Conserving Our Resources During These Difficult Times

The Fall semester is always a little hectic, and this one has been especially so. Trying to get back to some semblance of normalcy after Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita is difficult. Some of our students and faculty face tremendous difficulties just getting to school this semester. Many of our neighbors across South Louisiana are dealing with personal disaster and economic uncertainty.

Despite the turbulence around us, we in the Ellender Memorial Library are counting our blessings. Our university is open, classes are being taught, and students are actively engaged in learning again. We certainly have a lot for which we can be thankful. Though the future will bring challenges, the months ahead also hold much promise.

For many, the library is a place of calm and stability. We offer the students a place to meet, learn and work together. It is somehow reassuring to walk through the building and see so many students busy at the computers, studying at the tables and browsing the stacks. They, like those of us who work here, are getting back into a regular routine. Life goes on.

In some respects, student life here at Nicholls has not only returned to normalcy, but has also been turned up a notch. Student use of paper has gone up dramatically in the library, as the library is experiencing a boom in student use this semester. Each and every Library workstation on the second floor seems to be in use, virtually all day long. Also, an increasing number of instructors are posting more and more items on Blackboard, and students— in their continual efforts to do well and keep up—are printing everything that is posted. While we try to hold students to a thirty page a day printing limit, currently we are dependent on an honor system.

Because our supplies are so limited, the library staff has come up with a few simple practices you can follow to help conserve paper:

--Differentiate between what you really need to print and what you just need to look at.
--Send one print job at a time to the printer and collect your print job before sending a new one.
--When printing from PowerPoint presentations, first save the PowerPoint file. Then open the saved file and look for the command that says “Print What.” Change this setting to Handouts (do not select Slides). You’ll notice it will also save time if you select Grayscale, rather than color.
--Always choose the most printer friendly version of any file or web page.

Times are indeed hard, and with recent budget cuts, the road ahead promises to be difficult for a while. Please help us conserve paper, so that we can continue to offer printing services. Remember to use good judgment on all your printing projects, and to use all our resources wisely.

Carol Mathias, Director
Database Spotlight: ERIC Is Not a Viking Warrior, and Theo Saurus Was Not a Roman Emperor

If you’ve been following our database spotlights in our past few issues, you are well aware by now that we have a database for almost every subject area or specialization. In our first column, we pointed out that Academic Search Premier was the best database for generic searches and current events. This was followed by information on our best literature database (MLA International Bibliography) and the database recommended for searches in the nursing field (CINAHL).

We would be remiss to not take some time to address the interests of students and faculty here at Nicholls who are in the education field, as those two groups make up a large part of the NSU community. For those of you that find yourselves studying to create a future for yourselves in the noble profession of teaching, or for those who simply find themselves taking an education course and needing to find out what the most efficient methods of conducting parent-teacher conferences are, or what are the best ways to prevent school violence, the database of choice should be ERIC, which is short for The Educational Resource Information Center.

Because our version of ERIC is purchased through the same vendor as ASP, MLA, and CINAHL, those readers who are familiar with this column will find that the ERIC interface is, well, let’s just say very familiar. All a researcher need do to run a search is type in a search term or a combination using the Boolean and. For example, you could type the term parent-teacher conference or the combination violence and prevention and high school. As with the other databases mentioned, you will get a results list, which will include some full-text articles that can be printed from the computer.

Simple, right? Yes and no. ERIC has a few idiosyncrasies that you must be painfully aware of if you are to use it successfully. First, note that when you get a results list, you will see items of two types: ERIC Documents, which are designated by an ED identification number, and ERIC Journal Articles, which are designated by an EJ number. The important difference between the two is that of authority. EDs are works that are published by ERIC, and are not peer reviewed, while EJs are likely to be from peer-reviewed journals. If you have any question as to whether you can use EDs in your research, consult your professor.

The other sticky point is that ERIC uses controlled language, or standardized terms. Even though you can run a natural language (keyword) search in ERIC, your best results occur when you use the right standardized vocabulary. For example, if you wanted to find information on virtual libraries, but wanted to know what the right term was, you would click on the green tab labeled Thesaurus, and in the search labeled ‘Browse,’ type in your term. The Thesaurus would tell you that it is not the correct term, but would also advise you to use the term Electronic Libraries. You can click on the recommended term, and have the system paste it directly into a search.

Celebrating Democracy: The September Project

When we first got the e-mail asking, “What’s Your Library Doing on September 11,” we were not sure what to make of the self-proclaimed “grassroots effort to foster civic and campus events in all communities on September 11.” Yet we instinctively knew that it would be a good idea to use the anniversary of the most tragic event to take place on American soil in over a century to find a way to collaborate with non-library faculty, staff, and students to advance the cause of learning that celebrates and investigates democracy, citizenship, and patriotism—in all their manifestations.

