Libraries: Where we grow up

By José L. Lage
Professor of Mechanical Engineering
ASME Fellow
Faculty Senate President

I would not be surprised if reading is found to be one of today’s top human activities. The Internet has made reading extremely easy. The drive to be well informed, to be the first to know and then spread the news, seems viral. Although the sweeping information access produced by the Internet is seen as a blessing by many, it can be considered a curse as well.

The virtual environment created by the Internet often shields individuals from the social challenges presented by physical human interaction. Children used to develop conflict resolution skills organically as they learned to deal with disagreements during play in neighborhood parks and friends’ backyards. Now the Internet often serves as a playground. A quick scan of Facebook pages, especially those of youngsters, shows a make-believe world in which inhabitants are always happy and all are friends. In the event someone posts a statement that is slightly adversarial, or even controversial, the Internet allows for the perpetrator to be summarily blocked from continuing his or her virtual social interactions.

Anyone growing up in such an environment is likely to have difficulty enduring discord in the physical world. It can be surmised that as adults, these individuals may develop an excessive aversion to adversity, be it a simple opposing opinion, a difficult question or a derogatory comment.

A library is an ideal place for breeding emotional maturity. No longer somber spaces, modern libraries can and must provide the type of social environment where young people can converse and exchange ideas – and in the process, learn to disagree maturely and productively. That is why I am so enthusiastic about the Central University Libraries’ renovation plans for Fondren Library Center, which will make it an even more congenial place to read, study and socialize. The proposed café and browsing area are particularly exciting concepts. Perhaps the urgent need for this type of update to Fondren has already been hinted at by Starbucks – is the company’s explosive success really just about the coffee?

Hunting the elusive Dickens: A tale of one collector

The adventure of a lifetime began quietly for Stephen Weeks. After purchasing a coveted edition of The Pickwick Papers from a rare books dealer, Weeks settled in at the tea shop next door to read it.

“I was thrilled to have it,” he recalls, “but I was also frightened by it – what would I do with it, where would it take me?”

The first novel of Charles Dickens would lead the retired entrepreneur on a 20-year treasure hunt and inspire a deep devotion to the writer, whose bicentenary was observed February 7.

Weeks, a member of the SMU Libraries Executive Board, spoke about his impressive assemblage – and the art of collecting – during a program hosted by DeGolyer Library and the Friends of the SMU Libraries January 19. DeGolyer Director Russell Martin ’78, ’86 moderated the panel discussion, which included Steven V. Daniels, Professor Emeritus of English, and Beth Newman, Associate Professor of English and Director of Women’s and Gender Studies in Dedman College.

The event was held in conjunction with the opening of “Charles Dickens: The First 200 Years. An Exhibition from the Stephen Weeks Collection,” which continues through May 12 at DeGolyer. The exhibition of more than 200 items from the vast Weeks archive continued on page 2
Charles Dickens, engraving by Edward Finden. Part of the DeGolyer Library. 

Collector Stephen Weeks (right) with Gillian M. McCombs (left), Dean and Director of Central University Libraries.

Sandy Pfeffer Kraus ‘76, ‘80 of New York City, $125,000. She serves on the Archivist’s advisory board.

Betsy Scherger ‘62 of Washington, D.C., $20,000. She serves as vice chair of the Archivist’s advisory board.

An anonymous gift, $50,000.

The Archives of Women of the Southwest is one of the special collections of DeGolyer Library. The materials document the historical experience of women in the Southwest, with special emphasis on Dallas and North Texas, as well as a regional focus that includes Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona and the Spanish Borderlands.

The endowment will create an archivist position dedicated solely to supporting the collection.

“This is an honor to align my interest in women’s issues with my love of SMU,” says Kraus. “I believe by establishing the position of a full-time archivist, the Archives of Women of the Southwest collection will thrive well into the next century. I am proud that SMU is preserving the stories of women for generations to come.”

For more information, contact Paulette Mulry ‘93, Central University Libraries Director of Development, at 214-768-1741 or via e-mail at pmulry@smu.edu.

Painting a more complete picture of a legendary Texas artist

Jerry Bywaters Cochran, daughter of renowned Texas artist Jerry Bywaters ‘27, has donated 65 works of art to SMU, including the celebrated artist Cochran also donated the Jerry Bywaters Cochran family papers to SMU, which will become part of the existing Bywaters Special Collections in Hamon.

The materials are invaluable resources for researchers and scholars studying the art of the region, says Sam Ratcliffe ‘74, head of the Bywaters Special Collections.

