



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:



(Photograph provided by Karen Munro)

Greetings, LES members!

As I write this, LES has almost 600 personal and organizational members, many of whom are dealing with our usual heavy fall academic workloads of teaching, collection development, administration, and reference services. We're a busy crowd, but many of us have found time to get involved with LES and undertake some wonderful projects. You can learn more about what's going on by reading the minutes from our meetings at Annual 2008 conference in Anaheim, but here's a quick overview:

- The Membership Committee (Chair: Elizabeth Peterson) is working to enhance the LES mentorship program by building new features into our online membership directory. Ideally, members will be able to list their areas of research interest and their availability for different types of mentoring activities, such as being a conference ambassador or assisting with tenure reviews.

- The Publication Committee (Chair: Linda Stein) is continuing terrific work on the LES blog and wiki, as well as on the LES Web site, Biblio-Notes, and the LES-L and LES-Exec discussion lists. Please check the wiki (<http://literaturesinenglish.pbwiki.com/>) for meeting minutes, our online member directory, and handouts from programs and events. All members are encouraged to post items to the LES blog, which can be found at <http://www.acrl.ala.org/lesblog/>.

- The 2009 Nominations Committee (Chair: Kristine Anderson) has been working hard to develop a slate of candidates for the positions of LES Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect, Secretary, and Member at Large. We're happy to say we have a full slate of excellent candidates to submit to ACRL, so please remember to vote when the time comes next spring!

- The Conference Program Planning 2009 Committee (Chair: Angela Courtney) is working to plan an excellent program for our Annual 2009 meeting. The focus will be on large-scale digital projects in the humanities, including NINES (Networked Infrastructure for Nineteenth-century Electronic Scholarship) and the Poetess Archive. Mark your calendar for Chicago!

- The Planning Committee (Chair: Kathleen Johnson) is reviewing our bylaws and transferring them into a policies and procedures document, in accordance with ACRL's revised Section guidelines. At the same time, they're revising our Strategic Plan to streamline and update it, remove

redundancy, and bring it more closely in line with ACRL's Strategic Plan.

Other projects on the go include preliminary planning for a tour of the Newberry Library in Chicago during Annual 2009, and our annual planning process for the LES Action Plan. This year, the LES Executive Committee will work to engage all members in this important process, which helps launch and focus our projects for the coming years. Look for updates on LES-L and on the LES wiki and blog. We're looking forward to the fruits of all of these projects, which will help make our section easier to navigate, friendlier to new members, and richer for everyone. I'm personally looking forward to seeing many new and familiar faces at our 2009 Midwinter meetings in Denver. Our social gatherings, Membership meeting, and New Members Discussion Group are all splendid ways to meet new friends and colleagues, and get back in touch with those we already know.

Thanks to all of our dedicated LES members for making our Section a vital professional resource, as well as a welcoming landing-place for all!

Karen Munro
LES Chair 2008-2009

LES Midwinter Meeting Schedule



TENTATIVE Schedule of Meetings
(room assignments to be announced later)

If in January 2009, you are planning to attend the ALA Midwinter Meeting in

Denver, you are invited to all of the following meetings:

General Membership Forum (Saturday, January 24, 1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.) - will offer an opportunity to meet LES members in person and to gain a sense of the group's current priorities. This might be a good venue to identify a mentor. If you would like to suggest a topic for this session, please drop an email to LES Membership Committee Chair, Elizabeth Peterson, emp@uoregon.edu.

New Members Discussion Forum (Saturday, January 24, 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.) will be a smaller, cozier gathering where new and aspiring LES members will be able to network and discuss issues of particular interest to new literature librarians. To suggest conversation ideas, please contact Co-Chairs of the New Members Discussion Group, Arianne Hartsell-Gundy, hartsea@muohio.edu and Frank Gravier, gravier@ucsc.edu.

LES Social Hour - (Saturday, January 24, 6:30 p.m.) a time to make friends for life.

LES Reference Discussion (Sunday, January 25, 8:00 a.m. -10:00 a.m.) To suggest topics for the 2009 Midwinter meeting, please contact Melissa S. Van Vuuren, Chair, Reference Discussion Group, vanvuums@jmu.edu.

LES Collections Discussion Group (Sunday, January 25, 10:30 a.m. -12:00 p.m.) To suggest topics for the 2009 Midwinter meeting, please contact Faye Christenberry, Chair, Collections Discussion Group, fayec@u.washington.edu.

LES All Committees Meetings (Monday, January 26, 8:00 a.m. -10:00 a.m.) will offer everybody a chance to get involved in LES

activities, which is both great fun and good leadership training.

