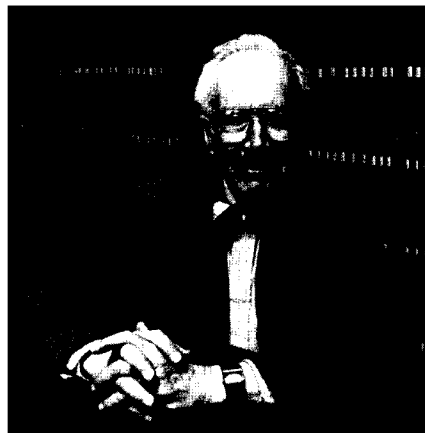


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The Newsletter of the Mark O. Hatfield Library, Willamette University

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SPRING 1998



Technological Idolatry and Today's Reference Librarian

By Evan Ira Farber

I DON'T KNOW IF THEODORE ROSZAK ORIGINATED the term "technological idolatry," that handy label for the tendency to love machines or, rather, to love what machines can do. The term appears in *The Cult of Information*, in which he warns readers about the computer's "peculiar power to spellbind its users." Roszak, a distinguished historian, was seeing too many students who not only regarded the computer as the single key for unlocking the universe of information, but who also felt that "if it comes from the computer, it's got to be true." Every reference librarian recognizes this attitude and most of us try to counter it.

Roszak's observations are persuasive. Recently, while I was looking through the book, a question occurred to me: isn't the enthusiastic adoption of technology by academic librarians dangerously close to the troubling manifestation of technological idolatry? "Troubling," I say, because that enthusiasm may be causing librarians — quite inadvertently — to pay less attention to their primary mission, that of enhancing the education of their students.

A recent article suggests that a reference librarian who roves around the reference area, rather than sitting at the reference desk, increases the number of reference encounters and "produces more sophisticated and more thorough reference service." When reference librarians used to see students at the card catalog, flipping through card after card, going from one tray to another, they knew

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The College Library:

Its Evolving Role in the Information Age

By Michael W. Spalti

In a paper published in 1993, Robert C. Heterick Jr. worried that libraries were not implementing the types of service needed for the "new models of teaching and learning" that will emerge in the "information age." Citing librarians' unwillingness to see that the "networked world is not a commodity," Heterick appears to contrast print publishing, to which librarians had a lingering and debilitating attachment, to the ways in which information circulates freely and without intermediary on the Internet.

OUR NETWORKED FUTURE

Around this same time, many of us looking at the "networked world" from the perspective of scholarly communication saw a different picture. In our view, formal scholarly exchange via computer networks would require methods for validation, peer review, formal design, indexing and archiving, all features used in the print world. In the arena of formal scholarly communication, at least, the immediate future did not look radically different from the present, and plans for a dramatic change of direction seemed premature.

Developments in recent years have tended to bear out this conclusion. As Heterick correctly observed, the networked world is not a commodity, but increasing it is a place in which documents, images and sound are sold by publishers. What Karla Hesse has called the "regulatory compromise" reached in the 18th century between "the notion of the right-bearing and accountable individual author, the value of democratic access to useful knowledge, and faith in free market competition as the most effective mechanism of public exchange" has not been bypassed by the new technologies. A parallel world of digital publish-

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Orbis — Alive, Well and Kicking

IN MARCH OF 1997, ORBIS AUTOMATED BORROWING was born. Orbis, a shared academic library catalog containing over five million records, provides an extraordinarily rich information base for students and faculty throughout the Pacific Northwest. The Orbis automated borrowing feature allows patrons to initiate their own requests by keying them directly into the Orbis catalog, which verifies borrowing privilege and item availability. Requested items are typically delivered to the patron's home library within 48 hours. Orbis automated borrowing has been highly successful from its inception. Statistics for the Fall Semester 1997, the first semester of full operation, indicate the popularity of this new service. Willamette faculty, students and staff borrowed 467 books from other Orbis

libraries during September, 883 in October and 736 in November. The Mark O. Hatfield Library lent 291 books to other Orbis library patrons during September, 577 during October and 617 during November. Impressive figures by any standard! ■

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those students needed help. Is using an online catalog that much simpler? Whenever I approached students (or even faculty members) at a catalog terminal, looked over their shoulders and saw that they were going from screen to screen, apparently in no systematic sequence, I asked if they were finding what they needed. Their replies invariably indicated that they weren't taking advantage of the system's versatility or helpfulness.

Why should we assume that simply because users are seated at a terminal, clicking away on keyboards, they're finding what they want or need — or even asking the right questions? Is the software so perceptive, so sophisticated, that it can replace even a brief reference interview? If we think along those lines, if we let the machines do what we were trained to do, haven't we also been seduced by technological idolatry?

