors are countercompliant in the way they count.

The question of how to distribute cuts is thorny. Use credit hours? percent of budget? percent of serials? In some libraries the sciences are canceling more because so much of their content is available online. One library is promising document delivery for canceled titles.

Some publishers charge more for packages if libraries cancel journals. Sometimes paper subscriptions cost less than packaged e-journals.

Amanda reported that Northeastern handled cancellations with a website full of information for the faculty but which outsiders could not view. Humanities faculty can see the amount spent on sciences.

The new financial realities are changing how libraries institute cuts. At the University of Georgia, cuts for journals costing under $100/year were not considered. Now they are.

At Virginia Tech so many faculty were concerned about the state of the library that the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences formed a task force which met with the Administration and, among other actions, compiled a list of essential resources to protect them from cancellation.

Stanford is preparing for collection cuts, layoffs, and having fewer people to teach and to process materials.

One strategy: opening collection meetings to teaching faculty, though the Provost needs to support the idea so s/he doesn't see faculty support for the library as a nuisance.

E-format packages: humanities have less input in what's included so often key journals and monographs are not available. Libraries perceive less need for selectors as they turn to e-journal and e-book packages. Buying shelf ready means that selector review may be seen as less necessary.

Finding time to do collection development is difficult. Many LES members report to the head of public services so reference and instruction dominate their time. Collection development is less immediately demanding and put aside. Some aren't even evaluated on their collection development work because they report to the head of public services.

Outsourcing: Coutts and YBP are eager to implement. The vendor chooses the books based on a consortial profile. The fear is vanilla collections. YPB will construct lists of titles not bought for a library or consortia; these lists can be used to diversity the collection(s).

Kathy (University of Nebraska-Lincoln) notes that book circulation has been an important tool in collection development, and the circulation of monographs is down while the use of e-formats is growing. Good statistics are crucial to see what is being used. Outsourcing can't look at usage or trends in scholarship.   Vendors claim that books they choose have a higher circulation, but many librarians are selecting not only for current but also for future research. The impact of patron- and interlibrary loan-driven collection development needs exploration since User-drive demand tends to have a narrow focus. Some ILL usage is not the result of academic research but of hobbies and outside interests. Relying on user-driven demand is a disservice to undergraduates since they don't have time to wait for months for a book to be ordered and processed. Finding time to study circulation figures and change approval plan profiles can be difficult.

Faculty want paper and e-books. Espresso may help; YPB has one in its warehouse. These machines are expensive, around half-a-million dollars. Users pay for the cost of materials, 1 cent a page and a copyright fee of $3.50-$4. Cost per book is around $20/title. Reporter note: see http://www.ondemandbooks.com/hardware.htm for more information about Espresso, http://www.lib.umich.edu/espresso-book-machine for information about the Michigan program). Another factor is the Hathi Trust and its plans.

4. British Newspapers 1800-1900   http://newspapers.bl.uk/blcs/

A brief discussion about this product, which is free to U.K. higher education institutions, some public libraries and a few institutions in other countries. Anyone can search the database, but U.S. users must pay to see the actual articles. Should this resource be placed on library lists of resources?