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Friends Inaugural Fall Festivities

by Margaret Shuler

The Friends of the Virginia Tech Libraries recently honored two special patrons, Elden E. "Josh" Billings and R. C. "Bob" Dorey, Jr., at its Friends Fall Festivities at the Donaldson Brown Hotel and Conference Center. The inaugural festivities in September featured a reception, recognition ceremony, and brunch with featured speaker Dr. James I. "Bud" Robertson, Jr. Representative material from the Billings Civil War collection and N.C. Wyeth's painting "Pennsylvania Barn" were on display for guests.

Dr. Charles Steger, vice president for Development and University Relations, officially expressed gratitude to Dorey for the magnificent Wyeth painting, and Robertson thanked his longtime friend Billings for "the largest literary gift ever made to the University Libraries." Dr. Paul Torgersen, university president, presented Billings with the *Ut Prosim* Award on behalf of the university.

"Bud" Robertson, Jr., Alumni Distinguished Professor, and Lon Savage, author and former assistant to the president at Virginia Tech, have been elected chair and co-chair, respectively, of the Friends of the Virginia Tech Libraries, succeeding co-chairs Frances M.H. Russell and Louisa G. Dekker. In his address to the group, Robertson said that the Friends intend "to build support for what we think is the heart of the University." The Friends, formed by a committee of faculty, community, and alumni leaders and spearheaded by Stephen Zietz, head of the special collections department, serves as an advocacy group for the University Libraries. Their mission is to increase public awareness of the array of resources and services available, to expand access to these programs, and to enhance private philanthropy.

FirstSearch Service Now Available

The University Libraries acquired a new database service called FirstSearch in June of 1994. This service is available to all Virginia Tech faculty, staff, and students who can connect with the University Libraries' Gopher server (vatech.lib.vt.edu, port 70). In addition, anyone visiting Newman Library or the Northern Virginia Graduate Center Library can gain access.

The Gopher server provides information about Virginia Tech library services as well as Internet connections to VTLS and other online public access catalogs (i.e., electronic card catalogs), other gopher servers within the state and around the world, and remote databases like FirstSearch.

Once a user has reached the Libraries' Gopher, a connection is made to a computer in Ohio where the FirstSearch service is located. There are over 40 databases available for searching. Most of the databases are indexes to articles in journals, although there are other types as well. WorldCat, for example, is an on-line union catalog of several thousand libraries of all sizes, from large organizations like Harvard University and the Library of Congress to smaller ones like Emory & Henry College and the Grand Forks, North Dakota Public Library.

Many different fields are covered in these databases. Some are standard library sources that index popular journals such as *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature*, *Humanities Index*, *General Science Index*, and *Social Sciences Index*. Others target academic and research journals; e.g., MEDLINE (medicine), AGRICOLA (agriculture), INSPEC (physics, electronics, and computing), PsycFIRST (behavioral sciences), and Arts & Humanities Search.

Nearly all of the databases are bibliographic, meaning one retrieves descriptions of books and journal articles rather than the actual documents themselves. In many of the databases, users will find holdings information as part of the record, so they can check for the VPI symbol indicating that it is owned by the University Libraries. For items not owned by the library, one can use the order option feature of FirstSearch (available on most databases). Depending on the database, one or more choices will display on the screen. Library patrons can have documents sent directly to them via mail or FAX for a fee using a credit card, or they can have the request routed to the Library's interlibrary loan service. The Library staff will process the request and notify patrons when the item has been received. There is no charge to students, staff, or faculty for using the interlibrary loan service. Readers who have questions about FirstSearch may contact Dave Beagle (phone 703-231-9231; E-Mail: beagle@vt.edu).

by Dave Beagle



New Media Center

by Virginia Chapman

Virginia Tech's Newman Library now serves as the home of the New Media Center, a facility designed to encourage and foster the development of new media. Part of a national collaborative partnership composed of 22 academic institutions and 15 corporate members, the Center contains both hardware and software which allow users to create their own innovative multimedia programs. Truly embodying the collaborative spirit, the Center is the resulting effort of the University Libraries and Educational Technologies and is accordingly staffed by both Newman and Educational Technologies personnel.

