

2000

## Reports

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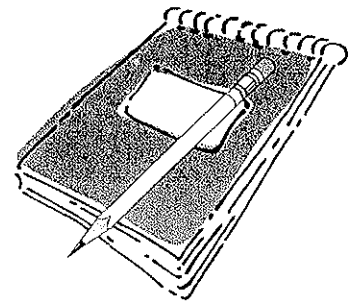
(2000) "Reports," *The Primary Source*: Vol. 22 : Iss. 2 , Article 5.

DOI: 10.18785/ps.2202.05

Available at: <https://aquila.usm.edu/theprimarysource/vol22/iss2/5>

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# Reports



## SOUTHEASTERN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

Reported by Mary Hamilton, Electronic Services Librarian,  
The University of Southern Mississippi, and Diane DeCesare  
Ross; Digitization Specialist, The University of Southern Mississippi

From October 11-13, 2000, the Southeastern Library Association held a joint conference with the Georgia Council of Media Organizations at the Jekyll Island Convention Center and Holiday Inn in Jekyll Island, Georgia. The conference theme was "Building Partnerships for the New Millennium". Several pre-conference workshops were offered, covering the topics of storytelling, Friends of Library groups, leadership, accreditation, and program planning. Joan Frye Williams, Dr. Elliott Engel, and Lorraine Johnson-Coleman gave entertaining keynote addresses.

## SELECTED SESSION REPORTS

### "ACRL STANDARDS 2000: PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS FOR ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENTS"

Bill Nelson from Augusta State University and Bob Frenkes from Georgia Southern University co-presented a pre-conference workshop focusing on the new outcomes-based ACRL accreditation standards. The outcome assessment standards require a move from rote methods of instruction to "an emphasis on assessment of student performance" using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The presenters demonstrated the evaluation plan in practice at Augusta State University's Reese Library which incorporates the ACRL standards, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) requirements and the individual library's purpose, goals, evaluation procedures, and the use of the results from the evaluation procedures. The presentation also included discussion of the Reese Library mission statement and the goals. The library's document provided "linkages" (bolded and underlined text) to the university's mission statement and goals. These were highlighted within the library document to demonstrate the ways the library supported the overall mission of the university. This session provided attendees with specific ways to implement the new standards and examples of how to document the efforts.

### "SO YOU HAVE TO PLAN A PROGRAM – NOW WHAT?"

SOLINET's Cal Shepard and Diane Brown presented a fun, fast-paced pre-conference workshop on planning workshops and other professional programs. In just three short hours, they laid out very useful guidelines for needs assessment, content planning, program design, evaluation, and implementation. The audience was able to practice freshly-learned skills through group exercises. *Program Planning: Tips for Librarians* was a highly recommended resource. (available from the web page <http://www.ala.org/alaorg/rtables/clene>)

### "THEY'RE FROM MARS – WE'RE FROM REFERENCE: TECHNOLOGY PARTNERSHIPS IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM"

Joan Frye Williams, a consult for libraries in the areas of information technology planning, management and marketing, presented at the first general session. Through specific examples and much humor, Ms. Williams identified reasons why "partnering" between technology specialists and librarians is not always successful and offered suggestions for making these partnerships work. While most librarians prefer libraries to be run like a boutique, patrons want a "convenience store" type library. She suggested

using "techie" to make libraries a more convenient place for patrons. Tell them to bring technologies from other areas of business. Also, librarians want perfection. For example, librarians would hesitate to bring up a new automated system with even minor problems, but in the software industry if a product is 88% effective, it is considered to be a success. When implementing a new program or service, try it for three months. Then, determine if the problems librarians have encountered are really problems for the patron.

"STOP SEARCHING AND START FINDING –  
CRISPEN'S GUIDE TO FINDING AND EVALUATING RESOURCES ON THE NET"

Patrick Crispen packed this hour-long presentation full of very useful internet searching techniques. He began by pointing out that many people are not using the right online tools for the task at hand, and then went on to outline simple search strategies that will improve results with almost any search engine. This was followed by more advanced strategies, like searches for titles, domain names, and URLs, and the use of operators such as "or" and "near". Crispen highly recommended google.com and dogpile.com as the best search engines.

**THE INFINITE LIBRARY: OLD WORLDS AND NEW: MANUSCRIPTS, ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

*The Fleur Cowles Flair Symposium 2000*, held November 3-4, 2000 at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin

Reported by Peggy Price, Special Collections Librarian, McCain Library & Archives, University of Southern Mississippi

*Artist and author Fleur Cowles edited the ground-breaking, yet short-lived, magazine "Flair" in the early 1950's. In the spirit of the magazine, and "the new, the controversial, the innovative and the creative," the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center holds "The Fleur Cowles Flair Symposium" every two years.*

"THE INFINITE LIBRARY: Old Worlds and New: Manuscripts, Archives and Special Collections in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," brought together leaders in the world of books and libraries to share their thoughts on what the future holds for special collections. Two full days of panel presentations and discussions on such topics as institutional planning & funding, technology, authors & their archives, and the future of the library and scholarship, enlightened and entertained the audience and participants alike. Good news--special collections should be around for a long time, with digital surrogates playing an important role in both preservation and access.

