



Biblio-Notes

Issued by the Literatures in English Section of the Association of College & Research Libraries, a division of the American Library Association

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Notes from the Chair:

LES Opportunities Abound!

This issue includes notice of numerous opportunities for literature librarians to become more involved in the Section and to take advantage of what the Section has to offer in terms of professional development and national-level service.

In San Antonio we'll be hosting a number of discussion groups as well as our committee meetings. The Membership Forum will include a presentation and discussion of the use of Weblogs in literary librarianship. Everyone is encouraged to attend and participate. If you are considering committee participation, you are welcome to sit in during the All Committees meetings to see which group is right for you.

Interested in editing our newsletter? Moderating our list serves? Becoming our Webmaster? Read on to learn how to let us know.

Additional opportunities and information are available on the Web site and will be announced on LES-L. Visit <http://www.ala.org/acrl/les> or contact Section officers if you have specific questions.

We'll be looking forward to working with you.

Susanna Van Sant
University of Maryland Libraries
svasant@umd.edu

Genre

Recently, LES members have been talking a lot about genre. We've discussed who's collecting gay and lesbian pulp fiction, how we find funds for graphic novels, and whether academic libraries are (or should be) in the business of preserving the kind of literature

that may not seem very "literary" at the moment. At the University of Oregon, we recently received a donation to support historical fiction. I'm hoping that this will be a fun, high-use collection that will boost circulation rates and also make our collection more inclusive.

I'm not a historical fiction fan, so I tackled this genre by doing what a librarian does best: I looked it up. Our public library had a copy of Sarah Johnson's very handy *Historical Fiction: A Guide to the Genre* (Libraries Unlimited, 2005), which gives thorough annotations of several thousand novels, as well as clear indications of which should be in a core collection. Anyone who reads in this genre knows it's very broad and that it resists definition, but by making some arbitrary decisions to steer clear of the outer reaches of romance, western, and fantasy, I compiled a manageable "starter" list.

I now find myself submitting orders for M.M. Kaye, Colleen McCullough, and Jean Plaidy, alongside more modern and "literary" novels like *The Devil in the White City*, *The Kitchen Boy*, and *A Floating Life: The Adventures of Li Po*. I'm buying Ken Follett, Leon Uris, and even Jimmy Carter. (The former President wrote a novel about the Revolutionary war, titled *The Hornet's Nest*.) I've come across several books I'd probably like to read. I'm also getting a chance to familiarize myself with a genre I've never spent much time on, which will no doubt help me on a reference question someday. (Everything leads back to reference, sooner or later.)

We're shelving the books in this collection on a separate shelf of our "New Books" section, with a sign designating that they're from a gift. We hope this will not only make them more visible to our readers, but maybe also encourage another donor to step forward. Maybe there's an alum out there who loves hardboiled mysteries, or westerns, or even graphic novels. I'd love to see a new trend of donors funding "pocket collections"--small, concentrated libraries of genre literature within our larger collection. It would be a

great way to broaden our collection and give our users a personal stake in their library. At the moment we're starting with historical novels, but we definitely have our eyes on the future.

Karen Munro
Literature Librarian
University of Oregon
kmunro@darkwing.uoregon.edu

LES-L

With queries ranging from assessing the relative merits of various electronic collections to seeking help with particularly challenging reference questions, and with postings about LES programs and activities, as well as the occasional position description or announcement of a new service or major reference tool, LES-L, the electronic list for Literatures in English Section, keeps section members involved and informed throughout the year.

The number of messages is fairly light, but enough to maintain a sense of community and to keep subscribers informed about topics that affect our work as literature librarians.

If you are not currently a subscriber to LES-L, I'd encourage you to try it for a month. Simple instructions for signing up - and for leaving - LES-L are posted on the LES web site. There are also on screen instructions for reading the Archive of messages.

If you have been a subscriber for a while and would be interested in becoming the moderator, please see the position description elsewhere in this issue of *BiblioNotes*. Serving as the "moderator" for LES-L for the past several years has been an enjoyable experience, one that I'd recommend.