I see another problem: reference librarians, rather than watching out for students who may need help, spend much of their time focusing on the terminal on their desks. They read email and consult other reference librarians around the country on all sorts of matters. These are often discussions that could improve the library's services. But isn't there a cost? Most students who might ask for assistance are hardly going to interrupt librarians who are focused on the screens in front of them. So we miss opportunities for individual instruction, the most productive kind of education.

What can we do? In the short run, we can be more skeptical of the efficacy of online searching and emphasize the limitations of electronic sources in our instruction. In the long run, as more and more students come to do online searching from outside the library, we can incorporate automated instruction into our technology, thereby helping to ensure that students will search systematically and critically. If we are to confront the mindset of technological idolatry we must, in a sense, fight fire with fire.

But, even if some group develops the ideal automated program for teaching information skills, there's one step I would insist be included: At some point during the search process, the student must talk with a reference librarian. No matter how effective automated instruction becomes, there's no substitute for a reference librarian who can help a student shape a topic, suggest an unusual source and offer an encouraging word. That role is extremely important; let's be sure to keep it in mind. ■

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A View from the Library

Non-Primary Clientele:

An Emerging Concern for College Librarians

By Larry R. Oberg

Budget shortfalls, convenient access to the web and the increasing availability of electronic resources are causing academic librarians to review the level of service they offer non-primary clientele. Librarians define primary clientele as faculty, students and staff, and non-primary clientele as those unaffiliated with the institution.

Concern focuses on recent dramatic increases in the use of academic libraries by the general public, a nationwide phenomenon. Libraries like Willamette's are increasingly popular with unaffiliated users as convenient access points to the games, free e-mail, erotica and sports scores readily available over the web, as well as the expensive, often specialized, electronic databases to which public libraries tend not to subscribe.

The open door policy that has long characterized many college libraries worked well in a library world defined by card catalogs and printed periodicals indexes. Many information resources today are available exclusively through a finite number of heavily-used computer terminals. The growing number of full-text databases contain documents that must be printed if they are to be consulted with any degree of ease. Concerns swirl around the cost of printing and issues of equitable access to scarce resources. These concerns are causing some libraries to charge for printing, limit access to terminals, restrict the use of certain resources and even deny entry to non-primary clientele.

This is a thorny issue. Many academic librarians are deeply committed to the concept of libraries as a public good and feel a professional, indeed a moral, obligation to provide generous service to an unaffiliated public. Others, faced with mounting

pressures for accountability, argue for restricting services and cite as reasons the recreational and sometimes disruptive use made of the library by the public, workload issues, limited funding, scarce resources and the fear of compromising service to students and faculty.

A number of factors complicate decision-making in this area. Primary among them is the nature of the relationship a school seeks to maintain with its host community. Librarians understand that an abrupt change in policy could risk undermining town-gown relations. At Willamette we are also aware that, as a selective depository for U. S. government documents, we are mandated by law to offer local residents fair and equitable access to these important print and electronic resources.

The Hatfield Library, like many libraries nationally, is increasingly dependent upon the state funds that partially support and, indeed, vitalize such resource-sharing technologies as Orbis, our statewide academic database, and the federal funds that partially underwrite collectively negotiated subscriptions to a number of electronic databases. All participants in these cooperative ventures recognize that these subsidies carry with them a responsibility to share resources equitably among publicly and privately funded institutions.

The decline in popular support for local public libraries is a source of concern. The level at which these libraries are funded determines the number of hours they remain open and the quality and number of computer terminals they make available. When public library hours are cut and Internet access curtailed, their public turns to academic libraries. And these folks find it difficult to understand that our obligation to serve them may be limited.

Nationally, we need to clarify the obligations of academic librarians to their non-primary clientele. This responsibility has as yet received little attention from the profession although these issues are appropriate themes for workshops and programs within the American Library Association. At the local level, public, school and academic librarians should define policies and coordinate the services the public can expect at each of our institutions.

At the Hatfield Library, we are approaching this issue cautiously. Printing from the web remains free to all, but access to expensive per-transaction priced databases and many computer terminals requires a Willamette password. For the moment, the demands of the general public are far from requiring us to impose any draconian measures and we expect to maintain our commitment to reasonable, if not unlimited, service to the general public. ■

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"Concerns swirl around the cost of printing and issues of equitable access to scarce resources."



The President's House and the Library: Structure, Symbolism and Change

By Bryan M. Johnston

During this academic year, my family and I have had the pleasure of living in Bishop House, the official residence of Willamette University presidents. The University asks the president to live there for several reasons, chief among them the responsibility to entertain and the symbolic nature of the residence itself.

