

LINKS TO LAKES

The Newsletter of the Arthur Lakes Library

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Colorado School of Mines

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From the Director

by Joanne Lerud

EXCITEMENT. Perhaps excitement is not a word you usually associate with libraries. This semester at the Arthur Lakes Library you will find excitement. The Library Local Area Network (LAN) is being built as you read this. There are ladders, cable and tools everywhere you look, and noise from drilling through concrete floors. The LAN will allow the Library to improve your access to information whether it be CD-ROMs, Internet jewels, or our own CARL. Come and check it out (no pun intended).

Once you find information, you tend to want to have the document in your hand. Document Delivery is also benefiting from new technology. The ARIEL system is providing faster turn-around for interlibrary loans. SAVEIT software is making the business side of document delivery more efficient. Also, plans for collection development, technology, disaster and preservation have been written and re-written. Our knowledge and skills have grown as those plans unfolded. The Library Visiting Committee was with us in November. The reports from that group have been very beneficial to our strategic planning and certainly cause us to strive for farther horizons.

Come and participate in our excitement-- and excuse our dust!



Throwing Books Away

by Janice Christopher

Do you still use computers with vacuum tubes? Is your lab noisy with machines powered by steam and bright with the light of thousands of flickering gas lamps? Of course not, you say; we disposed of those outmoded instruments years ago, in favor of the UNIX workstation and electric current, and we're better scientists for it. In a similar fashion, librarians sometimes have to dispose of outmoded instruments to be more effective at their jobs.

Arthur Lakes Library staff spent five months recently doing just that, by **weeding** (also known as **deselecting**) in the fifth- and fourth- level book collections. In other

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Throwing Books Away, cont.

words, we removed from the shelves large numbers of out-of-date, superseded, and just plain irrelevant materials. In the process, we eliminated such gems as Opportunity for Investigation in Natural History by High-School Teachers, Chinese Elements in Tagalog, and Twenty-Eight Years of Sterilization in California.

Now, in the right library, such items have tremendous value for historical research, if nothing else-- we did discover quite a few titles that could be euphemistically referred to as "fascinating historical documents." However, these materials do little to advance the cause of scholarship here at Mines. We as librarians can serve the CSM community more effectively by getting rid of materials that contain misleading or outdated information-- dead weight, in other words. This process is known as "keeping the collection current."

Of course, we didn't remove just those books about eugenics or the right path to take to appease Nazi Germany. We also weeded books from the science shelves: typically unused duplicate copies (how many copies of a highly specialized oceanography textbook do we need, anyway?-- we had six, five of which had never been checked out) and some superseded information. Through the process of weeding we hope to reduce some of the information that our patrons must struggle through by eliminating materials that have been superseded. Think about your students-- do you really want them using a twenty-year-old materials textbook as if it had been published yesterday? And a 1935 book titled Chromatography Today will probably create more problems than it solves, especially (we've all done this) if a user checks it out under the assumption that "today" is a time more recent than 1935.

Again, no one would deny the importance of many of these materials to serious historical research in any field, from history to high-energy physics. But since Mines as an institution focuses on training engineers and scientists, and in producing world-class research-- not in training historians of science or human history-- we find it advisable to make the focus of our collection more in keeping with the focus of the school. [Many of the weeded books have been retained for the annual book sale.]



Info-Glut on the Internet?

by Lisa Dunn

The Internet is a wonderful environment for information. You can find almost any sort of information you can imagine- if you have the time. There is so much on the Internet that it has become difficult to identify useful resources. Many people cope by using items' exact addresses supplied by friends or peers. But what if you know your information needs but don't know what resources can meet them? You can "explore" by browsing through menus and randomly selecting interesting-looking items. This is the equivalent to browsing through the library's book shelves-- you can find useful information but it's very time-consuming. Search software for the Internet is available but it can only be as good as the data it handles. All too often the search results include irrelevant hits, from bread recipes to college course catalogs. Instead of helping you, the Internet has dumped a massive amount of useless or marginally useful data in your lap, burying any relevant information you might have retrieved. Even if you identify a relevant item, it may be outdated or require specialized hardware and software.

That's part of the Internet environment. Compared to regular publishing channels, the Internet is much more accessible to people as a means of distributing information and data, and it shows. On the up side, it is possible to distribute your information as soon as you post it, and it's immediately retrievable by users. You can include graphics or software as easily as text. Material that would be a commercial risk for

traditional publishing can be posted with no financial risk to the author and targeted to an extremely specialized audience. On the down side, however, the relative ease of posting information, the wide potential audience and the general lack of publishing guidelines, editing or review contribute to a glut of undifferentiated data, most of which is highly retrievable but irrelevant to the specific and immediate needs of the user. Until search software catches up, Internet users must wade through it as best they can. Successful Internet publishers should make sure their information reaches people in a usable way. If you want to contribute to the Internet, what do you do to help your overloaded audience?

