



Biblio-Notes

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Notes from the Chair



(Photograph provided by Angela Courtney)

Greetings,

As September rapidly draws to a close and the fall semester is in full swing, it is newsletter time again. I've always looked forward to receiving the LES newsletter, but I was daunted to say the least at having to write the front-page text. This newsletter goes out to our nearly 600 members, predominantly literature librarians. That's a lot of people who know how to write with elegance and grace. Nevertheless, I will persevere.

There is a bit of good LES news in our difficult economic environment. The LES membership, as of our August statistics report from ALA, is up from this time last year. As we all know, however, many of our members were unable to travel to the conferences last year, and face similar situations in the upcoming conference season. While there is something to be said about the value of the face to face meetings afforded by our conferences, I believe our section has positioned itself in such a way

that it will be able to maintain the closeness and collegiality that we have developed even as fewer of us are able to travel as often as before. Over the past few years several devoted and dedicated members worked long and hard to give us excellent virtual outlets for our conversations, questions, and debates. In addition to **LES-L**, our email discussion list, we have a first-rate blog (<http://www.acrl.ala.org/lesblog/>) that debuted in January 2008. It's a great place to go for a look at what others are doing and thinking. We also have a user-friendly and information-packed wiki (<http://literaturesinenglish.pbworks.com/>) filled with helpful links to our mentoring form, governance policies, committees, discussion groups, newsletters, and much more.

Now is an appropriate time to consider becoming involved in LES if you aren't already. Our 3 discussion groups are always rewarding: Reference, Collections, and the fun New Members groups. If you want to take an active role in the future of LES, consider becoming a part of our many committees. Having served on most of them over the past few years, I can attest with relative authority that they are fun to participate in. Kathleen Kluegel has led the Nominations Committee to develop a strong slate of candidates for our next generation of officers. Our Planning Committee fearlessly chaired by Kathy Johnson is always busy and keeps the section on track and up to date with processes and procedures. The Membership Committee, under the leadership of Elizabeth Peterson, works hard to welcome new members and arrange a fun

General Membership meeting and discussion, among other initiatives. The Publications Committee, chaired by Christine Ruotolo, is responsible for many of our recent endeavors such as the blog and wiki. And, our Conference Program Planning Committee, guided by Melissa Van Vuuren, is in the midst of coordinating our summer conference program in partnership with the Western European Studies Section (WESS). The program will be about literature in translation.

There are many ways to become actively involved in the activities of the section. Please feel free to contact me or Liorah Golomb, LES vice-Chair, if you are interested or have questions. Best of luck for a smooth and successful fall semester, and I look forward to seeing many of you in Boston.

Angela Courtney
LES Chair, 2009-10
ancourtn@indiana.edu

LES-L: Join in the Discussion



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. Faced with a difficult reference question? Ask for assistance from your LES

colleagues. 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>. If you have any problems, please feel free to contact LES-L Discussion List Moderator, Amanda Rust a.rust@neu.edu.

Welcome New Members!



(Photograph provided by Tracy Nectoux)

Tracy Nectoux completed her Master in Library & Information Science from the University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign in 2006, and is a Cataloger and Metadata/Quality Control Specialist for the Illinois Digital Newspaper Project at UIUC. She also has a Master of Liberal Arts (St. John’s College Graduate Institute) and a Master of Philosophy in English (University of St. Andrews).

Tracy has been active in the Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT) and the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and

Transgendered Round Table (GLBTRT) of the American Library Association for almost four years. She regularly writes book reviews for both round tables, and serves as Secretary and Reviews Editor for GLBTRT. Tracy also serves on the Coordinating Committee for the Progressive Librarians Guild. She is currently editing an anthology: *Out Behind the Desk: Workplace Issues for LGBTQ Librarians* (pub. 2010, Library Juice Press).

