Ce qui se passe...
The newsletter of
Ellender Memorial Library
Nicholls State University
www.nicholls.edu/library
Summer 2009


Anyone who has been in Ellender Library has seen them. In fact, they are impossible to miss. They can be found on each floor of the Library, in virtually every department, inviting passers-by to engage in for the nonce learning opportunities about subjects such as Nicholls’ influence on the region, voting and elections, the American flag, the U. S. Constitution, the sound barrier, jazz musicians, local artists, Cajun and Zydeco music, stitchery, Beat poetry, May Day celebrations, Harry Potter, dance, the history of holidays, and local cuisine. Sometimes they even attempt to tell would-be patrons what new books the Library has acquired, just in case they’d like to check any of them out.

Yes, we’ve all seen them; unfortunately, they are too often too easy to overlook, to view as nothing more than part of the backdrop to a busy day. This is unfortunate, for library displays and exhibits can be what Fabian, Aniello, Tysick and Morin (2003) described as “... a memorable, tangible, and easily documented outreach vehicle.... an enjoyable and effective focal point around which to build relationships with professorial faculty, librarians, and students, as well as with various University offices and community organizations and institutions.”1 After all, a well-planned library exhibit or display can be much more than an outreach vehicle. It can become a self-paced learning activity.

In the best case scenario, these displays delight, teach, and offer an access point to important and timely information. For example, a display on voting rights, voting history, voter registration activities, and current polls immediately before an election can peak the interest of a passer-by, and might just encourage him or her to register, vote, and seek out further resources in the Library; or an engaging display on the sound barrier (see picture below) can encourage a passer-by to take a minute out of his or her busy day to quickly learn some basics about an important physics phenomenon.


On the Fly Classes

We offer On the Fly Classes in Research Methods, Literature, Musicology, and Culinary Arts Resources, among others! Contact Melissa Goldsmith at 448-4626 if you have a group of three or more students who would like a session we do not currently offer.

The Information Literacy instruction team will also be creating a battery of classes designed to enhance research skills. These sessions will cover everything from understanding how search engines retrieve information, to using Boolean operators correctly, to the more advanced skills like using search histories, thesauri, and standardized subject headings (or descriptors). Classes should be ready by August 2009.

Library Tip 1

Remember to bring your student ID with you when you come to the Library, since it doubles as your library card.

Two recent library displays exemplify the range of topics which students, faculty and staff can normally find in the Library’s display cases. On the left is a display which teaches about the sound barrier, and on the right is a display about Louisiana cookery. Displays were authored by Neil Guilbeau (sound barrier), and Sherrill Faucheux (local cuisine). Other displays are pictured on page 4 of this issue.
Leis in the Library

When Nicholls faculty and a few visiting librarians from around the state walked into the lounge in late April, they were greeted by the percussive sounds of exotic Les Baxter songs, songs about villages, jungles and tiki huts. Over in one corner stood a makeshift Tiki Bar, where Publicity and Public Relations (PaPR) Committee members made drinks using pineapple juice, cherries, fruit punch, grenade and various colas upon request. The tables were covered with ginger soups, curries, Hawaiian pork, and rice and meat dishes, and in one corner sat a small box filled with sand. The overall relaxed atmosphere of the day offered many an excellent opportunity to learn more about the Library and to interact with current and former Library staff. The tiki theme, with its cultural roots, offered a setting as disparate from Cajun and Creole culture as one could imagine.

The celebration was a part of Library Appreciation Day. The event included tours of the Library, as well as the aforementioned Tiki Party for faculty and members of the Nicholls community. Invitations were sent to Nicholls’ faculty who help with collection development by either serving as departmental liaisons to the Library or by routinely filling out requests for new books, as well as faculty who kept in touch with the Library concerning their department’s curriculum, or frequently participated in Library events. Former and current Library staff were also invited to the event. Four librarians hailing from different institutions attended the open house and Tiki Party—two from McNeese, one from Southern University, and one from Fletcher. All were welcomed to visit the Library’s various departments, view the displays, and discuss the Library’s outreach events and activities. The Library’s newsletter and information about the Friends of the Library were distributed.

The second floor reading room featured a display table that highlighted Library sources about Polynesia, ukuleles, and sea monster myths. Library users were directed towards books like Thor Heyerdahl’s Kon-Tiki: Across the Pacific by Raft; Marie Hall Ets’ Oley, the Sea Monster; and Herman Melville’s Moby Dick: An Authoritative Text. As a follow-up to this event, the PaPR Committee is planning a Library cookbook which will include recipes featured at the event, with proceeds to benefit the Friends.

