Greetings LES members!

I hope as the semester winds down you are doing and feeling well. Where did this year go? It seems that I just became your Chair and now my tenure is nearly over. It’s been a productive year for LES, and I thank each of you for your support and participation.

LES continues to be an active ACRL section. In September, for the first time, Past-chair Kristina DeVoe organized and led an orientation for members of the Executive Committee. The purpose of the session was to provide committee chairs, discussion group convenors, and members of the executive committee with information about section expectations and best practices. I plan to offer the session for LES leadership again this coming fall.

Around LibLearnX, the Collections and Reference discussion groups met virtually. Collections Discussion Group Co-Convenors Erin Durham Wright and Alexis Pavenick facilitated a lively discussion featuring topics such as advice related to collection development for new literary studies librarians, AI and authorship, and self-publishing and digital humanities. Reference Discussion Group Co-Convenors Stacy Reardon and Laura Semrau led participants in a discussion about post-pandemic reference work and serving non-traditional populations. These two discussion groups offer interesting and engaging discussions twice a year and are open to any interested LES member. Watch our ALA Connect space for information about upcoming discussions around the time of ALA Annual.

Recently, the Membership Committee, led by Nancy Dennis, worked on a new welcome letter for new LES members. The letter includes information about the section and a link to the new LES Membership Handbook, which was compiled by the Planning Committee last year. Membership will offer a virtual program titled "Zines and Academic Libraries" near the time of ALA Annual Conference. Check our ALA Connect space for details about that program.
The Planning Committee has crafted an Equity, Diversity, & Inclusivity Value statement that will be added to the LES Strategic Plan. Over the next year, Planning will be evaluating the section’s strategic plan overall to align it more closely with the ACRL Plan for Excellence.

After ALA Annual Conference, the brand new LES Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Committee will begin its work. The committee’s charge is: To identify, advocate for, and implement actions related to issues of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion, as well as belonging and accessibility in literatures in English librarianship and LES, including: promoting the recruitment, advancement, engagement, and retention of underrepresented groups; making sure that strategies from the section’s Anti-Racist Action Plan are implemented; communicating about JEDI work within the section and other LES committees; and advising the LES Executive Committee on programming, practices, and actions in support of these efforts. I look forward to seeing what this committee accomplishes.

For the third year in a row, LES has had a program accepted for ALA Annual Conference! This is a highly competitive proposal process, so I offer my hearty congratulations to the Conference Program Planning Committee. Thank you to Mark Dahlquist (Chair), Amy Barlow, Melissa Johnson, and Julie Kane for a job well done! The program, Marked for Death? Challenges to the Humanities and Humanities Librarianship will be presented on Saturday, June 29 from 4–5pm at the San Diego Convention Center. Co-sponsored with the RUSA History Section, the program will feature panelists Jennifer Hofer, History Librarian at the University of Florida; Nancy Kranich, Teaching Professor at Rutgers University; Ethan Lindsay, Humanities and Social Sciences Librarian at Wichita State University; and Laura Semrau, Humanities Librarian at Baylor University. The panelists will engage in a conversation about the turn towards AI and quantitative studies, shrinking attention spans, and growing economic anxieties among students and how libraries and humanities librarians can respond to this real or imagined crisis.

Thank you to everyone who voted in the recent ALA elections and special thanks to everyone who stood for election for LES office. Please join me in congratulating our newly elected officers: Vice-chair Chair-elect: Alexis Pavenick, Secretary: Emily Tock, and Member-at-large: Candice Dahl. After ALA Annual Conference, Stacy Reardon will begin her term as Chair of LES. Have you ever thought of getting involved with LES? There are many ways to participate, and we would love to have you join us.
It has been my honor to serve as your Chair this past year. Thank you to the Executive Committee for your stellar work. It has been a pleasure to work with you and I am excited to see what LES does next!