Her literary/humanities interests are in Bibliography, Victorian Gothic, and LGBTQ fiction. She is presently in the process of creating an annotated anthology of literary criticism of Margaret Oliphant's Gothic fiction. She lurked on the LES list for almost a year before joining, and attended the socials and membership meetings at conferences, which convinced her to finally join ACRL and LES!

Hands-on from Chaucer to Prufrock: The 2009 LES Field Trip to the University of Chicago



(Photograph provided by David D. Oberhelman)

This year the LES field trip at the ALA Annual Conference, an opportunity for LES members to visit a noteworthy literary collection in the ALA host city, took place on Monday, July 13. Approximately fifteen LES members joined me in the Windy City for a special tour of the Special Collections Research Center (SCRC) in the Joseph Regenstein Library at the University of Chicago. The tour featured a sampling of

their rare books and manuscripts across the centuries, and an overview of how special collections can be incorporated into library instruction.

Julia Gardner and David Pavelich, our gracious hosts from the SCRC, gave us a very illuminating presentation on the history of some of their collections. They also discussed how they work with their humanities subject specialists and faculty to integrate manuscripts and rare books into teaching. The public services librarians in the SCRC like to offer hands-on instruction sessions that allow students to explore the rare materials and learn about the context in which the literary works were produced. For example, they allow Victorian fiction students to examine the monthly parts in which Dickens's novels were first published in order to see how the advertising and the physical presentation of the text can shed new light on the consumer habits of his generally middle-class readers. Students can also learn firsthand about the history of the book using a dilapidated copy of the first edition of *Walden* the SCRC librarians use to illustrate historical bookbinding techniques. Julia and David also commented on how their division is trying to open itself up to students and researchers, even allowing elementary school groups to view their collection and letting scholars take non-flash digital photographs of manuscripts. Outreach is important to them, and they hold exhibits and events (with cookies) to draw the public inside their door. Students at the very rigorous University of Chicago have a saying that the school is the place "where fun goes to die," but the SCRC has put a new spin on it, saying they are the place "where fun goes to be archived"!

We also got to see and even touch (!) some of their treasures they have used in instruction ranging from a mid fifteenth-

century vellum codex of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, a 1667 first edition of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, a privately printed chapbook of Edgar Allen Poe's *Tamerlane*--the most expensive single acquisition in the history of the University of Chicago Library, the first British edition of Melville's *Moby-Dick* (which was actually published before the first American edition because of British copyright laws), typescripts of T. S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," important literary magazines such as *Fire!!*, the landmark publication from the Harlem Renaissance, and correspondence and other selections from the archives of *Poetry* magazine among many other rarities. Being literature librarians, we loved having time to examine these unique items and share ideas for how the items could be used in training sessions for our faculty and students back home. In addition, we learned about the new technology the SCRC is using for managing patron requests, e-reference questions, classroom presentations, and scanning. All of us were fascinated to see their sophisticated document view equipment zoom in on pages and render the images with extraordinary clarity.

We all would like to extend our thanks to Julia and David and the rest of the SCRC staff for their hospitality to the visiting LES librarians and for giving us some new ideas about how we can incorporate the historical books or manuscripts in our library collections into instruction for English classes.

David D. Oberhelman
Oklahoma State University
d.oberhelman@okstate.edu

A Crash Course in Academic Library Leadership



(Photograph provided by Tim Hackman)

From June 28 to July 2, I had the privilege to attend the Peabody Professional Institute on Academic Library Leadership, hosted by the Peabody College of Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee. I joined 22 other librarians and library administrators from around the country for an intense four-day seminar on all aspects of academic library leadership. According to the PPI Web site, the institute "prepares college and university librarians to think about the library as core to the university mission and to serve as campus leaders, central to institutional decision-making." Topics covered included strategic planning, assessment and accreditation, fund raising and public relations, and much more. In addition, there were ample opportunities to network and share ideas with fellow attendees. Finally, if one was willing to lose a little sleep (which I definitely was), there was the amazing Nashville music scene, with near-continuous rock, country and bluegrass music in the honky-tonks of lower Broadway.