Bishop House is a grand structure. A semicircular driveway invites visitors to a stately brick home, built in the Georgian style. Inside the large foyer (enhanced by a graceful curved staircase), guests pause before two large rooms that allow for an easy flow of conversation and movement.

For all its grandeur, Bishop House requires attention and updating. The carpet and wallpaper have both exceeded their useful life. Mechanically, the chief shortcoming is a heating system that, at all hours of the day, insists upon imitating an elk mating call. My six-year-old son, Zachary, can mimic this sound to perfection, but, to the rest of the family, it signals that something needs to be done.

I mention the president's residence because the inevitable problems of an older home bear comparison to a 12-year-old library. Bishop House, like the Hatfield Library, has a unique role to play in the functioning of the University. With changing inhabitants or changing librarians, the way the role is played may differ, but the role itself remains relatively constant.

I am not suggesting that the library, like the house, is beautiful on the outside but in need of work on the inside. I do suggest that the buildings housing Willamette's many functions must continuously evolve to fit a variety of roles.

Unlike Bishop House, which can survive with relatively minor updating, libraries in today's world are in a constant state of change. The pressure on libraries, of course, occurs both in terms of the physical space and of the program delivery systems. The mission of the library, however, remains constant: "... to provide the services and resources necessary to meet the scholarly and informational needs of the Willamette community." Let me offer two examples of changes made this past year that serve the Willamette community:

Automated borrowing: Last year, Willamette made headlines when we processed the 72 *millionth* interlibrary loan for OCLC (the Online Computer Library Center). This year, however, we revised our definition of success. In March 1997, patron-initiated borrowing among the 13 Orbis member libraries was introduced. For the first time, students and faculty had direct access to the five million volumes collectively held by the consortium libraries. Online requests cut delivery time to 2-3 days, a feat of remarkable celerity.

Workstations: As someone who could never find a pencil while standing at the card catalog, I was amazed several years ago when libraries started putting their collections online. The InfoStations introduced this year, however, are gateways to another world. With a click of the mouse they connect to the Internet, to library catalogs, to periodical indexes, and to a variety of full-text databases. The InfoStations are also easy to use, and the rapidity of their response time is astonishing.

Another dimension to the library's role is style. I grew up across from a park on Chicago's South Side. As much as visiting the park, I enjoyed using a nearby branch of the Chicago Public Library. My friends and I spent a lot of time at that library, some of it serious, much of it social. Years later, when I was studying for the Illinois bar exam, I virtually took up residence in an air-conditioned branch of the library. While I have come to respect the great intellectual services this country's public library system provides,



Bishop House, the official residence of Willamette University presidents.

my view of libraries places their real value much closer to the heart of the community.

For me, Willamette's Mark O. Hatfield Library measures up to the central role I believe it has to play in our community. First, the space is beautiful. It draws you in, as if to an oasis. The seating areas are attractive, well lit and generously spaced to avoid crowding. That combination of privacy and community is characteristic of all the best-loved libraries, from the British Museum to this city's own cultural center, the Salem Public. One can browse, read a magazine, write, or do research, and feel comfortable, even nurtured. Although I have collected a fair number of complaints over my year as president, I have never heard a bad word about the library.

Second, the Hatfield Library celebrates its social side. The Hatfield Room on the second floor provides an attractive space for campus and community events. Nearly 200 events were hosted in the Hatfield Room in 1996-97, including poetry readings, music recitals, candidate forums, dramas, business meetings and panel presentations on topics that ranged from domestic violence to financial aid. One of my favorite regularly scheduled programs is the Carson Undergraduate Research Grant presentations. Last semester, one of these student presentations introduced me to the great Irish poet and Nobel laureate, Seamus Heaney. Heaney will remain a literary friend throughout my life. Another presentation gave me at least one idea for legislation to introduce at the next meeting of the Oregon Assembly.

The Hatfield Library accomplishes its work — the scheduling, research, teaching, and, last but not least, lending — with grace and humor. As to grace, people as much as books make a library, and the Hatfield staff are among the nicest one will find. They take to heart their mission to help others and they do this with a ready smile that encourages people to seek their assistance. And humor? I offer as evidence two recent displays: "Pop Culture: Bad Taste, or, Just Plain Funky?" and "Staff Members' Collections" (porcelain frogs, old credit cards, salt and pepper shakers, Teddy bears — *dozens* of Teddy bears!). Next to a frothy cappuccino in a library cafe, nothing could be more welcoming this side of Powell's book store.