Housed on Newman's second floor, the Center is available to everyone, including Virginia Tech affiliates, town citizens and businesses, and visitors. The facilities include a large 21 seat

classroom equipped with PowerMacintosh computers, machines which have audiovisual features and are all connected to the Internet, the world's electronic information highway. The Development Lab currently has 4 powerful stations which allow the user to capture and manipulate video segments, to create and animate graphics, and to capture and manipulate sound.

Since its opening August 22, the Center has served a variety of patrons. Two hundred seventy-four Tech faculty members attended 17 workshops focusing on specific software applications. Twenty-six single session classes, which included local elementary and junior high classes as well as other special interest groups, were held during September and October. In addition to hosting classes, the Center for New Media will provide assistance to selected projects based upon the nature and scope of the project and available resources. Also, for those already accustomed to navigating the electronic highways, the Center maintains both a World Wide Web home page (<http://www.nmc.vt.edu>) as well as a Gopher site. Both of these electronic sites are designed to disseminate current information about new media technologies. The World Wide Web home page provides direct links to other New Media Center participants, including the national headquarters in San Francisco.

Everyone is encouraged to come by and learn about the potential of developing multimedia programs. Current hours are 10AM- 9PM, Mon-Fri. (For further information contact John Lewis, Ed Schwartz or Virginia Chapman at 231-4826. The electronic mailing address is "newmedia@vt.edu".)



Virginia Tech librarians assist Albanian restructuring

by Leslie O'Brien

Three librarians from the University Libraries were chosen to participate in an important grant for restructuring the economy of Albania. Linda Richardson, co-head of the reference department, Marilyn Norstedt, co-head of technical services, and Charles Litchfield, co-head of library automation, are consultants to the Agricultural University of Tirana Library, Albania. They are providing expertise in the areas of collection development, automation, and technical services to improve the Agricultural University's library so that it can better support the university's curriculum.

A country of 3.3 million people nestled on the Adriatic Sea between Greece and provinces of the former Yugoslavia, Albania had been dosed off to foreigners until 1989. It then underwent sweeping changes to its one-party state system during the early 1990s. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) awarded \$13.9 million in assistance to reform Albania's agricultural sector to a consortium of businesses and research centers. Virginia Tech, which helped lead the effort to obtain the grant, will receive \$2.5 million for its part in the project. The project, Support for Agricultural Restructuring in Albania (or SARA), will draw upon the knowledge and expertise of many Virginia Tech faculty, staff, and graduate students, to develop teaching curricula, laboratories, and technical skills at the Agricultural University of Tirana. A key component of the project is the development of an agricultural library to serve the faculty and students of the university. The librarians' visit served to establish the initial contact between participants in this venture.

In September 1994, the librarians visited Albania and spent two weeks in Tirana getting acquainted with the library and its staff and assessing the current state of affairs. The Agricultural University library, described by Norstedt as an "old European-style" library, suffers

from a lack of resources and support and a physical facility eroded by years of neglect under communist rule. During their visit, the Tech librarians met with the entire staff of the library, toured the facility, and evaluated the collections. The library in Tirana contains mostly Russian language materials that were distributed by the former Soviet Union; the library staff have not been able to purchase any new titles in the last three years. Part of the grant will focus on building a core collection of materials in agribusiness. Linda Richardson will have \$180,000 from the grant to purchase the core collection and necessary reference works for the library. She will also assist the Albanians in developing programs of outreach and user instruction, so that the teaching faculty and library staff will work more closely than they have in the past. Automation of library functions presents a myriad of challenges in a country where basic services such as water and electricity are often lacking.

The second phase of the library project is a visit by library staff from Tirana to the United States in February 1995. They will visit Virginia Tech's University Libraries and the National Agricultural Library in Beltsville, Maryland. The knowledge and experience that the librarians from Tirana will gain from their visits to the US and from the expertise of the librarians at Virginia Tech are important for helping the Agricultural University meet its goal of reforming the agricultural sector of Albania.