2009 was the fourth year for the Academic Library Leadership institute, which was created and chaired by Patricia Senn Breivik, library consultant and former dean of the library at San Jose State University, and Sharon Weiner, currently the W. Wayne Booker Endowed Chair in Information Literacy at the Purdue University libraries and formerly the director of the Peabody Library at Vanderbilt. The institute began

well in advance of my arrival in Nashville, when I received a copy of Breivik's book (co-authored with former university president E. Gordon Gee), *Higher Education in the Internet Age: Libraries Creating a Strategic Edge* (Praeger, 2006); other assigned readings were made available through Vanderbilt's course management system. I was also required to submit a background paper on an important issue at our campus with which the Libraries could become more involved. For my project I chose "improving graduate education," one of four "institutional priorities" outlined in the latest Strategic Plan for the University of Maryland.

After introductions and a welcome dinner on Sunday, June 28, the institute began in earnest Monday morning with an eye-opening presentation by Alan Guskin, President Emeritus of Antioch University, on "The Future of Higher Education." Dr. Guskin made the case that the context for higher education, including reduced fiscal support from state governments, mandated tuition cost controls, increasing pressures for accountability, the changing nature of our students and, of course, rapidly advancing technology, will mean that the current financial and operations models of the American university will not be sustainable. He spoke passionately about the need to find a transformative solution for the future of higher education, not just "muddling through," and stressed that such solutions must maintain or enhance quality of work life for faculty and staff and must focus on enhancing student learning. The morning of Day One continued with a panel discussion of the role of library resources and services in this higher education context. The afternoon's sessions were devoted to institutional strategic planning; there was a speaker (Paula Wood, Dean of the College of Education at Wayne State University),

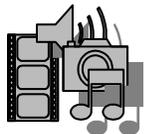
another panel discussion, and break-out sessions on this topic. Tuesday and Wednesday followed similar schedules, with a mix of individual speakers, panel discussions and break-out sessions interwoven with chances to work individually and in small groups on creating action plans for our "institutional issue" projects.

Overall, the Peabody Professional Institute was a valuable experience for the chance to hear and interact with many knowledgeable academic administrators, to meet other library professionals, to concentrate on the role the University of Maryland Libraries can play in improving the University, and to hear some great versions of Hank Williams and George Jones tunes. By the end of the program on Thursday I had a 2-inch binder full of reading materials, a stack of business cards from my new colleagues, and a notepad full of ideas for the future. Information about the PPI programs can be found at:

http://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/Peabody_Professional_Institutes.xml.

Tim Hackman
University of Maryland
thackman@umd.edu

MERLOT – Not Just a Wine Anymore



MERLOT—Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and Online Teaching—just held MIC09, the 9th MERLOT International Conference, in San José, California (MIC10 will be held in Boston). As a librarian, I found it to be one of the best events for exploring educational technology tools and applications through a collegial and entrepreneurial educational community. In addition, librarians are a key group in MERLOT and have an opportunity

to interact with faculty from various disciplines, making this a conference to consider attending on a regular basis. For those unfamiliar with MERLOT, the organization was founded in 1997 by the California State University System and now includes universities and colleges around the world. Since its founding, MERLOT is a key online resource for learning materials, both for faculty and students. Its membership is now over 70,000, the database contains 20,000 learning materials, and the organization and database are growing fast. Materials are contributed by MERLOT members and peer-reviewed by member-driven editorial boards. This is now a grass-roots organization, driven by the membership.

At this year's conference, the theme was *Teaching and Learning in a Networked World*. The keynote speaker, John Wilbanks of Creative Commons, focused on ~~the~~ transformational power of getting into cyberspace for scholarly communication." He believes we can leverage the power of people and the power of technology to increase opportunities for breakthrough discoveries. He described how a digital commons can lower transaction costs and increase transaction flow, and shared experiences from his project, the Science Commons, to illustrate the promise of these ideas.