In the next few years, the Mark O. Hatfield Library will face even more pressure for change. Whether it is pressure for shelf space as the collection approaches 300,000 pieces, or pressure to cope with the next technological revolution in library services (always just on the horizon), the need to update will continue. As it is with Bishop House, Willamette is committed to the excellence of its library and its mission to serve a complex and committed community of students and teachers. ■

Bryan M. Johnston is interim president, Willamette University, and Oregon state representative, district 31. email: <president@willamette.edu>.

New Databases Available for Sports and Anthropology

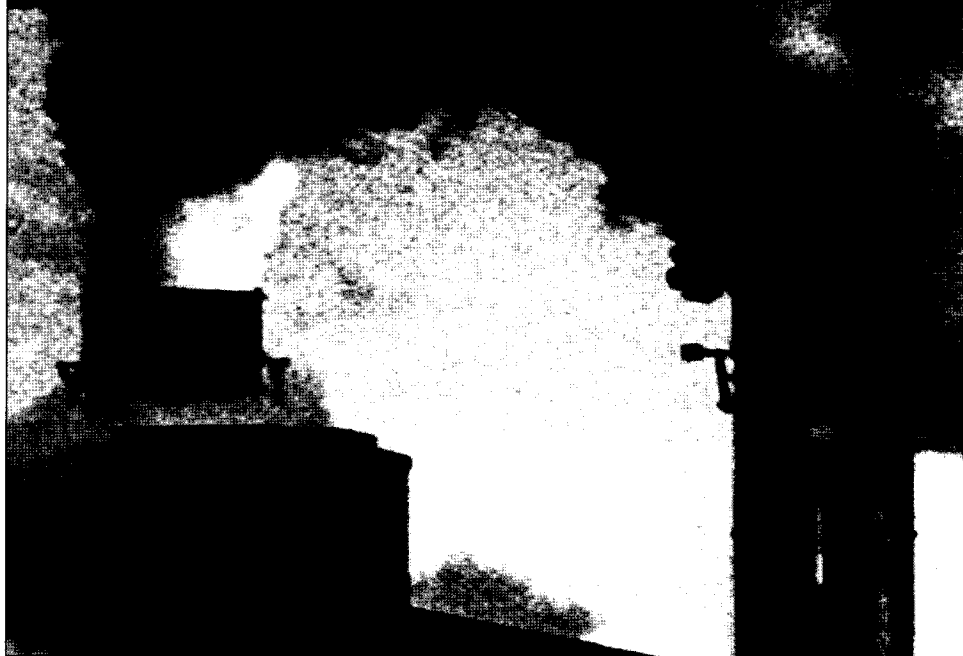
IN RECENT MONTHS, THE MARK O. HATFIELD Library has made available several new electronic databases. These databases provide coverage of the literature in subject areas that previously have been covered only cursorily in our existing databases. *SportsDiscus*, as its name implies, indexes and abstracts the literature of sports, exercise science and sports medicine. Produced by the Sport Information Resource Centre (SIRC), the database, international and comprehensive in scope, provides coverage back to 1975. It is updated quarterly. *Anthropological Literature*, produced by the Tozzer Library at Harvard University, is a web-based database that provides access to journal articles and essays dealing with anthropology and archaeology. It is updated quarterly, and includes works published in English and other European languages from 1984 to the present. Also of note: *CollegeSource*, an electronic database of college catalogs, formerly available only on CD-ROM from a single user workstation in the library, is now provided through the Internet and is available campus-wide. ■

New Task Force Focuses on Disaster Preparedness

A LIBRARY DISASTER PREPAREDNESS TASK Force has been created and charged with the task of developing a disaster manual. The completed manual will be organized by type of potential disaster and will include instructions for dealing with each. Other components contained in the manual include a staff telephone tree to be used in case of an emergency; a list of important emergency telephone numbers; a floor plan of the library; and a recovery plan. The task force has been concentrating its efforts on establishing a succinct emergency reference handbook that will provide basic steps for handling a variety of emergencies or disasters; the handbook should be completed this spring. Future plans for the task force include acquiring disaster supplies, training staff and students to cope with emergencies and participating in campus-wide efforts in disaster preparedness. ■

Adam Smith Goes to College, or, The Perils of Applying a Business Model to Higher Education

By Damon D. Hickey



At the end of the American Civil War, Francis T. King of Baltimore chaired a committee of northern Quakers known as the Baltimore Association to Advise and Assist Friends in the Southern States. Quakers in Dixie, devastated by war, had few schools, knew little of “scientific” agriculture and were few in number. To save his faith from extinction in the South, King and his cohorts set about to assist in building schools, hiring teachers, teaching farmers to be more productive and attracting new members. In the process, they endeavored to promote sound business principles in both the temporal and the spiritual life of their southern brethren. Terms such as centralization, accountability and statistics recur time and time again in King’s correspondence.