“Jerry Bywaters played an indispensable role in demonstrating how American artists could utilize regional subject matter to illustrate universal themes and ideas,” Ratcliffe says. “The artwork and papers donated by him, and now by his daughter, provide the background for understanding the formative influences on his depictions of the land and people of the Southwest.”

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MU Libraries rolled out the red carpet for library professionals from around the world, introducing them to faculty experts, special collections and other star attractions at the University during the annual American Library Association (ALA) Midwinter Conference.

More than 10,000 library staff members and supporters converged in Dallas for the conference January 20-24. Several of the 1,200 events were hosted by SMU Libraries, beginning with the College Library Directors Mentor Program seminar held at Hamon Arts Library January 18-20.

Fourteen new college library directors were provided with opportunities to network and learn from experienced colleagues, including Gillian M. McCombs, Dean and Director of SMU’s Central University Libraries. In her welcoming address, McCombs explained how strong advocates provide the backbone for robust libraries.

“One of the first challenges of a library director is attracting people with integrity to be compelling voices for the library,” she said. “I’m very fortunate to work with a staff that is passionate about serving the SMU community and a board that is equally passionate about our libraries.”

The seminar attendees also gained insight into the role of university libraries from the faculty perspective during a presentation by SMU Associate Provost Linda Ead; Cristina DeLuzio, Associate Professor and Director of Undergraduate

Studies for the Clements Department of History, Dedman College; and Professor Beth Thornburg, Dedman School of Law.

Thornburg applauded the role of librarians in teaching students how to find and use Internet resources wisely.

DeLuzio said students gain crucial analytical and research skills through their library research experiences that serve them well beyond the classroom.

Other ALA events held on campus included:

• A program hosted by DeGolyer Library with Bridwell Library Special Collections and the Bywaters Special Collections in Hamon Arts Library that explored special collections, archives and archival education in Texas and the Southwest. As part of the program, Alan C. Lowe, Director, George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum, presented “The Presidential Libraries and the George W. Bush Presidential Center.”

• A meeting of the University Libraries Group Directors, of which SMU is a member.

• The International Coalition of Library Consortia Balanced Scorecard Workshop. The Balanced Scorecard helps libraries measure the value of their services and programs through a system of metrics tied to strategic goals.

• A statistics workshop for staff featuring Jan Sel, Director of Management Information Services at the University of Virginia Library.

Back to where it all began


More information about the exhibit is available online at smu.edu/ucl/shopley/exhibits.htm or by calling 214-768-2153.

ARCHIVES NEARS GOAL

Thanks to these recent significant gifts, the Archives of Women of the Southwest endowment is within $20,000 of its $1 million goal:

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SPOTLIGHT SHINES ON SMU DURING ALA CONFERENCE

Gillian M. McCombs (left), Dean and Director of Central University Libraries, addressed the College Library Directors Mentor Program seminar held at Hamon Arts Library January 18-20.

Cowboy Hood, a favorite by Jerry Bywaters, c. 1920, from the Bywaters Special Collections in Hamon Arts Library.
Marshall Terry: Writer, Teacher, Literati Award Winner

In recognition of his contributions to literature and the academic community, Marshall Terry ’53, ’54 was honored with the 2012 Literati Award March 31. Terry — known affectionately as “Mr. SMU” — accepted the award at the Friends of SMU Libraries 12th annual Tables of Content fundraiser.

The author of 12 books, Terry has received highest honors from the Texas Institute of Letters and PEN Texas. His most recent work, The Romantic Story of Dallas: From Backsliders to Top Hat, is part of the special collections of DeGolyer Library. Director Russell Martin provided readers with historical context for the unofficial symbol of Dallas, the birch tree for the 2012 ALA Midwinter Conference (p. 3).

JCPenney Archives, DeGolyer Library:

SMU Archivist Joan Gonzell provided expertise for a story that traced the history of entrepreneur James Cash Penney and the JCPenney retail chain he established. JCPenney donated its corporate archives and the papers of its founder to SMU in 2004. Gonzell served as archivist with the company before joining the University.

Southern Support by James E. Turner, 1993, Bywaters Special Collections, Hamon Arts Library. The image is among those used in an innovation grant-funded marketing campaign.

To keeping with the CUL’s strategic goals, the program is designed to promote leadership and creativity in staff at any level of the organization, while working toward our ultimate goal of enhancing the library experience for everyone,” he explains.

Four teams have been awarded grants since the program was launched in July:

• A focus group project by Julia Stewart, research librarian, and Porcia Vaughn, Fondren mark maintenance manager, with Kappa Delta Chi sorority. The CUL team is observing the student organization’s library usage during academic year 2011-12 and monitoring their library literacy skills. The team will use the information they collect to assist undergraduate student needs. Vaughn is preparing a poster session based on information gathered from the study for the IDEX Library Orientation Exchange conference in Ohio in May.