All my best,
Leslie Madden

Leslie Madden is Team Leader for Arts & Humanities at Georgia State University. She may be reached at lmadden@gsu.edu.
Dear LES Members,

It is truly hard to believe that my tenure as editor of the section newsletter is drawing to a close. I am amazed by the activity of our section detailed in the four issues I’ve had the privilege of editing. Leslie’s Madden’s introductory notes for this issue alone describe the extraordinary efforts of LES committee members. In a year marked by a number of challenges in higher education, from dealing with and adapting to advances in artificial intelligence to challenges to free speech, our members remain committed to ensuring that literatures in English librarianship continues to evolve and remain a vital part of academic life.

In this issue, you will read Sam Lohmann’s article about the impact of Small Press Distribution’s closure on the literary ecosystem, the sessions of the 2024 Modern Language Association Convention relevant to librarianship, and the "Crisis in the Humanities" session coming up at the ALA Annual Conference in San Diego this summer. I am grateful to the authors for submitting these pieces. I think you will find valuable information in each one.

Enjoy this Spring’s issue of Biblio-Notes! Look for a call from the incoming editor for articles, news items, and announcements that highlight our important work and contributions in the fall. I hope to see some of you in San Diego!

All the best,

Hugh Burkhart
THE END OF SMALL PRESS DISTRIBUTION:
A CRISIS IN THE LITERARY ECOSYSTEM

by Sam Lohmann, Reference Coordinator and Information Access Librarian,
Washington State University Vancouver

Small publishers play an outsized role in the life of literature, especially for forms such as poetry and short fiction which typically do not sell enough to attract major publishers or “big box” retailers. In a literary world composed of innumerable micro-scenes centered around locations, institutions, online discourse communities, and ever-proliferating subgenres, small publishers bring out books that tend to be fresh, exciting, innovative, challenging, and diverse—but also commercially dubious. As an academic librarian who cares about the living practices of literature in communities, and about future scholars’ access to that literature and its context, I see small presses as central to collection development. Even at a campus with few creative writing courses and no creative writing degree program. I find that small press titles circulate and attract students’ interest. I think of these books as forming a pathway connecting the prestigious, canonical literature of the past and present with real people’s contemporary writing communities, concerns, identities, and experiences. Small presses publish faculty and visiting writers on my campus, and this is true at many institutions from community colleges and small liberal arts colleges to large research institutions. For these reasons, I am concerned about the sudden closure of Small Press Distribution (SPD) in March 2024 and what it means for libraries that collect literatures in English.

Founded in 1969 in Berkeley, SPD played a vital role in getting small press books and journals to booksellers, libraries, and readers. As a nonprofit, SPD relied on donations and grants to cover some of its operating costs. The past several years seem to have been turbulent for SPD. Labor disputes in 2020 led to the departure of its executive director. More recently, after a crowdfunding campaign, SPD closed its warehouse and transferred its stock of books as part of a partnership with the major book distributor Ingram. The final palettes were delivered only a few months before the March 28 announcement of SPD’s closure. As Literary Hub, NPR, and others have reported, this closure is catastrophic for many of the publishers formerly distributed by SPD, who face not only the loss of distribution but the cost of recovering their books from Ingram to prevent them from being pulped, and the likelihood of being unpaid for recent sales through SPD.

Besides the chaos and financial harm to publishers, SPD’s closure leaves a major gap in the U.S. literary ecosystem. According to its closure announcement, SPD represented over 500 publishers at its peak. On X (formerly Twitter), author Jen Benka posted a list of about 350 presses, based on Internet Archive Wayback Machine captures of the SPD site in the months before the closure. The list includes many of the most important publishers of contemporary American poetry, such as Counterpath, Fence, Hanging Loose, and Roof Books; it also includes older books from now defunct but still legendary presses run by poets, such as Lyn Hejinian’s Tuumba Press and Keith and Rosmarie Waldrop’s Burning Deck, which are now likely to be pulped. Aside from its centrality to contemporary poetry, SPD was an important resource for literature in English translation, works of Indigenous writers, works of LGBTQ+ writers, and a wide variety of formally and/or politically radical fiction and nonfiction. It is impossible to imagine a collection representing, for example, the Bay Area New Narrative movement of the 1970s-2000s without former SPD publishers like Semiotext(e) and Krupskaya. In addition, as the SPD announcement notes, former SPD titles and
and authors have received a wide range of major national prizes and grants.