The Baltimoreans’ efforts were successful, but they led ultimately to the first division in the history of southern Friends, some of whom found the language of business to be inappropriate to a religious society that had for more than two centuries endeavored to follow the leadings of the Spirit. While they saw the value (literally) in using sound business practices in their livelihoods, they objected to turning over control of their spiritual life to corporate religious leaders at the local, state or national level.

Corporate-think and corporate-speak are even more deeply ingrained in American life today. Seventeenth and 18th-century Anglo-Americans, true to their religious roots in Puritanism, spoke of virtues. Nineteenth-century Americans spoke of values, a term we employ today without any conscious thought of its commercial origin. It has been in the latter half of the present century that the business-industry model has come to dominate every part of daily life. What used to be called medical science or medicine is known today as the health care industry. Physicians, nurses, chiropractors, hospital administrators, pharmacists, medical equipment manufacturers, pharmaceutical manufacturers and even health insurance companies are known collectively as the health care industry. Physicians have

become health care providers and patients have become health care consumers. Hospital personnel study customer relations and medical professionals work for health maintenance organizations. To a degree that would have surprised anyone a generation ago, hospitals have become privatized and pay every bit as much attention to their bottom line as they do to the diagnosis and treatment of illness.

Will higher education go the way of medicine? Many observers predict that it will, indeed that it is headed in that direction already. They point to the increasing role of business in providing education, not only to employees but also to customers through a variety of computer software products. They say that traditional institutions of higher education, especially liberal arts colleges, have doomed themselves to extinction by booting their customers out the door after four years. No other business, they say, could hope to survive if it did that. Higher education, they predict, will become education for life and the company that gets a customer at age 18 or younger will try to keep him or her as a customer 'till death them do part.

And what about libraries? If higher education is becoming part of the knowledge industry, libraries have become part of the information industry. (Obviously, the two are closely related and may be expected to merge at some time in the near future.) Public librarians speak of their customers' consumer preferences and engage in marketing strategies, which include attractive displays of new books, records and tapes available for consumption. Commercial online services now provide encyclopedias, dictionaries and a host of other basic reference sources that are available to their customers any time of the day or night. Increasing numbers of colleges and universities are merging libraries and computing centers into "information services" under the leadership of people who are known collectively, in good industry-speak, as chief information officers.

The arguments favoring this trend are many. Some say that higher education is a business now and that we must treat it as such. But are higher education and libraries any more businesses now than they were a generation ago, or have we just decided that business and industry models and paradigms should be applied to every aspect of our society, including areas that were formerly deemed to have their own ruling paradigms? No one can argue successfully that understanding medicine, education, libraries or even religion in economic terms is without value (that word again!) A concern for good customer relations could benefit patients, students, researchers and parishioners alike. And it is obvious that an economic, business-oriented model can be used to analyze any social institution. The question is not whether it is possible, but whether it is desirable to look at all social institutions only, or even primarily in this way. American sports can be and have been analyzed as athletic competitions, as businesses and as secular, social or religious rituals. Seeing sports from these different perspectives enriches our intellectual understanding and appreciation of them. But what true sports fan watching a game wants to view it as a quasi-religious social ritual or as a business transaction?

Some of the post-Civil War Quakers in the South resisted the hegemony of the corporate business model because they believed that their faith gave them a better paradigm for understanding business than business gave them for understanding their faith. They were not convinced that centralization, accountability and statistics would improve their faithfulness. Likewise, educators in colleges and universities and in libraries may well ask themselves whether the corporate business model gives them a better paradigm for understanding education than the tools of intellectual inquiry, critical thinking and multi-disciplinary analysis give them to understand and to critique business and industry. After all, economics is only one discipline in the academy. Why should education be understood only in terms of economic institutions and relationships?

Some years ago, I had a dean who said that the academy is the only place where the corporate mission of the institution is to encourage people to sit and stare at difficult and complex problems until they see that they are really even more difficult and complex than they appear at first. It is the only place with a mission to encourage people to sit and talk for hours without any concern about whether the outcome will be useful or productive. Is community, let alone intellectual community, really just a kind of corporation? When we have said that our students are our customers (they are also our products!), have we said everything that we want or need to say about what it means to be a student, a teacher or a librarian who has students? I hope not! ■

Damon D. Hickey is director of libraries at the College of Wooster, Ohio, and the author of *Sojourners No More: The Quakers in the New South, 1865-1920*. email: <dhhickey@acs.wooster.edu>.