Kathy Johnson
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Kjohnson6@unl.edu

Life Not as a Literature Librarian: What I Did When I Didn't Become a Literature Librarian

I'm a British citizen who received a Ph.D. in English from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in 1996. Like many people with Ph.D.'s in English, I interviewed for a number of academic jobs I did not get. With my visa about to run out, I took a job in early 1997 as a technical writer. Four years in, routine had become a rut, and it was time to get yet another degree.

I chose library school because I thought an academic library was the place where I could best use the skills I'd developed in my various lives as a teacher, writer, researcher, and buyer for a secondhand and antiquarian bookshop in central London. I did the M.L.I.S. in ten months between September 2001 and July 2002. When I started applying for work, my experience before and during the library degree led me to apply primarily for jobs as a literature librarian. I applied for four such jobs and had two telephone interviews and two on-campus interviews. Neither of the phone interviews took me anywhere. The two on-campus interviews, however, went as well as I, or anyone else, could expect. I was close to getting one of the jobs, and got the job I wanted, only to see it disappear in yet another sadly familiar round of funding cuts.

When the job fell through, I intended to start applying for reference librarian jobs. I am not currently answering questions about the printer because, in June 2003, my spouse—who had removed herself from the academic job market—applied, on a whim, for a lectureship in Gender Studies at Indiana University at Bloomington (IUB). She got the job, and through one good connection, I was hired as a temporary lecturer by the IUB English Department.

Getting a library degree changed my teaching and research. The Indiana University Digital Library recently accepted my proposal to digitize the *Voice of Industry*, an antebellum labor reform newspaper contributed to and, for a while, edited by women who worked in the Lowell Mills. In my teaching, too, I now collaborate with the library. During my years in graduate school, I never took my students to the library. Now every semester, I take all my classes on a visit to the Special Collections

library. My classes also attend two library research sessions where they are shown how to search the online library catalog, WorldCat, the Modern Language Association International Bibliography, and Wright American Fiction, 1851-1875. Those who have taught composition should be immune to shock, but it's alarming when students do poorly on the search basics test I designed to accompany the sessions.

The library degree changed me but it's difficult to tell whether it will ever get me hired as a librarian. I don't think I'm less qualified for library work in late 2005 than I was in late 2002, but who am I to judge? I am also in the position of any half of an academic couple. We are fortunate to have jobs at the same place, and if I took a library job now, I'd need to know that the university hiring me would also hire my spouse. My job is impermanent and that alarms me. But even if my job were permanent, I'd regret that the literature librarian job I thought I had went unfunded. It was the pay off for nine years in graduate school: an excellent job at an excellent university. I do useful work as a lecturer, but I now doubt that it's more useful than the work done by literature librarians.

Gareth Evans
English Department
Indiana University at Bloomington
garevans@indiana.edu

**The Formby Library Research
Fellowships 2006
Southwest Collection/Special
Collections Library
Texas Tech University**

Application deadline: January 13, 2006.

The Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library (SWC/SCL) invites applications for the Formby Library Research Fellowships which support short-term fellowships of 1-3 months for conducting research in its collections. The fellowships are open to a broad range of researchers residing outside the Lubbock area: holders of the Ph.D. or the equivalent, graduate students, writers, journalists, and independent scholars. We are

especially interested in receiving applications that utilize collections such as: The Sowell Collection, the sports collection, oral histories, and the Millennial Collection. The stipend is \$2,000 per month, and the term of the fellowship is a minimum of one month and a maximum of three, taken between June 1, 2006 and May 31, 2007. Fellows are expected to be in residence and conduct research during the majority of the award period. Funding for the fellowships comes from the Sharleen and Marshall Formby Endowment.

Guides to the SWC/SCL holdings are available at the Library's website:
<http://swco.ttu.edu>.

* In the area of ranching and agriculture, the Library holds the records of the Matador Land and Cattle Co., the JA Ranch, the Four Six's, and the Pitchfork Land and Cattle Co.

* The James Sowell Family Collection in Literature, Community and the Natural World includes the papers of contemporary writers on the literature of place: Rick Bass, Max Crawford, David James Duncan, Gretel Ehrlich, Bill Kittredge, Barry Lopez, Walter McDonald, Bill McKibben, Doug Peacock, David Quammen, Pattiann Rogers and Annick Smith.