Although it is too soon to speculate about the long-term effects, the closure is likely to affect library collection development in the short term. SPD formerly linked small presses to major vendors like Ingram, GOBI (a subsidiary of EBSCO), and Baker & Taylor. As a GOBI user, I observed that in the week after the closure announcement, all titles formerly distributed by SPD had changed their status from "In stock" to "Orders accepted" (meaning the title may be in print but is not currently available from GOBI). This means that while my library might be able to order a small press book directly from the publisher, it cannot go through the normal bindery process for paperback books. For those at larger libraries that rely on approval lists or need to order through a single distributor for logistical reasons, it might now be much more difficult to order, or even identify, important small press titles. There may be further effects on teaching and research. For instance, if a university bookstore is unable to stock a small press title, faculty may choose to cut it from their syllabus, or try to use library ebooks or electronic reserves as a workaround to provide texts to students.

Despite these problems, there has been a lively response from publishers, authors, and organizations in the small press community. While SPD is not answering inquiries, the Community of Literary Magazines and Presses (CLMP) organization has convened several meetings and information sessions for publishers and compiled a helpful FAQ page on the closure. At least three independent distributors—Asterism Books, Itasca Books, and Independent Publishers Group (IPG)—have held information sessions with CLMP and appear interested in partnering with former SPD clients. Both Itasca (the distribution division of the design and printing company Bookmobile) and IPG work with the major library vendors such as GOBI and Baker & Taylor. While Asterism does not appear to work with these companies, they offer a discount and a standing order program for library purchases. It is worth our time as librarians to become familiar with these options and also to consider direct ordering from publishers.

I would like to conclude by joining the recent chorus of authors and publishers urging the public to support small presses and help them to weather this crisis. Small presses are vital to local and national literary communities, and to any library collections that attempt to support, reflect, and document those communities. Librarians who collect in English language literatures need to look beyond vendors' approval lists to find the small press works that matter to patrons. Librarians can begin by browsing the list of former SPD presses, the catalogs of Asterism and IPG, and book review sites such as Los Angeles Review of Books and Rain Taxi. Annual awards are also of interest, such as the CLMP Firecracker Awards (for small press publications in various categories), the CLMP Constellation Award (for presses led by or featuring work by people of color), and the Lambda Literary Awards (for LGBTQ+ authors—frequently though not always from smaller presses). Some small presses are happy to set up standing orders by season or year, and libraries with larger collection budgets may find this an efficient way to supplement their regular collection process and build connection with a particular region or community of practice. Academic librarians may also want to ask English faculty and graduate students, students working on literary magazines, or anyone organizing literary events in their area, for suggestions authors and presses. The small press world is already finding ways to rebuild and move away from old models, and public and academic libraries need to take part in that future.

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This is my final year as the ACRL LES/ESS liaison to the Modern Language Association. I have greatly enjoyed being your liaison, and I hope that the ACRL LES and ESS sections continue supporting this liaison role in the future.

This year I attended the 2024 MLA Convention in January in Philadelphia in person. The theme was “Joy and Sorrow.” Though I attended this conference in-person, they continue to offer some sessions virtually. It was really nice to have the option to attend some virtual sessions after I returned. I felt like some of the major themes this year were AI and large language models, public humanities, recovering alternate archives, and climate change. I attended too many sessions to list them all, but a couple of highlights include 69 Rereading Ourselves and Others, 175 Celebrating Twenty-First-Century Indigenous Literatures, 229 Information Literacy, Undergraduate Education, and Business and Organizational Communication, 556 Digital Storytelling across the Americas: Adoption, Adaptation, and Counternarratives in Video Games, and 604 Drag Story Hour: Children’s Literature, Right-Wing Hate, and Queer Celebration.