*"Some say
that higher
education is a
business now
and that we
must treat it
as such."*



JENNA CALK

Gift of Oregon History Materials Received by Library

A COLLECTION OF MORE THAN 1400 BOOKS, pamphlets and journals on Oregon and Pacific Northwest history have been donated to the Mark O. Hatfield Library by Nancy B. Hunt of Salem. Mrs. Hunt's late husband, Kenneth J. Hunt (1916-1979), a parole officer with the Oregon State Corrections Division, began collecting in this area before his graduation from Willamette University in 1942.

"Oregon history was my husband's passion," Mrs. Hunt, a pianist-teacher, notes. And, indeed, this was a passion that Kenneth Hunt pursued avidly, remaining an active collector throughout his life. Hunt came to know many of the authors personally and a considerable portion of the books bear authors' inscriptions that attest to his dedication.

The materials included in the Hunts' collection are a welcome addition to the Hatfield Library, reinforcing retrospective coverage in this important field. The collection complements the Mark O. Hatfield Archives, the Pacific Northwest concentration of Willamette's new art museum, and an increasing curricular emphasis upon Oregon and Pacific Northwest history.

Included in the collection are copies of *The New Penelope*, *Atlantis Arisen* and *The Early Indian Wars of Oregon* by Frances Fuller Victor (1826-1902); Charles Henry Carey's *A General History of Oregon Prior to 1861*; Robert C. Clark's *History of the Willamette Valley*; and C. H. Mattoon's *Baptist Annals of Oregon, 1844-1910*, in two volumes.

All of these volumes have been preserved with great care, and many are in mint condition. An important focus for the Hunts, the Oregon history volumes were carefully shelved on bookcases throughout their home. Mrs. Hunt points out that "books, reading and research have always been an integral part of our lives." ■

High Quality Video Projection Available

THE MARK O. HATFIELD LIBRARY'S CLASSROOM is now equipped with a Cinevision projector and surround sound system. Configured for use with computers in the classroom, the projector is available for library instruction and other instructional sessions that require projecting a computer screen. With the addition of surround sound, the system offers high quality video projection and compliments the library's extensive film collection. The room is an ideal place for groups of up to 30 students to view films. Faculty are invited to schedule this room for occasional class use. Reservations, accepted between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. weekdays, may be made five days in advance of use. Call the library office for further details 370-6512. ■

FOL Book Sale



JENNA CALK



JENNA CALK

Scenes from the Friends of the Library book sale, February 1998.

MOVEABLE TYPE

Moveable Type is published by the Mark O. Hatfield Library, Willamette University, 900 State Street, Salem, Oregon 97301. Editor: Larry R. Oberg, University Librarian; Associate Editor: Joni R. Roberts, Associate University Librarian for Public Services and Collection Development; Assistant Editor: Judi Chien, Acquisitions Manager; Graphic Designer: Christine Harris, News & Publications. Contributors to *Briefly Noted* include Ford Schmidt, Michael Spalti and Joni Roberts. The text of *Moveable Type* is archived on the Hatfield Library's WebStation at <http://library.willamette.edu/home/publications/movtyp/>

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ing is emerging, in which most of the essential characteristics of the print literary system are preserved, including protections for intellectual property.

CHANGING ROLES

Given this history, it seems likely that the primary players in the literary system — authors, publishers and libraries — will continue to play important although changing roles. But what of the products of the system? It is often noted that new information technologies alter the nature of writing, making it more like transient oral communication and less like the fixed and linear printed manuscript. Some, like J. Hills Miller, have argued that this will change fundamentally the “conditions and results of scholarship,” while others argue that the new technologies will free information from the constraints of print. Perhaps this will be so. At present, however, libraries and universities cannot assume that books will soon (or ever) disappear, or that the need for permanence and closure that are embodied prominently in book publishing will vanish in the age of digital reproduction.

ANYTIME, ANYWHERE?

Change will happen, of course, despite our inability to foresee it. Here, at the Mark O. Hatfield Library, we have begun to subscribe to digital publications in greater numbers than we could have predicted even two years ago. Some of these new publications are purchased on CD-ROM and added to the library collection, while in other cases we purchase annual subscriptions that allow users to retrieve documents from a publisher's web server. From any computer on the campus network one can now access

full-text databases, bibliographic databases, the contents of electronic journals, *Britannica Online* and the library catalog at any time of the day or night.

This “anytime, anywhere” access to information is a highly touted advantage of digital publication. For libraries that serve off-campus users, large institutions or multiple campuses, the advantages of such remote access are immediate and obvious because the ability of students and researchers to use the library is enhanced dramatically when much of their research can be done online. At institutions like Willamette, however, the advantages of remote access are not as apparent, although we presume them to be potentially significant.

