New Face at Ellender Library

“...I enjoy biking and swimming, so it feels good to live in Thibodaux, only a short bike ride from the library…”

Jean-Mark Sens, Collection Development

No one in his or her right mind would pass up hiring a culinary expert who hails from France when given the chance. After all, there is always a need for someone to whip up appetizing treats for the annual office party. Well, we at Ellender Memorial got very lucky with our job search for the new Collection Development Librarian (the individual who oversees the development and purchase of library materials), when we found Jean-Mark Sens at The University of South Carolina, working in the Medical Library there.

Sens was born and educated in France and Belgium, spending most of his formative years in and around Paris. Having earned a Baccalauréat in Economics and Social Studies at L’Ecole et La Ville, and surviving a series of occupations while living in England, he returned to Paris and double-majored in English and Business Economics, translating poetry by Hart Crane. He completed a Masters in English from Paris VII University and went to Florida to teach at U.S.F. in Tampa. He again returned to Paris, where he taught and worked as a night clerk in the Quartier Latin, until he received a scholarship to complete his studies in American Literature at the University of Southern Mississippi, where he received a Ph. D. in Creative Writing (Poetry) in 1994. After graduating, he took a teaching position as Assistant Professor of English and French at Rust College, a small black college in North Mississippi, and two years later transferred to Ole Miss to teach there.

In the Fall 2000, he moved to Charleston, S.C. to study Culinary Arts at Johnson and Wales, teach at the College of Charleston, and work in a few restaurants, including Robert’s of Charleston with “the singin’ chef,” Robert Dickson. Admitted at the University of South Carolina with an assistantship for a degree in Library Science, he moved to Columbia where he worked at USC Medical Library. He is of course interested in books and reading, but Jean-Mark has also published poems and criticism in various magazines. He recently published a collection of poems, Appetite, with Red Hen Press of California. His well-rounded academic background and variety of life experiences will serve him well as Collection Development Librarian: “Collection Development offers a convergence of interests for me, and I feel it will be very rewarding to build collections in collaboration with faculty, with whom I am eager to become acquainted,” Sens states.
Seek, and Ye Shall Find: Spotlight on Ellender Library’s Databases

The old days of using print indexes (bibliographies) such as The Reader’s Guide to Periodical Literature and the MLA are behind us, as these print versions have been replaced by web based online databases. It is easy to make the mistake of thinking that the articles from these databases are part of the World Wide Web, or are, as some people inaccurately state, “from the Internet.” Nothing could be farther from the truth. The Internet, or the FREE WEB, is unmoderated and available to anyone at no cost (generally speaking). These databases and the full text articles they often contain are fee-based, paid for out of the library budget. Additionally, they are as closely moderated as are print journals and magazines, for they are, simply put, electronic versions of the same information.

Of course, the inevitable question is “so they are new, but are they better?” The answer to this question is a resounding and unequivocal “yes, they are.” To begin with, this new technology allows for students and faculty to quickly search for journal articles, and sometimes even book chapters, by using an intuitive interface. This gives the researcher not only the advantage of speed, but also the advantage of efficiency, as some of these online databases make it possible to combine as many terms as are necessary to find exactly the information that is required. In addition, certain databases automatically keep a search history for each session. This means that you can experiment with various combinations of search terms, without the fear of forgetting which search produced the most useful results.

Two databases are of particular importance to our Freshmen and their professors here at Nicholls. The first of these is called Academic Search Premier (ASP), a large multi-disciplinary, academic database that contains over 4,000 full text titles, including over 3,100 scholarly titles. This database is most useful because of its inclusion of articles from professional journals, popular magazines, and newspapers. ASP is excellent for current events searches, such as articles on Election 2004 or the Iraq War, as well as for academic assignments such as finding information on careers in nursing or the effects of binge drinking on college campuses.

The second of these databases is more specialized, yet no less integral to the First Year Experience. The MLA International Bibliography is, quite simply, the electronic version of the old MLA Bibliography. The database indexes articles and chapters from books, on subjects in literature and linguistics. Containing over 1.5 million citations from more than 4,400 journals and series and 1,000 book publishers, MLA is where students would go to find articles on the American Dream as seen in The Great Gatsby, or on Edgar Allan Poe’s use of color. Like ASP, it uses an intuitive interface (the interface is similar to Google’s and All the Web’s Advanced Search interfaces), with which savvy web searching will be familiar.