This is when five library staff members, Cheryl Adams, Tony Fonseca, Angela Graham, Pam Tabor, and Anke Tonn, joined forces with Phi Kappa Phi officer Lydia Boudreaux, as well as Student Programming Association representative Olinda Ricard-Hodge, to form the September project committee. The committee was charged by Library Director Carol Mathias with the responsibility of creating meaningful and informative displays on the first and second floors of the library. These displays promote and explore themes of democracy and freedom, within the safe spaces of the NSU campus.

As event organizer David Silver, an Assistant Professor of Communications at The University of Washington-Seattle states, “We began the project because we thought Americans were in need of a space to participate in some kind of public discussion.”

**Library Tip #2**

Any item that is housed in Multimedia may be checked out by Faculty and Staff, who can borrow the item for one week. If you are Faculty or Staff and you check out a DVD, video cassette, or music CD, etc., and then find you need to keep it longer, contact Multimedia. Students can borrow as well, but they are allowed to check out only general videos.

Pictured, right: Part of the Library’s Veteran’s Day display, located on the first floor.
New Faces In New Places

At fifty years young, Debbie Adams still identifies helping people as the number one reason that she enjoys her job here at Ellender Memorial, and in that she says she feel she is blessed. A Nicholls Graduate who went on to be an Algebra teacher and businesswoman, Debbie has an array of interests outside of her job in the Multimedia Department. She is quite fond of arts and crafts, and can be found rummaging through many a garage sale, ostensibly looking for that one piece that will get her onto Antiques Roadshow. Her smiling face can always be found on the first floor of the library, back behind the pirogues, in Multimedia (what some people call Audio-Visual). She considers herself a good listener, and is considered by her colleagues as one of the most helpful people we have on staff.

Clifton Theriot is now the University Archivist. He previously held positions in the Serials, Reference, and Cataloging departments before being named interim Archivist in 2002. He earned a degree in history from Nicholls and then attended LSU, where he earned his M.L.I.S. As Archivist, he actively promotes one of his favorite pastimes—locating and preserving items that document local history. He enjoys meeting people from the community and listening to their stories of times gone by. It is during these visits that he usually discovers wonderful historical treasures. Many of these items have been donated to Nicholls and are now preserved in the Archives and available for research. He also finds time to be active in several community organizations including the Lafourche Heritage Society.

Tony Fonseca is not an unfamiliar face here in Ellender. If you’ve been to our Reference Department in the last couple of years, or have taken a class with us in the downstairs Ellender Lab, you’ve probably run into him. He is, however, a new face in our Serials Department. He has taken over as Head since the retirement of Marie Sheley. At 43, Tony has run the gauntlet of South Louisiana’s universities, but got his first degree here at Nicholls. An avid reader of horror and humor, he can often be found writing reviews of horror novels and movies, or writing literary essays for various reference books. He is also a gym rat and will watch nearly any sport, even the silly ones where dogs dive into ponds or lumberjacks throw around trees.

... And Skeletons in Our Closets!

Departmental Spotlight: Multimedia

If you remember Our Gang, Ozzie and Harriet, I Love Lucy, and “Who’s On First?” (Abbott and Costello), don’t worry. We won’t let on that we know how old you are. After all, many of us here in Multimedia remember seeing these black and white classics ourselves, back when we turned 29 the first time.

But those of you who are birthday-challenged and aren’t familiar with any of these “oldies but goodies,” take heart: we’ve got music—MTV’s Hip Hopera Carmen, Cypress Hill Live, Jessica Simpson, Mandy Moore, Richard Thompson. We’ve got video that teaches languages, the x’s and o’s of football, and how to avoid date rape, as well as just plain fun video—such as CSI’s first season. You could say we’re putting the “multi” back into Multimedia.

We are also the location for Audio-Visual Reserves, for times when teachers place slides or videos on reserve. Audio and visual machines are housed here. We have projectors, a TV with VCR, and DVD players. So if you’re looking for helpful instructor tapes for biology, math, French, Spanish, art, and history, look no further.

And let’s not forget the body parts we keep! We have models of the heart, eyes, and ears. Looking for a thin, good looking friend? Well, we’ve got a complete skeleton. Or are you looking for the intellectual type? Then check out our brains (don’t get too excited now; they are just plastic and won’t be much help on exams).

Sounds like all that and a bag of chips? Wait, there’s more! We’ve set up two group areas for viewing tapes and DVD’s, and four rooms are set up for viewing by groups of three or more students. These rooms can also be used for listening to music, though we ask you to keep the dancing to a minimum. We have the ability to pipe music to the individual rooms, or students can check out individual cassette and CD players.

Our General Video collection is available for check-out to everyone. We have many Classics, for those of you who are hip enough to want to watch them.

Multimedia also has a large, quiet study area, and our very own piano (please keep harp room type sing-alongs to a minimum).