THE LIBRARY AS PLACE

Yet, what of the library as a place? At Willamette, at least, it appears that the library is used no less frequently when resources become available online. Statistics from the Fall Semester of 1997 demonstrate that significant numbers of faculty and students accessed electronic resources from outside the library. Yet these statistics also show that the bulk of the use of these same resources originated from *within* the library, primarily from our nine public InfoStations.

If, as these numbers suggest, the value of the library as a place for research and study has not diminished with the advent of networked publishing — at least not yet — what does this say about the value of “anytime, anywhere” access? Is the virtual library (or the virtual university) the wave of the future? Certainly, when compared with such dull descriptors as “place-bound,” the ideal of “anywhere, anytime” sounds a lot like progress. Yet for an institution such as a library or a university to be “place-bound” is no more limiting than it is for the text of a novel or scholarly monograph to be printed on paper and bound between the covers of a book. To be “bound,” in this sense, is to work within a space that has qualities that are not only valuable but also, perhaps, non-transferable.

TAKING A CUE FROM OURSELVES

For me, this leads to a conclusion that echoes a more general point made by Damon Hickey elsewhere in this issue. As we at liberal arts colleges work to make digital resources a part of the curriculum, we need to avoid taking our cue exclusively from the telecommunications industry and from institutions of higher education that are unlike our own. For college librarians, this means thinking a great deal about how to integrate technologies into the current space and use patterns of the library. While we must not underestimate the opportunities presented by digital publishing, the World Wide Web and the new media, most of the work of quality education will continue to involve people, programs and places that are a continuation of what works best today. ■

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The Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Book Awards:

Bringing a Literature Out of the Closet

By Faye A. Chadwell

The American Library Association's Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Book Award is the oldest award of its kind, having been established in 1971 by members of the library profession to honor outstanding works by or about lesbians, gay men and bisexuals. The 1997-98 GLB Book Award Committee, which I presently chair, has 14 members, seven men and seven women. This year's committee is composed of five members from public libraries, five from academic libraries, two from special libraries, one library science professor, and one member still seeking her first permanent position within the profession. In addition to planning an annual awards breakfast and publicizing the book award itself, the committee's most important purpose is scouring the world of lesbian/gay publishing in order to make two awards: one for the best English-language literary work (fiction, poetry, drama) and one for the best nonfiction book in English.

The work of any book awards committee is helpful to librarians because of the many factors that complicate the selection and, ultimately, the acquisition of titles for our collections. One significant factor, to which almost anyone on a tight budget can relate, is the ratio of what one would like to buy versus the funds one has available to spend. There just never seems to be enough funding to make libraries all things to all people.

By honoring these outstanding books, the Book Award Committee provides a valuable book selection tool for the library community, where there has been an historical tendency to ignore or dismiss books with gay, lesbian and bisexual content. Librarians have sometimes been reluctant to acquire these books for their collections or have chosen to restrict access to them. And even when librarians themselves were not dismissing lesbian/gay titles, genuinely concerned or thoroughly disgusted patrons were demanding that we refrain from purchasing "objectionable" titles, shelve "distasteful" works where children could not view them, or remove the offending volumes from our collections.

This past is not necessarily past. In our own state, according to statistics compiled by the Oregon Intellectual Freedom Clearinghouse, titles with gay, lesbian and bisexual content were often the target of would-be censors during the last five years, most notably during 1992-93. Because of the recent treatment of lesbian/gay titles, and a legitimate concern over possible reaction in the future, the work of the Book Award Committee becomes even more important. Today, it provides librarians with a powerful collection development tool and a rationale for collecting gay, lesbian and bisexual books.

If you were to interview members of the first Book Award Committee, they

would certainly comment on the scarcity of titles available for consideration at the time the first award was given to Isabel Miller for her classic lesbian novel, *Patience and Sarah*. Because of the burgeoning growth in glb publishing in the 1990s, today's committee members review several hundred titles annually, a wide range of works published by small presses and mainstream publishing houses alike. It has become increasingly hard for librarians and patrons to ignore this mass of publishing, just as it is hard to disregard literature that a group of librarians has chosen to honor for more than 25 years.

For critics of glb literature, like Karen Gounaud of the Family Friendly Library Association, the fact that librarians annually honor glb books may never provide convincing evidence that lesbian/gay titles belong in libraries. These critics believe that books with gay, lesbian or bisexual content must inherently lack literary merit, thereby failing to acknowledge that this literature has garnered significant recognition through both gay and non-gay literary awards. Our committee's past winners and nominees

include, for example, Paul Monette (National Book Award winner), Dorothy Allison (National Book Award finalist), Reynolds Price (National Book Critics Award) and Minnie Bruce Pratt (Academy of American Poets Lamont Poetry Selection).