LES-L: Join in the Discussion



I would like to introduce myself and, more importantly, LES-L, the online discussion list of the Literatures in English Section of the Association of College and Research Libraries, a division of the American Library Association. My name is Liorah Golomb and in July I began a three-year term as moderator for the list. There are currently over 360 subscribers. The purpose of LES-L is to provide a forum for discussion relevant to the acquisition, organization, and use of information sources related to the study and teaching of literature written in English from around the world. Recent discussion topics have included whether to weed long-standing series that go unused in favor of online sources; publishers and publishing practices; and popular fiction collections. Open positions and professional development opportunities are also announced on the list from time to time. Finally, LES-L serves as the primary venue for members to announce activities, meetings, and programs at ALA Annual and Midwinter.

To subscribe to LES-L, send an e-mail message to sympa@ala.org from the address you want to subscribe to the list. In the subject line of your message, type in: **subscribe LES-L Firstname Name** (using your own first name and name). **Leave the message body blank.**

Alternatively, subscribe via the Internet at <http://lists.ala.org/www/info/les-l>. In either

case, if you have any problems please feel free to contact me at liorah.golomb@wichita.edu.

Liorah Golomb
Wichita State University

Life as a Humanities Librarian



After Pabst Blue Ribbon, a Niche Bibliographer

While I was a student in library school, sometime in 2004, I bumped into old high school friends in a smoky pool hall in my home town. Something like Def Leppard buzzed from the juke box; the floor was slick with beer. Plotting the ten years since graduation with expressive hand gestures – and growing increasingly self-conscious – I described my trajectory from college to public library worker, from graduate school in poetics to library school.

“I suppose I’m only qualified to be a librarian of experimental poetry,” I joked nervously, shrugging in my own uneasiness. I backed away from their puzzled faces.

In November, 2006, I was named Bibliographer for Modern Poetry at the University of Chicago Library. How could such an unlikely position have dropped into my lap? And could those townies in the pool hall ever believe my luck?

The key is this: my bibliographer duties constitute only 15% of my job description. I

arrived at the University of Chicago Library in 2005 as a Reference and Instruction Librarian in the Special Collections Research Center (the remaining 85% of my “portfolio”). As most positions in a special collections library, mine requires me to be a generalist, able to provide reference and instruct classes on a wide variety of topics.

But shortly after my arrival I saw an opportunity to create a very particular role, making use of my subject expertise – contemporary poetry and poetics. Within the previous several years, new programs and interests had developed on the University of Chicago campus. The Program in Poetry and Poetics (an interdisciplinary program) and the Creative Writing Program, for instance, are both new initiatives for the university.

The library seized on this opportunity to serve these new constituencies. I now perform specialized reference, outreach, and instruction for a focused user group; uniquely specific collection development duties; and outreach to non-university communities.

I’ve collaborated with faculty in both English and creative writing to integrate modern poetry manuscripts into their teaching. Classes on modernists such as Wallace Stevens (drawing on the records of *Poetry Magazine*) and creative writing classes that look at successive manuscript drafts of poems have been especially fruitful and exciting for students.

In this part-time bibliographer role I’ve initiated an effort to collect manuscript and print materials documenting the history of poetry in Chicago, an area overlooked by other institutions. My collecting leads, happily, to community outreach, bringing non-university communities into our library and taking the library out into the city. In

2008, I founded the annual Chicago Poetry Symposium, a forum for the discussion of the history of poetry in Chicago. The inaugural event drew many people from the greater Chicago community into the library. I’m also increasingly involved with events outside the university’s neo-gothic cloisters. Most recently I represented the University of Chicago Library at the Poetry Foundation’s annual Printers Ball at the Museum of Contemporary Art, and I was invited to coordinate a series of poetry readings at Columbia College’s Center for Book and Paper Arts to celebrate and promote their exhibition “Intersections of Experimental Literature and Artists' Books.”

For now I can only describe myself as a “niche bibliographer.” Over time, perhaps this niche will change shape, develop, or disappear altogether. The library was nimble and recognized a chance to provide service to a new, small (but growing) user group on campus by drawing on the expertise of a librarian already on staff, and this has led to new collections, collaborations with faculty, and increased visibility for the library.

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Research Fellowship Opportunity



The Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library (SWC/SCL) invites applications for the Formby Research Fellowships which support short-term fellowships of 1-3 months. The fellowships, which carry a stipend of \$2,000 per month and must be taken between June 1, 2009 and May 31, 2010, are open to researchers residing outside the Lubbock area. Fellows are expected to be in residence and conduct research in the collections during the majority of the award period. Funding for the fellowships comes from the Sharleen and Marshall Formby Endowment. Among other collections, the SWC/SCL contains The James Sowell Family Collection in Literature, Community and the Natural World, which includes the papers of contemporary writers on the literature of place: Rick Bass, Max Crawford, David James Duncan, Gretel Ehrlich, William Kittredge, Barry Lopez, Walter McDonald, Bill McKibben, Susan Brind Morrow, Doug Peacock, David Quammen, Pattiann Rogers, Sandra Scofield, and Annick Smith.