Our hours of operations are as follows: Regular school semester hours are 7:30 a.m. till 11:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Saturday we are open 12 p.m. till 4:00 p.m. Sunday we are open 4:00 p.m. till midnight. During the Interim we are open 7:30 a.m. till 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Oh, and being state of the art, we have a phone! So please call if you have any questions (about loan periods, reserves, checking out equipment if you are faculty, etc.). Jolene Knight (who works during the day) and Debbie Adams (our night owl) can help you with your questions.
Library Looking to Make Major Improvements

In order to better serve students and faculty, the Library will be making major changes this semester and throughout the course of the year. For starters, the 2nd floor is now open until midnight on Sundays and Mondays, which will give students that extra hour they may need in a pinch. We are also displaying new acquisitions, both purchased books and donations, behind Reference.

A list of newly added books can also be found by clicking first the My Account link on our web page, and then clicking New Books in the top right. This list is sortable by subject area or discipline. So if you want to know what the Library has added recently to its chemistry collection, you can do it from home or your office!

Library Tip #3
Don’t let the new links that you see when you run a search in our EBSCO based databases throw you off. When you see in your results list a link that says LinkSource Access Options, what this means is that when you click that link, a new software product called LinkSource will search all our databases simultaneously to see if we have full-text of your article. If we do, you will see a link that will lead you to it. You will also see a link that will automatically search our catalog for a print version of your article (which is useful if there is no full-text version), and a link to get a copy of your article through Interlibrary Loan (if we do not have the article either in print or as full-text online).

Books in Brief: Masked Wrestlers, Cleaning Cons, and Baby Turtles

Those of us who are fans of Columbo or Monk know what I mean when I talk about quirky characters. These are the true-to-life but slightly off people who do things a little differently than you or me, which usually results in strange, comic adventures, but who are nonetheless loveable because we see enough of ourselves in them. Along these lines, three delightful novels housed in Ellender Memorial redefine the term eccentric.

The Bean Trees, by Barbara Kingsolver, tells the story of a young woman who sets out from her mother’s old Kentucky home in order to make a life for herself. While some of us adopt stray cats, Taylor finds herself in possession of a stray baby she names Turtle, left with her at a truck stop in Oklahoma. By the time she makes it to Arizona, she must redefine her idea of family, and overcome her fear of being blown apart by an overfilled tire.

Buddy Cooper Finds a Way, by Neil O’Connelly (who heretofore had written only a children’s book), is a wonderful romp through the life of a professional wrestler who makes his living playing the masked bad guy who always loses. Estranged from his stunted woman and mature-for-her-age teenage daughter, Buddy becomes best friends with three homeless “professors,” meets and falls in love with a psychic hotline worker, gets a chance to win the title, gets shot at, attends the funeral of a python, and witnesses a miracle performed by a fellow wrestler who hears God in his hearing aid. Oh, and Buddy figures out that faking amnesia might just be the way to win back his wife.

An extremely well-written and touching young adult novel, Jenniffer Choldenko’s Al Capone Does My Shirts is the 1930s story of an oversized teenage boy nicknamed Moose, his strained relationship with his savant sister (think Rain Man), and his adjusting to his family’s move to Alcatraz Island, where his father is a prison guard / electrician. This novel is full of real pain, but has the most enjoyable cast of characters, including a precocious seven-year-old who bullies Moose, the charming but mischievous and spoiled warden’s daughter, and an assorted cast of teenage gangster wannabees. If catching Al Capone’s baseball can’t lift your spirits, nothing will.

Library News and Upcoming Events


Daisy Guidroz, Tony Fonseca, and Jeremy Landry attended the LOUIS Systems Administrators Conference at LSU in July, and Landry and Fonseca attended a LOUIS workshop on LinkSource in August.

Jeremy Landry, Carol Mathias, Jean

Mark Sens, and Anke Tonn attended the American Libraries Association Conference in Chicago in July.

Clifton Theriot recently served as co-host and chair of the 29th Annual History and Genealogy Seminar, sponsored by the Lafourche Heritage Society. He also attended the Annual Conference of the Society of American Archivists in New Orleans.

Van Viator has published an entry in Supernatural Literature of the World.

Library Tip #4
The librarians at Ellender Memorial are extremely knowledgeable about research, but they are not computer technicians, nor are they English tutors. But they do know where you can find help with almost any problem: If you are having computer or software issues, such as problems with Word, Access, Excel, or PowerPoint, remember that the Ellender Lab, located on the first floor of the Library and run by Academic Computing, has experts who can address such technical issues. By the same token, if you find yourself faced with Research Paper enigmas, such as specific documentation issues, or grammar, development, or wording problems, remember that the Writing Across the Curriculum Writing Center (the WAC) has moved to Beauregard 153.