Next Issue: Publishing Guidelines for the Internet?



The Bourbaki Gambit. Djerassi, Carl. Athens GA: Univ. of Georgia. 1994. J. Christopher, reviewer.

History, Ambition, and Revenge: The Stuff of Great Literature and Great Entertainment. This smart, funny novel explores three major issues in contemporary science: the greying of (and subsequent forced retirement of mature scientists from) academic and research facilities; the collaborative nature of scientific enterprise; and the desire for individual recognition that drives many scientists. Max Weiss, a successful Princeton chemistry professor turned "Senior Research Biochemist without stipend," decides that the best revenge on the academic establishment that believes him beyond productive science would be to continue to publish anonymously, in collaboration with other biologists in the same position. His plan works until the group produces Nobel-quality research. Conflict then erupts over who should be able to take the credit: the pseudonymous author or the individual members of the group. Djerassi, a Stanford chemist, is a lively and very literary writer who uses his writing to explain scientific advances and examine the culture of science as well as entertain. He succeeds admirably on all levels with this novel, which is by turns a critique of attitudes toward older scientists, an exploration of scientific collaboration, an examination of ambition and revenge, and a gentle love story.

Djerassi asks in the preface, "How many scientists would be satisfied with making a sensational discovery and then launching it into the world unattached to their own balloon?" Readers can find this book in the Baker & Taylor popular fiction collection at the library.



Each of the academic departments has a liaison to the Library. Requests for books and suggestions about the journal collection can be referred to the departmental liaison as well as to library staff. Liaisons are informed of new publications of interest to their department or issues that affect our scientific and technical materials by the library faculty, who are responsible for specific subject areas in the Library. The liaisons, along with the library faculty, form the Library Advisory Committee. For a list of departmental liaisons, contact the Library Office at x3690 or check the Library's gopher menu on the campus network.



The Library has received a grant from Information Handling Services (IHS) for a one year subscription to the CD-ROM indexes of three major databases:

Worldwide Industry Standards Index- Provides over 137,000 US and international standards from approximately 400 standards organizations.

Book Review

Liaisons to the Library

IHS Grant for Standards Information

IHS Grant for Standards Information, cont.

Vendor Master Directory Index- Complete product descriptions from over 16,000 US and UK vendors detailing manufacturers, distributors and contact numbers.

DODISS Plus Outlines Index- Contains detailed information on 80,000 active and 190,000 canceled or superseded US military or federal specifications, standards, drawings and related documents.

IHS is the world's largest provider of engineering-related data to industry, government and academia. The grant was offered to select schools across the nation to acquaint future engineers with the scope of information systems available through IHS. Contact **Reference** at **x3694** for more information.



Library Notes

Rosalia (Buddie) Rooney retired as Maps/Government Publications Librarian in November, after 5 years in that position. She started her career at Mines as the Natural Gas Supply Information Center librarian. For the past 2 years Buddie has also been Head of Circulation at the Library. We wish her good luck on her activities in Montana.

FirstSearch, an electronic information system, is now available to CSM faculty and students. It offers research flexibility with access to many online subject-specific databases. Plus, it is linked to the world's largest online catalog, WorldCat (OCLC's online union catalog), with more than 27 million records from 15,000 libraries worldwide. Users can conduct in-depth subject searching, compile bibliographies and locate hard-to-find materials without any computer training. We're excited about opening up the world of online information to library users- it's an excellent way to enhance learning and bolster the research process. We'd like to encourage you to try FirstSearch and let us know what you think. FirstSearch is also accessible via the Internet. For details, contact **Reference** at **x3694**.

The Visiting Committee for the Library returned in November to evaluate library collections, staff and services, and to note progress made since their last visit in 1992. Their past recommendations have helped expand information services and resources to the campus. For information on the Visiting Committee and its role in our Library's operations, contact the **Library Office** at **x3690**.



Library Directory

Director.....	x3690
Circulation.....	x3698
Document Delivery/ILL.....	x3699
Document Delivery/Photocopy.....	x3899
Reference.....	x3694
Government Publications.....	x3695
Maps.....	x3697
Acquisitions.....	x3691
Cataloging.....	x3692
NGSIC.....	x3707

Library Hours (School Term)

Monday-Thursday.....	7:30 AM to 12 Midnight
Friday.....	7:30 AM to 6:00 PM
Saturday.....	9:00 AM to 5:00 PM
Sunday.....	3:00 PM to 12 Midnight