Library staff members decorate a table covered with Polynesian foods. Pictured are (left to right) Cheryl Adams, Lady Pierson, and Sandi Chauvin. In the background, librarian Tony Fonseca serves drinks to Michelle Bailet (emeritus faculty) and Renee Piper (Director, University Relations).

Home Is Where The Horror Is (Book Review)

Mark Z. Danielewski. Mark Z. Danielewski's House of Leaves. 813 D227h 2000

According to Johnny Truant, the tattoo-shop apprentice who discovers The Navidson Record, a long-forgotten treatise by a blind man named Zampanò, once you read the book, you will no longer be the person you believed you once were.

A strong argument can be made that Mark Z. Danielewski’s House of Leaves is the quintessential academic’s horror novel, the Blair Witch Project of literature. Highly experimental in its design, the novel is at times playful, heady, satirical, and even disturbing. The story begins with the unearthing of a The Navidson Record, which leads to the further discovery of a weird (and rare, as in impossible to find) documentary film. The subject of the film is a photojournalist and his family—and the strange house they move into. This “house of leaves” has one room that is infinitely large inside, and seems to be the doorway to another realm. Despite the experimental quality of the narration, readers will find their skin crawling as the author describes the vastness, coldness, and total emptiness of this realm. Scenes in which characters, especially the small children, get lost in the room are the stuff of nightmares.

For good measure, Danielewski peppers the story within a story within a story with poems, scientific lists, collages, Polaroids, fake correspondences, marginalia, and annotations. Although the leaves referred to in the title here may well be the number of trees chopped down to produce this at times ponderous tome, and although most people who will attempt this novel (best described as the Gravity’s Rainbow of horror) will not finish it, this book deserves all the praise heaped upon it. Perhaps the early reviews of this novel realized that once you read Danielewski’s work, you will no longer be the person you believed you once were. File this title under eccentric, but enlightening and eerie.
Nicholls Librarians Head State Chapter of Association of College and Research Libraries

The current make-up of the Association of College and Research Libraries-Louisiana Chapter Executive Board includes two Nicholls librarians—President Tony Fonseca and President-Elect Vice-President Melissa Goldsmith. They will be heading what has recently been one of the most active chapters in the United States, holding quarterly meetings (no easy feat given travel and budget restraints) and brainstorming to launch various initiatives—including working toward a two-day, full-fledged scholarly (perhaps even regional) conference in 2011.

Generally speaking, the ACRL-LA Executive Board is currently looking at the possibility of expanding ACRL-LA conference offerings. In 2008 the organization hosted Dr. John Budd for a day-long workshop titled “Publish and Flourish,” which offered practical advice on publishing various types of literature in order to meet tenure and promotion requirements. Recently, ACRL-LA, under Past-President Mike Matthews of Northwestern, hosted a day-long colloquium on the most important budgetary issue facing academic libraries: open access, copyright licensing, and journal prices. Only five of these workshops were held in the United States, awarded to the organizations which submitted the strongest grant proposals, since the keynote speakers were nationally recognized figures. Fonseca and Goldsmith will be leading the organization for its 2009 colloquium, tentatively titled “Academic Libraries, Budgets, and Return-On-Investment,” yet another timely themed professional learning opportunity for the state’s academic librarians.

Other ACRL-LA initiatives of which the two have been a part were the introduction of the Scholar Librarian of the Year Award, which was first given in March 2009. The award’s purpose is to encourage research and scholarship in the field on an ongoing basis. The two Nicholls librarians have also contributed heavily to the early stages of a statewide peer experts network. In the program that ACRL-LA’s Executive Board envisions, academic librarians would have access to colleagues who can help with various aspects of the academic librarian experience: surviving the tenure process, earning a promotion, management issues, and publishing in the academic library literature, to name a few.

Best of all, the two get to work with some of the best academic librarians in the state, as their fellow officers include Matthews, Secretary Kelley Blessinger (LSU), and committee chairs Jessica Hutchings (McNeese), Megan Lowe (ULM), and Karen Niemla (ULM). Both Fonseca and Goldsmith will be helping Lowe to create a peer-reviewed journal.

Score One for Musical Score Cataloging

Music poses special challenges in library collections, especially when it comes to scores, but tagging scores for retrieval is extremely important. Libraries acquire not only performance-based versions of notated music, but also conducting and study scores. Recently at Ellender Library, approximately 100 scores have been rebound and cataloged, thereby making them accessible. These scores were selected for the bindery because of their popularity and heavy use, especially among students of music here at Nicholls. Some of the scores have added value since they are first editions. For example, the Library owns several Universal Edition (Vienna) scores composed by Alban Berg and Arnold Schoenberg.

