

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

In addition to familiar electronic services in libraries such as the Library catalog (CARL), online databases (now numbering in the hundreds) and World Wide Web access, the Arthur Lakes Library offers a wide variety of additional electronic services and e-mail reference service. The end-user is much more directly involved in information research. The Arthur Lakes Library provides updates on the constant changes occurring in the electronic information arena on its web page [<http://www.mines.edu/academic/library/>], this newsletter, handouts available in the Library, and through the liaison/representative system between the Library and the academic Department/Division. The Reference staff is pleased to answer questions and/or provide training as well.

Other changes have also occurred over the summer. Christopher Hooper-Lane has joined the Reference staff, allowing not only greater breadth of subject expertise for the Reference staff but also increased reference hours for evenings and weekends. Please note the new carpeting on the main floor of the Library. There has also been a bit of furniture arranging in the Browsing area and Boettcher Room.

The Library is helping CSU deal with some of its information needs from the devastation of the flood in July. CSU has purchased a second ARIEL workstation so delivery of journal articles could be expedited without degradation of service for our own clientele. The Library at CSU was a resource for the whole state and we are saddened by the loss (hopefully temporary) of that collection.



Can We Change our Fragmented Minds? Or How I Learned to Start Worrying and Stop Loving the Net

by Christopher Hooper-Lane

In a recent *New Scientist* essay [1/20/96] warning of the allure of the Internet, Donald Mitchie conjectures that "the proportion of the population who can read to the end of normal sentences may be in rapid decline." Whether or not his comment is true remains to be seen, but it does illustrate the human mind's tendency to prefer information in bite-sized packages. Could this tendency be the result of human laziness, declining educational standards, or television's pernicious influence? While these explanations might play a role, a less cynical answer may be found in our genes.

cont. on next page

Can We Change Our Fragmented Minds, *cont.*

Noted neurobiologist Robert Ornstein and biologist Paul Ehrlich propose in *New World, New Mind* [1989: Doubleday] that the genetic foundation of our mental processes developed during a time (a very long time!) when the human population was limited by predators. In order for us to survive in this prehistoric setting, our nervous system evolved to focus most of our attention on immediate and palpable physical danger. Our brains developed in a way to greatly limit environmental background noise by eliminating most of the sensory information we take in, selecting only extracts or fragments (or blurbs, if you will) of the outside world. (In a recent analysis of our nervous system, neurobiologists concluded that we are conscious of only one *trillionth* of the outside events with which we come into contact.) Consequently, we sense only the immediate, forefront, and dramatic, but ignore the mundane, constant, and incremental. Humans walking through the savanna land of Africa, home to many feline predators, need to perceive a lion's footfall or a cracking branch over a shift in the sound of the wind.

We are no longer living in a prehistoric environment of immediate physical threats, and our population is no longer limited by predation (viruses and bacteria excepted); we now adapt our surroundings to suit our needs. However, our method of mental filtering hasn't changed. In fact, this phenomenon may now be manifesting itself in a new light in this world of information overload. Although the rise and popularity of "sound bite" publications and news sources, such as *USA Today* and *CNN's Headline News*, may be a sign of a time-pressed or indolent population, another explanation may be that human mental hardware *compels* us to favor consuming information in bite-sized packages. The blurb is natural, the graduate dissertation is not.

A potent illustration of our fondness for "bites" can be seen in the stunning success of the Internet's World Wide Web. In the case of the Web, text-based information has finally evolved into a format consistent with our mental machinery. The inherent structure of the Web provides us with affective (though often not effective) packets of information -- browsable screens accentuated by vivid colors, audio, and animation -- where context and authority, often considered unimportant or irrelevant, are either missing or consigned to backpage links. The cornerstone of the Web, the hypertext link, permits us to jump effortlessly between pages, divorcing us even further from context and authority, a drawback largely ignored in the Internet hype.

Mitchie posits that our society may be on the verge of losing the ability to read full sentences. A more pressing concern may be whether or not the sentence itself is becoming obsolete. Are all those words necessary? A sentence is not just a grammatical device: it provides a framework for words by placing them in context. String a few words together and you get a sentence. String a few sentences together and you get an idea. String a few ideas together and you get an understanding. Eliminate the sentence? Preclude an understanding? Maybe we should change our minds.



Rocky Flats Donates Their Technical Library to CSM

In early October, the Library received more than 1,200 boxes of books and journals from the technical library at the Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site. This collection was a working library which supported activities at Rocky Flats during the Cold War. It is especially strong in the areas of metallurgy, chemistry, physics, nuclear engineering and environmental engineering. Books from the collection which CSM does not currently own will be added to our Library. Duplicates will be sold at the annual book sale in February. Many of the journal titles which CSM already owns will be sent to Colorado State University which suffered a drastic flood last summer, destroying most of their bound journal collection. The Rocky Flats donation is a peace dividend resulting from the end of the Cold War which will greatly enhance our Library's collection as well as aid a neighboring institution of higher education in need.