I want to feature one session especially because I found it valuable to my work as a librarian. It was called 421 The Frosting on Your Cake: Aligning Information Literacy with Your Course Curriculum. What I found so valuable was that I really appreciated seeing how the librarians who led the session structured the workshop in order to enable faculty to understand what information literacy is and how librarians can support their work. They did a fabulous job engaging the faculty who attended this session. I also want to mention attending the workshop “Future Directions for MLA Handbook Plus” where I provided some feedback for the MLA editors and learned about improvements and upgrades for that product. I am pleased that they are continuing to expand and improve this resource.

I was the secretary for the TM Libraries and Research Forum Executive Committee last year, and this year I am chairing the committee. I co-facilitated (along with Andrea Malone) our panel program 477 Addressing Underrepresentation of Marginalized Populations in Institutional Archives. Our panelists were a mixture of librarians, archivists, faculty, and graduate students. We structured the session as a discussion, and we worked with the panelists to generate the questions we asked them. Our speakers provided a great variety of perspectives and experience, and we had a lot of questions from the audience. Twenty people attended this session. I think my work as a member of this committee is a good example of how my time as the liaison to MLA has given me opportunities to become more involved with the organization and gave me opportunities to promote the work of academic libraries to the members of MLA.

Attending the MLA conventions has helped me keep up with the trends in literary studies and provided new connections to librarians and faculty members that I hadn’t made by just attending library conferences. If you have the opportunity, I highly recommend attending an academic conference like MLA to expand your understanding of a relevant discipline.

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LES AND RUSA HISTORY SECTION CONSIDER
THE “CRISIS IN THE HUMANITIES” AT ALA ANNUAL

by Mark Dahlquist, Humanities and Social Sciences Librarian, Miami University

At this year’s ALA Annual convention, LES and the RUSA History section will jointly sponsor a session that responds to the crisis of enrollment, or even of purpose, that many have argued is facing the humanities. Articles such as Nathan Heller’s “The End of the English Major” in The New Yorker have pointed to declining enrollments in humanities courses at colleges and universities as evidence of a “crisis in the humanities,” and some universities, such as West Virginia and Miami Universities, have begun cutting and consolidating humanities programs.

How are librarians in the humanities to understand and respond to this crisis in the humanities? The LES-RUSA History session, “Marked for Death: Challenges to the Humanities and Humanities Librarianship,” will bring together history and English liaison librarians and library science faculty, as four presenters share perspectives and practices for responding to ongoing changes in higher education. Presentations will include:

- “Beyond the University: Using Community Outreach and Collaboration to Support History and the Humanities,” Jennifer Hofer, History Librarian, University of Florida
- “When the Humanities Met Civics,” Nancy Kranich, Teaching Professor, Rutgers University
- “Integrating AI in the Humanities: A History Librarian’s Reflections on Balancing Technology with Traditional Critical Thinking Skills,” Ethan Lindsay, Humanities and Social Sciences Librarian, Wichita State University
- “How Libraries Can Help the Humanities Flourish by Fostering Interdisciplinarity,” Laura Semrau, Humanities Librarian, Baylor University

For more information on these presentations, please see the program schedule.

The panel was developed by the LES Conference Program Planning 2024 Committee, including Amy Barlow, Melissa E. Johnson, Julie Kane, and Mark Dahlquist (Chair). Dahlquist, who is a Humanities and Social Sciences Librarian at Miami University, will also moderate this session.