Most of these scores were donated, given to the Library as part of the Harwell Collection. They included primarily miniature study scores, in addition to a few critical and performance editions. The newly rebound scores can now lay flat for browsing purposes, and can stand without falling over while on music stands. For those studying music history and literature, it is easier than ever to consult the scores for any given listening assignment. And for those with more leisurely musical interests, it is easier to check out one of these scores to use along with sound recordings.

Cataloging is essential and its results can be extremely beneficial to students; unfortunately, it requires scholarly knowledge of music, since one needs to understand specialized knowledge, such as key signatures, uniform titles, and/or other historical and biographical information about the work. Knowledge of several foreign languages is also required. Music cataloging also requires learning to incorporate the most important scholarly catalog number of a work into the assigned Dewey Decimal call number. In other words, students no longer have to consult The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians to be sure about the correct usage of a work’s cataloging number because the number is incorporated into the call number. As an example, scholars refer to Berlioz’s Symphonie fantastique as Op. 14; Beethoven’s Sonata pathétique, or his Piano Sonata in C minor, as Op. 13; and Mozart’s Symphony No. 40 in G minor as K. 550. However, students will still have to consult The New Grove to find out more introductory information about composers and works.

Despite the logistical and staffing problems of cataloging, having scores at hand enables students to learn more about various aspects of music and informs them about differences in performance practice during their comparative listening exercises, a vital skill for music enrichment as well as for music education.
Library News

Sandi Chauvin (Serials) presented two statewide workshops on using the Serials Control module of the SIRSI JAVA Workflows client at McNeese and Southeastern. Approximately 50 librarians attended the training.

Tony Fonseca (Serials) began his tenure as President of ACRL-LA (The Louisiana Chapter of The Association of College and Research Libraries). He recently attended the ACRL-LA regional workshop on Scholarly Communications. The workshop emphasized how open access journals, journal prices, and copyright licenses were directly related. He has had reviews published in Dead Reckonings (horror fiction) and is currently working on various entries for an encyclopedia of vampire lore and legend (Greenwood Press).

Melissa Goldsmith (Reference/Instruction) presented the paper, “The West is the Best: Uncanny Regionalism in the Music of The Doors,” for the national annual meeting of the Society for American Music in Denver. A month earlier, she presented a paper about William S. Burroughs’ rendition of REM’s “Star Me Kitten” at the annual meeting of the Southern Chapter of the American Musicological Society in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. Goldsmith has currently published reviews in Choice, American Music, and Fontes Artis Musicar (the journal of the International Association of Music Libraries and Documentation Centres). She is also the Guest Editor of Louisiana Libraries’ special issue on information literacy. Goldsmith was recently elected Vice President/President elect of ACRL-LA.

Cynthia Marchbanks (Director’s Office) is now the proud grandmother of Dalton Lee Marchbanks. Dalton came into this world weighing 7 lbs. 5 oz. and measuring 18 1/2 " long.

Van Vactor (Reference/Instruction) has had an article accepted by Louisiana Libraries (the official publication of the Louisiana Library Association). The article is tentatively titled “Using an Age Old Trick, Breaking Them in Easy: Making the Most of Google to Prepare Students for Searching Library Databases.” It is scheduled for publication in 2010.

Library Tip 2

One important phrase to keep in mind any time you do research in Ellender Memorial is “it’s not your parent’s library anymore.” What this means is that research has evolved since the last generation of library users. Card catalogs have been replaced with online public access interfaces (OPACs), the old print indexes have been replaced with databases, and the trusty old Serials List (the list of which journals the library owns) is extinct, now replaced with our Journal Holdings A-Z software. All this software specialization means that patrons now have to be aware of exactly what they are looking for, so the Reference Interview is more important now than ever. Gone are the days of browsing print journals to find any useful article. In fact, long gone are the days when “getting a photocopy of an article from the actual print journal” was a viable and feasible assignment. But with every passing of an old format, a newer and more effective format becomes the rule of the day. Now, getting a print article actually means getting on a computer and searching a database for a full-text scan. Don’t let the blurring of lines between digital information and print information make your research experience into an indistinguishable blur. When you come into the library for research, talk to the librarian. There is a huge difference between the need to browse a print journal to get a sense of its purpose and the need to find just the right article that will complete your research. Remember, when you are searching for a needle in a haystack, it helps quite a bit if you happen to be in the correct barn.

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