As with any controversial literature, librarians need to remember that to deny a literature's existence, or simply not to select representative titles, is to ignore a part of our human heritage. For me and many of my fellow committee members, the ramifications of denying gay literature a place in our libraries go beyond the destruction of a literary, cultural and historical heritage. Given the high rate of suicide among gay youth, the absence or loss of affirmative role models that a young person might find between the pages of, say, *Uncommon Heroes*, or, *Am I Blue?* can mean the difference between life and death.

I am proud of my involvement with the ALA Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Book Award Committee and proud of its contribution to the larger goals of the library profession. One of these goals relates directly to Article II of the Library Bill of Rights: the identification and provision of "materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues." The committee's work of analyzing and honoring gay and lesbian literature greatly assists librarians in choosing the best titles for their collections, whether those librarians are at small college libraries, rural public libraries or large research libraries. ■

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Representative titles from the burgeoning field of gay studies.

JENNA CALK



Delta of Oregon:

Willamette University Awarded Phi Beta Kappa Chapter

By George S. McCowen

Willamette University was awarded a Phi Beta Kappa chapter at the Thirty-eighth Triennial Council of the Phi Beta Kappa Society held in Chicago, September 26-28, 1997. Willamette, one of seven liberal arts institutions to receive this honor, was chosen from 47 applicants. The Willamette chapter, Delta of Oregon, joins some 250 chapters throughout the country. Phi Beta Kappa will provide a national recognition for the academic achievements of outstanding Willamette students who have been educated in the liberal arts tradition.

The Mark O. Hatfield Library and its staff played a significant role in obtaining the charter for Delta of Oregon. Library facilities and services, updated technology, sufficient expenditures for books and the size of the collection are among the concerns that Phi Beta Kappa has in awarding charters to qualified institutions. Phi Beta Kappa members Larry Oberg and Judith Chien, together with other library staff and Phi Beta Kappa members, were instrumental in drawing up an impressive report on the Hatfield Library, which was a part of an extensive study of the University submitted to the Phi Beta Kappa Society prior to the review of the visitation committee in February 1996.

The installation of the Chapter was held on Founders' Day, February 1, 1998, in Cone Chapel at 5 p.m. Six elected foundation members were inducted into Phi Beta Kappa at that time: Wallace Carson Jr. L'62, chief justice, Oregon Supreme Court, and Willamette University trustee; Maribeth Collins, president, The Collins Foundation, and WU trustee; Lawrence Cress, dean of the College of Liberal Arts, WU; Jerry E. Hudson,

president emeritus, WU, and executive vice president and director, The Collins Foundation; Dorothy P. Garlinghouse '30 H'81, retired; and Loren Winterscheid '48, professor emeritus of surgery, University of Washington, and WU trustee. They joined the charter members currently on the faculty and staff in formally receiving the charter of Delta of Oregon from Allison Blakely, professor of history at Howard University. Dr. Blakely, representing the Phi Beta Kappa Society, had earlier effectively supported Willamette's application before the assembled delegates at the Triennial Council in Chicago. On that occasion he remarked that it would be difficult to find a liberal arts university more suited for a Phi Beta Kappa chapter than Willamette.

Professor Blakely gave an enlightening address on "The Meaning of Phi Beta Kappa," at a banquet for invited guests following the installation ceremony. He based his remarks on Ralph Waldo Emerson's "The American Scholar," a famous Phi Beta Kappa lecture delivered at Harvard in 1837. Although he admitted that Emerson's 19th-century perspective may seem optimistic to us, Blakely has discovered that there are

fundamental truths that he considers as relevant for our times as for Emerson's "What history tells me," Blakely said, is that much of what is wrong with the world ... is not the result of a lack of knowledge, but rather a lack of will to take appropriate actions. The challenge to us is to look to nature; look to the legacy of recorded human knowledge that can be found in books; look within our own souls; and then act on the understanding we gain."

Students will be selected from the classes of 1998 and 1999 as the first Willamette University undergraduate members of Phi Beta Kappa. An announcement of the date of this ceremony will be forthcoming later in the Spring Semester.

The current officers of Delta of Oregon are Professor George McCowen, president; Professor Norman Hudak, vice-president; Professor Grant Thorsett, secretary-treasurer and Professor Emerita Virginia Bothun, historian. Any questions regarding the organization and its activities may be directed to any one of the officers. ■

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