Electronic Theses and Dissertations

by Richard Sapon-White

Imagine a Virginia Tech graduate student sending a chapter of a dissertation over the campus network (or the Internet) to an advisory committee for review. Wherever they are, even if away on sabbatical, the committee members can comment on the work, attaching electronic "sticky" notes suggesting revisions. The chapter not only includes the written text, but also graphics and hypertext links.

Such a scenario will become reality in the not-too-distant future. At the initiative of John Eaton, associate dean of the Graduate School, plans are underway to make submission of electronic theses and dissertations an option for graduate students. The University Libraries is already planning for the cataloging and archiving of this new format of traditional research library materials.

Under the direction of Gail McMillan, director of the Libraries' Scholarly Communications Project, guidelines for the handling of these materials are currently being prepared. Theses and dissertations would be submitted on diskettes and loaded on a closed server for cataloging. Customary cataloging procedures will have to be modified to accommodate the new format. For example, theses and dissertations are currently assigned Library of Congress subject headings. Unfortunately, for such works on the cutting edge of research, existing subject headings are often too broad or just not available. The electronic theses and dissertations will instead have keywords, suggested by the authors, included in the bibliographic record. The record would also indicate the Universal Resource Locator (URL) where the item can be found on the Internet, as well as a note mentioning that the item is available in electronic format only. Also, a "page" would be added to the file which would include the call number and the Libraries' property stamp.

Once cataloged, the electronic thesis or dissertation would be sent to a public server for campus and Internet access. The original diskettes would be sent to Special Collections as archival backup copies.

Making the transition to an electronic format will require special software. Adobe Acrobat, produced by Adobe Systems of Mountain View, California, is being considered for this purpose. It will allow the completed document to be read on machines using different operating systems, and support the attachment of electronic notes and hypertext links.

Planning for this new type of material is very exciting, and the University Libraries looks forward to making it available to the university community.



Hot Jets and Bug-Eyed Monsters:

The William J. Heron Science Fiction Collection at Virginia Tech

by Tamara Kennelly

The recent acquisition of William J. Heron's science fiction paperback book collection in combination with his science fiction and fantasy magazine collection (purchased by Special Collections in 1988) has thrust the University Libraries to the forefront of research collections in this area. Heron, who lives in Charlotte, North Carolina, has collected science fiction materials for over 25 years. His science fiction paperback book collection contains 11,900 volumes dating from 1939 (with the origin of mass-market science fiction paperbacks) to 1987. The collection contains over 95 percent of the American science fiction paperbacks published during these years. There are roughly 8,000 different titles in the collection. Approximately 2,200 authors and editors are represented in the collection as well as over 1,000 science fiction artists.

Heron had two goals in mind when he amassed his science fiction paperback book collection. He wanted his collection to include all of the American published paperbacks which were considered fantasy and science fiction, and he wanted a copy of every edition of these titles which was published with a different cover. For example, *Shield* by Poul Anderson was published three times by Berkley, and each of these three editions had a different cover by Richard Powers. All three of these editions are in the collection. Heron's paperback book collection ranks among the most comprehensive collection of paperbacks with different covers in the world. The collection includes science fiction, fantasy, horror, ghost stories, dystopias, fairy tales, spy and adventure novels involving science fiction-type gadgets, lost worlds and undiscovered lands, super heroes such as Tarsan and Doc Savage, and other works that include some supernatural events or are set in the future. The only type of paperbacks which he did not collect were those books published in the oversize format and science fiction pornography.

The paperback book collection complements the science fiction and fantasy magazine collection previously acquired by Special Collections. The magazine collection contains over 5,000 issues of 200 different publications dating from 1926 to 1987. Heron's chief interest was in magazine cover art, and he was careful to collect issues with the covers in the best possible condition.