* The SWC/SCL also holds the Texas Tech University Archives, the organization records of the Southwest Athletic Conference, numerous regional oral histories, and photographic images and records for the Millennial Collection, a documentary project. The Rare Books department holds an in-print collection of Joseph Conrad that is perhaps the strongest in the world. Other authors with significant representation include John Donne, Rudyard Kipling, W.H. Auden, Walt Whitman, Marianne Moore, Kay Boyle and James Dickey.

There is no special application form and this notice provides all the essential information needed to apply. Applicants should submit the following:

- (1) cover sheet stating name, title of project, expected period of residence, institutional affiliation, mailing and email address, and telephone numbers;
- (2) a letter (not to exceed 1,000 words) which briefly describes the project, states the specific relevance of the Library's collections to the project, and indicates expected results of the research (such as publications);
- (3) a c.v. or resume; and
- (4) one letter of reference (graduate students should use their thesis or dissertation advisor).

Applicants are encouraged to consult the Library staff by mail or phone regarding the collections. Inquiries may be addressed to SWC/SCL staff or to the Formby Research Fellowship Committee. Email or fax submissions are acceptable.

Address application or inquiries to: Diane Warner, Chair Formby Library Research Fellowships, Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library MS 41041, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX 79409-1041, Fax: 806-742-0496 Phone: 806-742-3749 Email: Diane.Warner@ttu.edu

Three Positions Open in LES

LES is currently accepting applications for three section positions. These roles are excellent for people who like to be involved in professional associations and feel they can make an impact. We are looking for applicants who could make a two or three-year commitment (see individual job descriptions) and could attend ALA conferences for training and to participate in LES meetings. All three positions are ex officio members of both of the Executive Committee and the Publications Committee, so Midwinter and Annual conference attendance is required. If you can meet these expectations and are interested in the position, please send a short (one or two paragraphs) statement of interest to Susanna Van Sant, the Chair of the Literatures in English Section (e-mail: svansant@umd.edu).

We would like to have selections identified by the end of the year.

Webmaster

The Literatures in English Section is in need of a Webmaster for its site (<http://www.ala.org/acrl/les>). Our current Webmaster, David Bell, who has served in this capacity for three years, is moving on to new projects. We thank him for his work.

The LES Webmaster is primarily responsible for maintaining the functionality of the site and for implementing new initiatives and updates generated by the committees. The Webmaster would be encouraged to pursue his or her own proposals for the LES site in consultation with the Executive Committee.

We are looking for someone who could make a two-year commitment. If you have any questions about the nature of the position or its duties, please address them to David Bell (cfdsb@eiu.edu).

In your statement, please tell us why you are interested in the position, your qualifications for it and describe any relevant experience you may have. Feel free to send URL's to any Web site work you have done. (Please note that ALA provides training in the use of its content management system. Prior experience with such a system is not required.)

This is a terrific opportunity to get involved with the Section.

LES-L Moderator

The Literatures in English Section is seeking a volunteer to be the "moderator" for LES-L, the Literatures in English Section's electronic list and LESExec-L, the "moderator" for the LES Executive Committee's electronic list.

Our current moderator, Kathy Johnson, who has served in this capacity for nearly six years, is now the Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect of LES and would like to focus on that responsibility and to turn over the position of LES-L and LESExec-L moderator to another member.

The LES-L "moderator" is primarily responsible for answering inquiries about using LES-L, from occasional questions about posting a message to LES-L; for updating and correcting the subscriber list as needed; and for monitoring and updating the instructions on the LES web site for subscribing to LES-L and reading the archives. With LESExec-L, the chief activity is updating the subscriber list after the ALA annual meeting. Time commitment is about one hour per month.

If you have any questions about the nature of the position or its duties, please address them to Kathy Johnson (kjohnson6@unl.edu).

In your statement, please tell us why you are interested in the position, your qualifications for it and describe any relevant experience you may have. Prior experience with such a system is not required.