Deadline for applications: January 16, 2009. For further information see http://www.swco.ttu.edu/Formby%20Fellowship/formby_research_fellowship_main.htm or contact Diane Warner at diane.warner@ttu.edu.

Professional Development



Registration now open for ACRL 2009

Join your colleagues in Seattle, March 12-15, 2009, at the premier professional development event for academic and research librarians and staff.

ACRL's celebrated line-up of keynote speakers include Naomi Klein, award-winning journalist, activist, and author of *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*; Sherman Alexie, prolific novelist, poet and screenplay writer; and Ira Glass, host and producer of the public radio program *This American Life*. ACRL will offer Virtual Conference presentations and embrace Web 2.0 tools such as podcasts, Flickr, blogs, and more to enhance the impact of the National Conference. ACRL 2009 will also implement more eco-friendly practices than ever before and invites you to help reduce the meeting's ecological footprint by committing to the Green Pledge when you register for the conference.

Registration materials are online at www.acrl.org/seattle. Discounted housing rates, scholarships, and exciting tour options are also available. Contact acrl@ala.org with questions.

LES Bibliography

The *LES Bibliography: Studies of Interest for Literatures in English Librarians* has now moved to the LES Wiki after being hosted at Central Michigan State University for several years. The new URL is:

<http://literaturesinenglish.pbwiki.com/LES+Bibliography>

Members of the Publications Committee welcome contributions of citations. If you need assistance or would like to suggest a new subject category, please contact Aparna Zambare, zambalav@cmich.edu or Michaelyn Burnette, mburnett@library.berkeley.edu.

Stepping into Literature



I recently attended the “Stepping into Literature: Bringing New Life to Books through Virtual Worlds” virtual conference held entirely in Second Life. This one day conference included a keynote address by Beth Ritter-Guth (the creator of *Literature Alive!*), several “field trips,” an author lecture, a book discussion on *Snow Crash* by Neal Stephenson, and a panel discussion of several professors and publishers using Second Life in their classes or to promote their books. This conference helped me to see some of the possibilities and some of the

limitations for using virtual worlds in instruction.

The biggest possibility of virtual worlds involves their immersive nature. Beth Ritter-Guth mentioned this immersive nature in her key address. She said her students connected to the texts she taught in new ways and were more willing to take risks when she used Second Life. She told a very interesting story about teaching the *Canterbury Tales*. In past classes she had students dress up in costumes and do a “pilgrimage” around campus. It was never very effective because students just felt embarrassed. The reaction is very different in Second Life. They become excited about creating their costumes and creating the area where they do the pilgrimage. She also does a “Grendel hunt” when she teaches *Beowulf*. I saw this idea in action when I went on a field trip to “Tintern Abbey.” It’s set up so that you are guided to all the different points that are mentioned in the poem. When Wordsworth writes about looking down at the abbey, then you are looking down at the abbey. As you walk, there are questions to reflect on. There are also biographies, links, and interactive tasks. After you walk around “Tintern Abbey,” you really do feel immersed in the poem.

I also saw some of the limitations, at least at this point in the development of virtual worlds. I had had high expectations of the book discussion part, but it turned out to be a little boring. All the avatars (a computer user's representation of himself or herself) sat in a circle and typed their responses into a chat box. As a result, it felt less like a dialogue and more like we were just responding to the questions the moderator typed out. The idea that I was discussing this book with people from all over the country was neat, but I didn’t feel any more connected to them than if we had been

chatting through e-mails. Another limitation is the ability to present information. The other field trip involved a visit to “Rachelville,” an area devoted to children’s literature. Though the Secret Garden part of the area was beautiful, the area mostly consisted of links to Web sites, some audiovisual clips, and pictures. It was a slightly more interactive library research guide. It was an interesting way to present the information, but in the end you were still just clicking on links.

Though I don’t see myself building a literary world in Second Life anytime soon (for the record, if I did, I would definitely want to create a virtual Pemberley), I appreciated the chance to learn more about the education projects taking place. As a librarian, I think it’s very important to keep up with new trends in education. You never know when a professor may want you to take students on a tour of Dante’s *Inferno* or *Alice in Wonderland* (both real areas in Second Life). If you want to learn more, the following two links may be helpful:

Stepping into Virtual Worlds:
<http://www.steppingintovirtualworlds.org/>
Literature Alive:
<http://literaturealive.wikispaces.com/>

Arianne Hartsell-Gundy
Humanities Librarian
Miami University (Ohio)
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Coming Soon....

Look for an extended online version of *Biblio-Notes* on the LES Web site in the near future!

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 March of each year. Please contact the editor for the exact deadlines of specific issues.

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