The paperback books and magazines in the Heron Collection are extremely fragile and are deteriorating rapidly because they were printed on inexpensive, acidbased, pulp paper. To address preservation needs, improve scholarly access, and provide a new resource for students, the Virginia Tech Speculative Fiction (VTSF) Project is in the process of digitizing the Heron Science Fiction Magazine Collection and making the materials available on the Internet. Through this experimental project the text and graphics of the magazines are being digitized from cover to cover, after which the originals will be sealed to protect them from light, air, temperature variations, and additional handling. The hope is that as paper recovery techniques become more effective at retrieving and stabilizing acidbased materials, eventually it will be

possible to stop and even correct the deterioration of these important popular culture materials. The newly digitized materials will be searchable and retrievable. The VTSP Project archive will contain not only the text but also high quality graphic facsimiles of the entire original magazine.

Accomplishments

Dave Beagle, reference librarian, has been elected Secretary-Treasurer, for the Virginia Tech Faculty Senate for the 1994-95 term.

Donald J. Kenney, assistant to the university librarian, did a presentation, "Locating and Using Appalachian Young Adult Literature in the Classroom," at the Virginia Association of Teachers of English Annual Conference held in Charlottesville, Virginia, October 14-16, 1994. Kenney also did a paper, "Books for Young Readers: Problems and Possibilities," at the Southwest Regional Conference for Teachers of English/Language Arts in Boulder, Colorado, October 10, 1994.

Harry Kriz, assistant to the university librarian for special projects, has published an article, "Teaching and Publishing in the World Wide Web," which is available at <http://learning.lib.vt.edu/webserv/webserv.html>. A version of the article formatted in Adobe Acrobat is being published on the "25th Anniversary CACHE CDROM" by CACHE, Inc. (Computer Aids in Chemical Engineering).

Gail McMillan, director of scholarly communications, presented a paper, "Scholarly Communications Project: Publishers and Librarians," at the ARL/AAUP Symposium on Scholarly Publishing on the Electronic Networks, November 6, 1994 in Washington, D.C. McMillan also moderated the Association for Library Collections & Technical Services (ALCTS) of the American Libraries Association's institute, "The Electronic Library: Administrative Issues for Organization and Access," October 29, 1994 in San Antonio, Texas.

James Powell, technical assistant for scholarly communications, and **Gail McMillan** gave a presentation, "[Electronic Scholarly Communications and Libraries](#)" at the meeting of the Special Interest Group on Networked Information, Discovery, and Retrieval (SIGNIDR), August 4, 1994 in McLean, Virginia.



From the University Librarian

I hope you have read the preceding articles about some of the changes and initiatives the library has begun this fall. We are confident that the New Media Center and FirstSearch capability will prove to be important services.

In addition, Interlibrary Loan/Document Delivery and Photocopy Services moved into a newly constructed facility in a more accessible location. Their fully staffed service window will enhance our ability to be more responsive in these areas.

I am pleased to announce that Gail McMillan has been named Director of the Scholarly Communications Project. She replaces Lon Savage, founding director, who retired at the end of last year. Scholarly Communications continues to make great strides in increasing their number of electronically published materials. The latest addition to their list of publications is The Virginian Pilot.

Certainly not the least of our new enterprises is the official launching of the Friends of the Virginia Tech Libraries with a successful brunch and recognition program. I want to take this opportunity to thank Frances Russell and Louisa Dekker, the co-chairs of the founding committee of the Friends. Their efforts have been instrumental in finalizing the organization of the group. On behalf of the University Libraries I extend our deepest gratitude.

The prospect of a vital, growing Friends group opens the way to exciting opportunities for the University Libraries. The commitment of active Friends organizations has contributed immeasurably to a new level of energy and achievement at many libraries. Perhaps more importantly, these groups have helped to heighten awareness of the central role of libraries in the communities they serve. I am convinced that by working together, with a shared enthusiasm for a strong and vigorous library, the Friends and the staff of the University Libraries can, in "Bud" Robertson's words, "build support for what we think is the heart of the University."

Joanne Eustis

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