BiblioNotes Editor

The Literatures in English Section is also seeking a newsletter editor. If you have any questions about the nature of the position or its duties, please address them to Julie Still (still@camden.rutgers.edu). Meetings of all section newsletter editors if often, but not always, held at ALA Midwinter. An ACRL staff person is always available by email or phone to answer questions. Previous newsletter editors are also willing to pitch in where needed.

While graphic design and newsletter experience are useful, the current editor did not have either before taking the helm. The editor issues a call for items twice a year, and watches LES-L and other venues for story ideas and approaches people to see if they would be willing to send in a brief article. Editorship also places you in a position to encourage other librarians, including those new to the profession, by asking them to write, something that may not have occurred to them. The newsletter is currently prepared in Word, and saved as a pdf.

In your statement, please tell us why you are interested in the position, your qualifications for it and describe any relevant experience you may have.

Listening to the Millennials: Thoughts for Literature Librarians

At our state's library association conference two weeks ago, I introduced and moderated a panel on the Millennials. From the turnout, it appears that this is still a hot topic of conversation right now among those in higher education. As the largest generation since the Baby Boomers, this group of 81 million people born between 1982 and 2002 are not only influencing how we think about education, but the culture at large. If one considers the influence which the Baby Boomers have had over our culture - music, art, literature, film, politics - and then realize that a generation this large will define our society's next era of culture and all that means, one can see why we're all attending to what makes them tick. For the Baby Boomers, the defining moment of their lives may have been the Vietnam War. For the Millennials, it may be September 11

which occurred when the class of 2009 was fourteen years old. Reflect on how those two historical episodes differ, how young people's responses to them differed, and we can begin to see how different this new generation may be.

As I introduced the topic, some librarians' eyes widened when reminded that the freshmen of this year, the class of 2009, were one year old when the first George Bush was elected, two when the Berlin Wall came down, four when the Soviet Union broke apart, and five when the Rodney King verdict was announced. Most of them have never lived through institutions which were formative to many librarians, the Cold War being a notable example. In their childhood, they saw the extensive media coverage of bombings including Oklahoma City (when they were eight) and the Olympic Park bombing (when they were ten). They entered junior high when coverage of the Columbine High School shooting was inescapable. Whether life has become more dangerous than it was for older generations is debatable, but what is not debatable is the perception that these students have grown up in a period of personal violence and terrorism. They've never known a day without the AIDS virus, and the U.S. has been at war since most of them started high school.

They've also never known a day without computers, much less VCRs, CD players, or television without *The Simpsons*. Taking into account how much technology has played a role in their lives - how fascinated they are with new technologies, and how supple they are at learning them - will be essential for librarians posing the question of how to create services, collections, and spaces that meet the learning styles and attitudes of this generation.*

The panel I moderated brought together a librarian who has studied this topic and two Millennial age students, one a college senior and one a beginning library school student. We tried to tease out what these students are like: their characteristics, their uniqueness, their strengths and interests, and their similarities to all of us. Two of the things which surfaced I thought especially relevant to literature librarians. First, the panel felt that the students who arrive on our campuses come with sufficient technological proficiency that instruction sessions which discuss strategies for searching different databases were bound to disappoint the students. According to the

panel, these students don't want strategies: they want sources. They want librarians to bring to their attention the definitive database, the stellar journal, the strange and wonderful reference book, and the author whose works are obscure but electrifying. I found it to be a peculiarly retro look at librarianship, where making reader's guides and bibliographies would seem a more valuable use of library instruction time than investigating how to evaluate websites. Now, we most likely do both when working with them, but these students find one precious and one an uneconomical use of time. Though we may have a different assessment of their information fluency, this is what they think.

The other interesting thought which emerged was that the panel felt we should do more work on our websites and with vendors to make the interfaces and usability of our electronic products simple and efficient. As the college senior explained, "Don't think of it as the students being lazy; think of us as wanting to be efficient. We have a lot of things to do and we want to be able to get in and get the information out of each database as efficiently as possible." According to William Strauss and Neil Howe's book *Millennials Rising* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000), the Millennials have led highly structured, scheduled lives and are used to multi-tasking all the time. America's obsession with time and squeezing more in has affected the lives of these students from childhood on.