President of Emory University, William Chace, established a theme with his opening keynote address that would resonate throughout the symposium when he lamented the loss of "reverie" surrounding books and study. On a brighter note, it was generally agreed that special collections are in the unique position to recover such a loss and celebrate the book in all its forms. Succeeding speakers talked about establishing communities of readers by "animating" texts and collaborating to build national and international collections. Digitization, preservation, and the commodification of cultural artifacts were some other topics considered.

Speakers represented prestigious institutions from the United States, Canada and Great Britain. Michael Ryan (Director, Special Collections, University of Pennsylvania Libraries), Ellen Dunlap (President, American Antiquarian Society), Jeane Ashton (Director, Rare book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University), Kris Kiesling (Head, Department of Manuscripts & Archives, Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin) and Lisa Brower (Lilly Librarian, Indiana University)

were just a few of the moderators of the panel discussions. Featured speakers included Peter Hirtle (Co-Director, Cornell Institute for Digital Collections), Charles Henry (Vice Provost, University Librarian and Interim CIO, Rice University), Deanna Marcum (President, Council on Library and Information Resources), and Alice Prochaska (Director, Special Collections, The British Library).

A reading of Brian Friel's play "Give Me Your Answer Do!" dramatized the ethical considerations a writer encounters when selling his archives to a library and set the stage for the last program of the first day. Authors James Salter and Diane Johnson, along with playwright Arnold Wesker, spoke about their own experiences selling their papers to libraries, ending the evening with both insight and humor. Day two carried on with the panel presentations, which were capped off by a most upbeat and lively journalist, James Fallows, telling us that what we do is wonderful and valuable and will only increase in worth in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Fleur Cowle's closing remarks compared the relationship between books and digital technology with the horse and the automobile. Although one has replaced the other in most functional ways, we still enjoy the beauty and majesty of horses--as well we should with books.

## **RARE BOOK WORKSHOP**

held at Mitchell Memorial Library, Mississippi State University, November 8, 2000

Reported by Dr. Lynne Mueller, Mississippiana/Rare Books Librarian, Special Collections, Mississippi State University Libraries

On November 8, 2000, Elaine Smyth, Curator of Special Collections at Louisiana State University Libraries in Baton Rouge, gave a workshop entitled "Rare and Endangered: a Workshop on Selecting Material for Transfer to Special Collections." Around 30 librarians from Mississippi and Alabama academic and public libraries attended.

Ms. Smyth began with a PowerPoint lecture on the elements of rarity. She talked about the development of book technology from the hand press period through mechanization and what that means in terms of scarcity, value, and the ability of books to survive in circulating collections. Books have many kinds of value (monetary, informational, aesthetic, and associational), and all of these values must be considered when deciding to place a book in special collections. She talked about the role of the antiquarian book trade in establishing monetary value and listed several websites and other means of determining that value. In addition, she listed some of the currently "hot" collecting areas.

While it is relatively easy to establish monetary value, other values may depend on the individual institution. Special collections stacks are expensive due to conservation costs, security, and more intensive service. Unless books fit the specific research emphases of the institution, or have elements associated with the institution's mission or history, they may not be worth placing in a special collections department. In fact, they can be detrimental to such a collection by taking resources away from more suitable material. Ms. Smyth recommended that each library have a clear collecting policy.

A related recommendation was that some books are better preserved in a limited circulation situation rather than in special collections. For instance, books that are in poor condition but in high demand for certain courses may need limited circulation or in-house use only, rather than being subjected to the usually limited hours of use found in special collections departments. Books in poor condition with nothing more than informational value to recommend them may need to be replaced in circulating collections with newer editions.

During the afternoon session, participants evaluated a group of books that Ms. Smyth had pulled from the MSU stacks. Some books were obvious candidates for transferring to Special Collections because of rarity, age, or special features. Some were simply old books with condition problems. Other were examples of books that had associations with MSU and might be transferred to Special Collections for that reason only. Once everyone had a chance to look through a few books, they compared

evaluations. Even those who do not regularly work with rare books learned that they can monitor circulating collections and recommend a more thorough evaluation of selected pieces by the special collections staff.

### **NEH DEEP SOUTH REGION MEETING:**

Held at the Pine Hills Culture Program Office, Hattiesburg, MS

Reported by Preston Everett, Audiovisual Archivist, MDAH

The Center for the Study of Southern Culture has been chosen as the Deep South Humanities Center for the National Endowment for the Humanities Deep South Region. The NEH is in the process of designating 10 regional studies centers across the nation. The Center received a \$50,000 planning grant from NEH to prepare a grant proposal for a \$5 million endowment for this region. The Deep South Region includes the states of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee and Arkansas, and the Center created a separate staff for this NEH project. The endowment will be used to support regional humanities research, education, and preservation and public programs.

The Center for the Study of Southern Culture has planned regional meetings for the planning grant year. The meetings began on September 12, 2000 in Helena, Arkansas and will end in Lafayette, Louisiana. The second regional meeting, held on October 18, 2000, in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, gathered together representatives from various libraries, universities, public schools, archives, museums and historical societies. Those in attendance suggested the need for public outreach in the form of various community programs. Also suggested was the need for collecting and preserving our past in every community throughout the state, which could be done through preservation workshops. The workshops would be designed to train volunteers in areas of outreach programs, preservation of manuscripts and photographic materials, oral history projects and any programs a community would want to accomplish.