Tony Fonseca, Reference

Elizabeth I Exhibition Comes to Ellender

Queen Elizabeth I ruled England from 1558 to 1603, holding the nation together during religious wars and defeating the once believed to be invincible Spanish Armada. This symbol of national unity will be showcased at the Elizabeth I, Ruler and Legend exhibition.

This is a national traveling exhibition sponsored by Chicago’s Newberry Library’s Center for Renaissance Studies, in conjunction with the American Library Association Public Programs Office, commemorating the reign of Queen Elizabeth I on the 400th anniversary of her death. Made possible in part by major grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Vance Family Fund and the University of Illinois at Chicago, the exhibit will open on March 7 in the Archives Room of Ellender Memorial, and will remain there for public viewing until April 15.

On Tuesday, April 5, various guest speakers will be present to discuss diverse aspects of the Elizabethan Period, beginning at 9:00 a.m. in the library’s Multi-Purpose Room, located on the third floor.

You can get individualized Research Assistance from a librarian: http://www.nicholls.edu/library/research_assistance.htm
BIB: Books in Brief

The Last Girls, Lee Smith’s novel, is based on an actual raft trip she took on the Mississippi River with a group of fellow Hollins undergraduates. Harriet Holling, Smith’s fictional counterpart, narrates the novel, which centers around four suitemates, narrator Harriet Hollings, Ann Margaret "Baby" Ballou, Anna Todd, and Courtney Ralston, students at fictional Mary Scott College in Virginia. In 1965, the four, along with other classmates, take a raft down the Mississippi. In 1999, three of “the girls” are reunited on a riverboat trip from Memphis to New Orleans on the Memphis Belle for the purpose of scattering Baby’s ashes into the Mississippi.

Smith depends heavily on flashback to tell the story, which revolves around the theory that all plots are divided into those where someone new comes to town or someone leaves town, an appropriate device for a novel based on Huck Finn, where the protagonist is either arriving or leaving a series of small river towns. The boat also has its share of “fools.” The Last Girls has a quickly paced plot, accompanied by an even quicker-paced, witty dialogue.

For those of you who do not read The Chronicle of Higher Education and, thereby, miss what academia is reading, I suggest Tom Wolfe’s I Am Charlotte Simmons. I am predicting that the Man in White will probably be at the 2005 SACSCOC Conference expounding on the Freshman Experience, since his latest novel centers on the trials and tribulations of the first college year.

I am also suggesting the much more genteel The Dante Club by Matthew Pearl. It is set in post-Civil War Boston and centers around a series of murders based on The Inferno and solved by the members of the Dante Club, the three poets Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, James Russell Lowell, and J. T. Fields, their publisher.

Fran Middleton, Reference

Library Tip #3
If Ellender Library does not own a book or an article that you need, you can use Interlibrary Loan to get it (see Tip #4).

Department Spotlight: Archives

For those patrons who want a closer look at the geographical, historical, and cultural uniqueness of the region, a visit to the Archives and Special Collections Department is a must. The department is divided into five main areas of research. The five divisions consist of the Allen J. Ellender Archives, University Archives, Special Collections, Genealogy, and Regional and Rare Books.

The largest single holding in the Archives are the papers of Senator Allen J. Ellender. Senator Ellender, a native of Terrebonne Parish, served in the United States Senate from 1937 until his death in 1972. Ellender served as chairman of the Agriculture Committee, chairman of the Appropriations Committee, and president pro tempore. The collection consists mainly of his office files along with photographs, memorabilia, and a film collection.

The University Archives contains material that documents the history and growth of the University from its beginnings in 1948. Included are the papers of former university presidents and non-current records of other administrative units and academic departments on campus.

Yearbooks, class bulletins, student and faculty newspapers, special reports, committee minutes, photographs, and films are also among the holdings of the University Archives.