While I think their point is well-taken to work with vendors and make *data gathering* as seamless as possible, I posed as follow-up to this panel that perhaps research is not supposed to be simple and efficient. Perhaps it is supposed to be circuitous and inefficient and time-consuming and laborious - so that the time and path required to meet a text facilitate both serendipity and discovery. The recent *Chronicle* article "Stacks' Appeal" by Thomas Benton describes well that occasion when, looking for a book, another different but perfect one falls on your head. Yes, I want to be able to search MLA and ABELL and a host of literature websites easily and simply, but do I believe the process of research in literature should be easy and simple? No more easy than learning to write well, no simpler than reading *Ulysses* or Akhmatova or Neruda. While believing that we should continue to investigate and shape our libraries with the

learning styles and characteristics of our incoming students in mind, I also wonder whether research has begun to denote data gathering and just how simple this process should be.

**Thanks to Dr. Dan Friedman, director of Appalachian State University's Freshman Seminar program, for his invaluable information about the students on our campuses today.*

Georgie Donovan
Appalachian State University
donovangl@appstate.edu

Editing BiblioNotes

It did not seem appropriate to put this in the editor's job description earlier in this newsletter but I would like to say that editing the newsletter is not the fearsome job many would envision it to be. I keep a bibliotes folder in my email and twice a year issue a call for articles. When replies come in I file them. Sometimes during the year I see an interesting item on LES-L or hear someone say something at a conference and ask them if they would be willing to write up some brief comments for the newsletter. These also go into my email folder. A week or so before the ACRL deadline I start putting these articles into a Word document, using the previous issue as a template. When copy is thin I call and email around asking people if they would be willing to write something. More than once I have been able to offer someone their first opportunity at publishing. These writers usually produce excellent pieces. It is not an onerous job; in fact it is a joy. However, after what will be five years on the job, it seems a good time to step aside. Many of you reading this will think editing the newsletter sounds interesting but that it requires an important person, or someone who has been very involved in ACRL. While I cannot speak for previous newsletter editors, let me assure you that I am in no way important (or that any current importance comes from being newsletter editor and not the other way around), and as for being an ACRL bigwig, well, let's just say I am a three-time loser in ACRL section elections. Hardly bigwig material. If the prospect of

signing up for something that requires attendance at six consecutive ALA meetings sounds daunting, rest assured that I have missed a few (maybe more, the consequence of having a child with a late June birthday and a long memory for maternal absences) and no one has hunted me down and flogged me for it yet. Nor have I been fired or fined. If you have any interest at all in being BiblioNotes editor I strongly encourage you to apply. Feel free to contact me with questions.

Julie Still
Rutgers University, Camden
still@camden.rutgers.edu

Personal and Institutional News

Karen Munro, Literature Librarian at the University of Oregon, has accepted the position of E-Learning Librarian at the University of California, Berkeley.

If you have news of note or just want the world to know you painted your house this spring, please email the editor.

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Contributions welcome. The editor especially encourages those who may not be able to travel to ALA meetings to contribute descriptions of new books of interest, essays on "My Life as a Humanities Librarian," "My Favorite Reference Tool" and "Personal and Institutional News." Deadlines for copy are roughly the end of September and the end of February of each year. Please contact the editor for the exact deadlines of specific issues.

Editor: Julie Still
Paul Robeson Library
Rutgers University
300 N. 4th St. / P. O. Box 93990
Camden, NJ 08101-3990
856 225-2846
still@camden.rutgers.edu

Assistant Editor: Katharine Dean
Ohio State University Libraries
Information Services Department
Main Library, Room 126
1858 Neil Ave.
Columbus, OH 43210
614 688-5861
dean.202@osu.edu

Chair, 2005-2006: Susanna Van Sant
McKeldin Library
University of Maryland
College Park, MD 20742-7011
Phone: (301) 405-9283
Fax: (301) 314-9416
E-mail: svansant@umd.edu

Vice Chair, 2005-2006: Kathy Johnson
Professor of Libraries
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Lincoln, NE 68588-4100
(402) 472-2553
kjohnson6@unl.edu

LES web site: www.ala.org/acrl/les

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