This year’s session was developed in consultation with LES membership, using a survey sent to all members in June 2023 regarding their interests in potential topics. The “death of the humanities” emerged at the top of the list. The committee then developed a call for presenters, and reached out to the Co-Chairs of the RUSA History Section Programming Committee, Melissa F. Gonzales and Rebecca Ann Lloyd. Partnering with RUSA History, the call for presenters was distributed to both LES and RUSA History members, creating a session with presenters from both sections. The call was also distributed to faculty in the humanities and library science through departmental emails and (with the assistance of Arianne Hartsell-Gundy, LES/ESS liaison to the Modern Language Association) to members of the MLA Association. All members of LES and RUSA History and all attendees of ALA 2024 are invited to attend this discussion, which will feature librarians working with history and English, as well as former ALA President Nancy Kranich, who has written and edited many publications, including, recently, a special issue of Library Quarterly on Reimagining the Civic Role of Libraries.

We hope you will join us in San Diego for this conversation!

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ACRL books provide timely and practical advice and thought-provoking research for academic library workers worldwide. Some recent titles:

- Digital Humanities in the Library, Second Edition
- Predatory Publishing and Global Scholarly Communications
- Toxic Dynamics: Disrupting, Dismantling, and Transforming Academic Library Culture
- Universal Design for Learning in Academic Libraries: Theory into Practice
- Supporting Student Parents in the Academic Library: Designing Spaces, Policies, and Services

Interested in writing for ACRL? Contact Erin Nevius, ACRL’s Content Strategist, for more information, or visit www.ala.org/acrl/publications/publishing to learn more about our book publishing program.

UPCOMING CONFERENCES

ACRL at ALA Annual

Don’t miss the 2024 ACRL President’s Program, "Workplace Belonging Matters: Key Insights for Library Professionals," on Saturday, June 29 in the San Diego Convention Center Room 29D from 10:30am – 12:00 pm, hosted by ACRL President Beth McNeil. ACRL will also sponsor 14 section, committee, and individual programs at the conference on topics such as artificial intelligence: inclusive scholarly publishing; equitable access for the blind, visually impaired, and print-disabled students; LibParlor: setting boundaries in the workplace: challenges to humanities librarianship; and more.
ACRL 2025 Call for Proposals

ACRL invites proposals for the ACRL 2025 Conference to be held April 2-5, 2025, in Minneapolis and online. ACRL 2025 will be a platform for us to engage in critical conversations and explore solutions-centered approaches to the challenges facing our profession. We will focus on themes like embedded bias, inclusive excellence, and the role of technology. Whether you join us in person or virtually, we welcome you to be a part of this important conversation. Together, we can build a future where knowledge is accessible to all.

Contributed paper, panel session, and workshop proposals are due June 7, 2024. Community chat, lightning talk, poster session, roundtable discussion, and virtual presentation proposals are due October 18, 2024. Complete details about ACRL 2025, including the full Call for Proposals, are available on the conference website.

Learn About the Relational Possibilities of Generative AI and Data Literacy

The Relational Possibilities project showcases the unparalleled artistic and expressive capabilities of employing generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) imagery and audio technologies to facilitate immersive and interactive design in film and media. As the seminal collaboration between Dana Reijerkerk and kYmerly Keeton (The Creative CoLab), Relational Possibilities: A Remix of Aesthetic Forms Through Indigeneity and Blackness is a meta creative digital work between two researchers, writers, and artists from different races using generative AI. Relational Possibilities is a digital community archive data science project that explores community relations and futurist realities of Indigeneity and Blackness through artists, writers, and public art in Philadelphia. Our research-creation entails the practical development of a collaborative data media art endeavor centered around the Black and Indigenous communities in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, US.

The Creative CoLab is currently sharing this research and engaging the community. They presented their research virtually in March at the BitCurator Forum and Research Data Access and Preservation (RDAP) Summit. They will present at the 6th Interactive Film & Media International Virtual Conference in June (free virtual event), the University of North Texas School of Information, and Barnard College/Columbia University in summer 2024. If you’re interested in hosting a virtual workshop on using generative AI for data literacy, you can get in contact with The Creative CoLab at danareijerkerk@gmail.com.