Patents and Trademark Information: The Library now has CD-ROMs to help you search for patent and trademark information. **CD-ROM Patent BIB** [C 21.31/2:] allows you to search for patents (1969-present) by:

- keyword(s) from the title
- patent number
- state or country where the patent was issued
- assignee name

Once you identify the patent you can display basic information and an abstract. (The CSM Library doesn't collect full patents; Denver Public Library is the closest patent depository.) **Patent CLASS** [C 21.31/3:] has full-text versions of patent search tools such as *Index of U.S. Patent Classification*, *Patentee-Assignee Index*, and *Manual of Patent Examining Procedure*.

Trademarks PENDING [C 21.31/8] and **Trademarks REGISTERED** [C 21.31/7:] are searchable by:

- registration and serial numbers
- word marks
- owner name

Trademark ASSIST [C 21.31/10:] has the full text of trademark searching tools. These CD-ROMs and others on patents and trademarks are in the CD-ROM cabinet in the Government Publications Reference Room (Level 1) and can be used on the workstations Sparky and Whitehot.

The U.S. Bureau of Mines ceased to be an agency in January 1996. However, other agencies have taken over some of the Bureau's work, so finding current information is possible. The U.S. Geological Survey now publishes many of the titles frequently used at this Library (*Minerals Yearbook*, *Mineral Industry Surveys*, *Mineral Commodity Summaries*). The Library still receives these publications in paper format, but they are also available on the USGS Mineral Resources Program website <http://minerals.er.usgs.gov/minerals>. Frequently the information on this website is more current than that in our print collection. However, at present only recent information is available on the website, so if you need older information we have the print resources available. For more information on these resources, contact Lisa Stomberg (x3695, lstomber@mines.edu).



Into Thin Air: A Personal Account of the Mount Everest Disaster. Jon Krakauer. NY: Villiard. 1997. Lisa Stomberg, reviewer.

As a member of one of the expeditions attempting to reach the Mount Everest summit in the spring of 1996, Krakauer gives a riveting account of the disaster that befell many teams, including his own, during one of the most deadly years in Everest expedition history. As a journalist for the magazine *Outside*, Krakauer received an invitation to participate and write about a guided ascent of Mount Everest. Since reaching the top of Everest had been one of Krakauer's dreams, he accepted, having the knowledge of all of the dangers associated with the climb. His writing style is very engaging as he describes other members of the teams and the decisions, good and bad, made by those individuals. As the expedition teams climbed closer to the summit of 29,028 feet, their decisions were clouded by the lack of oxygen even though the majority of the climbers used supplemental oxygen. Unfortunately, these decisions led to many climbers, including Everest guides, losing their lives. Krakauer supplied an article for *Outside* soon after the disaster, but wrote this book after he had many months to reflect about the events and his own actions. Therefore, in addition to telling the story of the 1996 Everest disaster, Krakauer criticizes some key decisions made on the mountain, including his own, and takes a stand on how and if future Everest ascents should be made.



Electronic Government Information at Your Fingertips:

Patents and Trademark Information

Current U.S. Bureau of Mines Information

Book Review

New Publications from the Library

Our two newest publications are:

List of Electronic Databases. This guide lists the hundreds of electronic indexes and databases made available by the Library. It is organized by broad subject and includes access information (via CARL, WWW, etc.) for your convenience. It also indicates access restrictions where applicable (accessible in the Library; on the campus network; requiring library ID, etc.). Pick up this List at the Library, or contact Christopher Hooper-Lane (x3689, chooperl@mines.edu).

How to Find and Use Information: A Basic Guide. This booklet describes the basics of identifying, locating and evaluating information resources, and how to navigate in the Arthur Lakes Library. It contains (almost) everything you need to know to start your library research. Copies are available in the Library, or contact Lisa Dunn (x3687, ldunn@mines.edu) for multiple orders for your classes.



CARL: Important Notice!

The Library is changing its CARL access late this semester, so you will see a new look to our public CARL workstations thanks to the Student Technology Fee Program. We will be using PCs and graphical user interfaces to provide students and faculty with information about our collections, access to databases and a gateway to the Internet for information research purposes. **NOTICE: The electronic address for CARL (telnet) will change to pac.coalliance.org as of Sunday 12 noon, Nov. 9. If you have trouble connecting to CARL from your computer lab or office, please call us.**



Library Notes

Christopher Hooper-Lane is our newest reference librarian. He received his MA in Library Science from University of Michigan and his background is in biochemistry and education. Chris is the library liaison for Chemistry and Geochemistry, and Chemical Engineering and Petroleum Refining.

Jennifer Sotello was hired as a Circulation Library Technician I this summer. Her experience includes work in the Imaging Dept. of the Boulder Community Hospital.

Linda Lewis is our new Government Publications/Maps Library Technician II. She has a BA in geography.

The Reference Desk is now open during the academic year until 8:00pm on Tuesdays-Thursdays, and 9:00am to 5:00pm on Saturdays, in addition to regular weekday business hours.



Library Directory

Director.....	x3690
Circulation.....	x3698
Info. Delivery Services/ILL.....	x3699
Info. Delivery Services/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