Conferees could participate in a variety of hands-on workshops and presentations. There were sessions on YouTube; Second Life; combined uses of the software tools C-Map, Photostory3, and Windows MovieMaker; effective use of clickers; creative use of digital identities; podcasting; interactive use of VoiceThread; affordable and scalable content capture solutions; ePortfolios; use of gaming; effective threaded discussions; effective instruction

through cell phones; accessibility and universal design—all presented from the perspective of enhancing student learning. There was a conference blog (<http://merlotconf.wordpress.com>) leading up to the event and, during the conference, the ability to follow the action on Twitter. Every room was provided with wireless access and sufficient power outlets for every attendee. This enhanced the experience significantly.

Some topics were explored in greater depth through full and half-day pre-conferences. One full-day pre-conference focused on using Google docs, wikis, blogs, and Web 2.0 tools to improve student interaction and interest in both traditional and online classes. *Interactive and Online/F2F*, a half-day session, was designed to enable academic support professionals, such as librarians, instructional designers, and instructional technologists, to develop "brief hybrids" (short combined online/F2F sessions) and facilitate colleagues' development of these hybrids through low-risk and low-cost Web-accessible resources and tools. Another introductory session, *Calling All Librarians*, provided training and guidance on using MERLOT, explored how librarians from various disciplines might more effectively use MERLOT, and how librarians can become more involved in the MERLOT effort.

The importance of MERLOT is growing and librarians have a couple of options. They can join a MERLOT community of practice, either for a specific discipline where they serve as liaisons or for information science; or they can simply use the learning materials available through the MERLOT site. Everything is free, whether you choose to join MERLOT or simply visit the Web site. Of course, you can also contribute.

Recent new MERLOT services include: MERLOT Voices (<http://voices.merlot.org>), an open Web 2.0 online collaboration center designed to encourage discussion, debate, and networking and to enable participants to share experiences, expertise, questions, and requests for advice about education; MERLOT Compass (<http://taste.merlot.org/COMPASS.html>) for academic leaders and administrators, providing easy access to online resources to plan, implement, and support educational innovations; and “Pedagogy Portal” (<http://pedagogy.merlot.org>), easy and free access to resources on learning and learners, course instructional design, teaching strategies and challenges, and assessment.

A conference experience illustrates the importance of librarians to MERLOT. The Executive Director called together members of the librarian editorial board and other librarians in attendance to seek advice on improving the search function in the learning materials database. Librarian participation, therefore, is sought and valued—as part of the community, as part of an editorial board, and in a general consultation role.

Librarians can play an integral part in the use of technology to enhance teaching and learning through MERLOT, as well as take advantage of the freely available learning materials. I enjoyed my conference experience and recommend it for our profession. If nothing else, check it out and take advantage of the database of learning materials or join a community: <http://www.merlot.org>.

Aline Soules
California State University, East Bay
aline.soules@csueastbay.edu



Newsletter Going E-Only

Starting with the spring 2010 Issue, *Biblio-Notes* will be available only in electronic format. Copies of the newsletter can be printed from the LES Web site. **Look for more LES topics on the LES Blog** <http://www.acrl.ala.org/lesblog>.

Newsletter contributions welcome. The editor especially encourages essays on “My Life as a Humanities Librarian,” “My Favorite Reference Tool,” “Tech Tips,” 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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Editor: Laura Taddeo
University at Buffalo
ltaddeo@buffalo.edu

Chair, 2009-2010: Angela Courtney
Indiana University
ancourtn@indiana.edu

Vice Chair/Chair Elect, 2009-2010:
Liorah Golomb, Wichita State University
liorah.golomb@wichita.edu

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

BiblioNotes
ACRL/ALA
50 East Huron Street
Chicago, IL 60611-2795

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