The Special Collections unit of the department offers a view of the rich culture and history of the region through original manuscripts, photographs, scrapbooks, diaries, newspapers, and numerous other rare materials. Many collections document the plantation era and the sugar cane industry. Highlights are the Martin-Pugh Papers, which contain letters written by Civil War soldiers; the J. Wilson Lepine Papers, which portray early life on Laurel Valley Plantation; and the Robert Ruffin Barrow Jr. Papers, which document the construction of the Barataria and Lafourche Canal. Other collections, such as the W. L. Martin and Maude Billiu collections, provide a pictorial history of the area dating to the mid 1800’s.

Other noteworthy collections are the Evangeline Baseball League Collection, the Shaffer Collection of original 1847 prints by John James Audubon, and the J.A. and J.C. Lovell Collection of local survey maps.

The Genealogy Division contains church and parish records, ship passenger listings, ancestor charts, and regional and national genealogical journals along with many other resources. The Regional and Rare Books Division includes original titles dating from the 16th century along with first editions, autographed copies, and many Louisiana related titles.

Cliff Theriot and Emilie Pitre are available to assist students, faculty, and other patrons with their research needs. The Archives, which is located on the first floor of the library, is open 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. When the University is in session, the department is also open until 9:00 p.m. on Tuesday nights and 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on the first Saturday of the month.

Cliff Theriot, Interim Archivist

Library Tip #4
You can Interlibrary Loan an item online, by clicking on the link from the library’s webpage (under Services). Once you set up your account, click on the link that says Iliad. Just make sure that you allow for one to two weeks for us to find the material.
Oncale Donates Important Historical Documents

Nicholls alumnus Wayne P. Oncale (pictured, right) has generously made several donations of historic material to the Archives. Among the items are documents signed by Louisiana Governors Francis T. Nicholls, E.D. White and Isaac Johnson. Also noteworthy is a collection of Civil War era newspapers, which includes a rare copy of a Union newspaper printed in Thibodaux during the Northern occupation in 1863.

Allons Danser! And It’s Free!!

The Ninth Annual Cajun/Zydeco Music and Dance Exhibit will be Wednesday, March 9, 2005, 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 in Ellender Library, beginning with a reception and exhibit on the first floor of the library. Light refreshments will be sponsored by Jubilee and Coca-Cola, with special sweets presented by the John Folse Culinary Institute. The Renaissance Cadienne, a Cajun Folklore Troupe, will entertain during the reception, and the event poster and event brochure, designed by Patrick Banks and Dr. Barry Ancelet, respectively, will be officially unveiled.

In addition, musicians will perform a one hour program of modern French and Cajun dances. Steve Riley and the Mamou Playboys will give a three hour concert/dance performance from 8:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. And there will be a silent auction for a framed event poster.

Students, faculty and staff, along with community members, are all invited to enjoy this free annual event, directed by Interlibrary Loan Librarian Anke Tonn, with the help of a generous grant from the Houma-Terrebonne Arts and Humanities Council.

Library News and Upcoming Events


Daisy Guidroz recently attended a LOUIS Systems Administrator conference at LSU.

Fran Middleton worked with the Thibodaux Area Toy Drive and library staff to create and donate 24 embroidered customized unique pillowcases.


Cliff Theriot presented "Outreach: University Archives Working with Local Historical Groups" at the Louisiana Archives and Manuscripts Association in Lake Charles.

Anke Tonn is co-contributor to the Louisiana Dance Hall Series exhibit, currently at the Terrebonne Parish Library.

Van Viator published 2 entries in the *Encyclopedia of Supernatural Literature of the World*, as well as 2 reviews in *Choice and Louisiana Libraries*.


Joel Williams will attend The Louisiana Library Association Conference in April. Joel has accepted a Reference position at Lafayette Public. Good luck Joel, we’ll miss you.

The International Film Club presents its Spring Semester 2005 schedule, with special guest Director Volker Schloendorff:

- *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1990) TH, Jan. 20 & F, Jan. 21

Director Volker Schloendorff (lecture), M, Feb. 28, 9:30-11:30 a.m. Ellender Memorial Archives

- *Death of a Salesman* (1985) SU, Apr. 10 & W, Apr. 13