• The purchase of an inflatable outdoor theater screen. The request was made by Patricia Van Zandt, Assistant Dean, Scholarly Resources and Research Services, and Lisa Wall, Media Collections Manager, on behalf of the CUL Outreach Committee. The committee plans to use the screen for a variety of educational and entertainment programs for the SMU community. For example, it will allow staff members to demonstrate new web-based services during the annual cookout sponsored by CUL during National Library Week in April. It also will be used to screen movies from CUL’s collections throughout the year.

Wanted: Creative risk-takers

Innovation grants promote creativity, leadership, service excellence

The new Central University Libraries Innovation Grants program celebrates — and rewards — unbound thinking.

An initiative of the CUL Leadership Team, the program’s objective is to “encourage staff to take risks and try new ideas in pursuit of service excellence.”

Library staff members are urged to experiment. Even a project that is tested and deemed unusable can yield valuable information, says Bill Dowaracyk, CUL Assistant Dean, Human Resources/Facilities.

As a member of the Leadership Team, he serves as coordinator of the program.

The team looked at models from other institutions, including the University of Houston, in developing plans for the award, Dowaracyk says.

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Outstanding staff members, resources attract national attention

Terry’s most recent work, Loving U: The Story of a Love Affair (And Some Lover’s Querels) With a University, is an affectionate narrative of his involvement with SMU, told with his characteristic wit and wisdom. The DeGolyer published the memoir last year.

A mentor and friend to his students, Terry helped launch the careers of novelists Joe Conner ’81, Tracy Daugherty ’76 and Lewis Shiner ’73, among others.

The photograph taken in 1941 shows Rivera painting The Uprising in his workspace in Mexico City’s original building. The image appears on the university’s website (www.moma.org/interactions/exhibitions/2011riversa/chronology.php) as well as in the exhibition catalog.

Fondren Library Center: Federal Depository Library Spotlight, December 2011

The Federal Depository Library Program, which provides U.S. government information to designated depository libraries, featured Fondren in its online Federal Depository Library Spotlight for doing “an excellent job of making hard-to-get collection and digital publications accessible to users.”

The story included a profile of Julia Stewart, Fondren’s Government Documents Coordinator, citing her research guides and outreach efforts as helping to raise awareness about the library’s extensive resources.

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• A touring campaign and promotional efforts by Cindyinke, developer for CUL Digital Collections, targeting “Texas Artists: Sculptures, Paintings and Works on Paper” and a family of collections that include images of Texas, Mexico, the U.S. West and the Civil War. The ongoing effort includes distribution of bookmarks, pens, notebooks and other items to raise awareness about the materials and navigate people to them online. Works by Texas artists Jerry Bywaters, Deorrent Judd and Octavio Medellin are among those used so far in the marketing effort.

• From Lit Review to Publishing,” practical workshops offered, by discipline, to graduate students proposed by Rebecca Graff, research librarian, on behalf of the Outreach Committee. Designed for advanced researchers, the programs will include training on performing a thorough literature review with specialized databases, using bibliographic software, obtaining materials with limited availability, and finding publishing opportunities, including the new SMU Digital Repository.

CUL staff may submit proposals at any time, says Dowaracyk. “We review proposals that have been submitted at our monthly Leadership Team meeting, so we can award grants as they come in.”

Staff members can find grant requirements, application details, deadlines and funding information on the CUL Inside SMU site.

Singing the praises of Bel Canto

Bel Canto, Ann Patchett’s award-winning fourth novel, will be discussed during the spring meeting of the Hamon Book Club April 13.

The event will begin at 6:30 p.m. in the third floor study area of Hamon Arts Library 4401 N. Bishop Blvd.

Jon Haupt, Music Librarian, will lead the discussion. Wine and cheese will be served.

Sponsored by the Friends of SMU Libraries and the Hamon, the event is free to the public, but space is limited. Reservations are required and may be made by calling 214-668-2325 or e-mailing crupsa@smu.edu.

The club’s selections focus on works in which fine writing and the arts intersect. The club was launched in November with Beverly Mitchell, Hamon’s Art and Dance Librarian, leading a discussion of Umberto Eco’s History of Beauty.
Sally Rhodes Lancaster: Admiring library technology as a ‘new art form’

Sally Rhodes Lancaster ’60, ’79 marvels at the evolution of the University’s libraries.

“I’m blown away by SMU’s modern libraries,” says Lancaster. “Making SMU’s rare books, photographs and other materials available online is an incredible advancement that transcends technology, it really is a new art form.”

Lancaster, who serves on the SMU Libraries Executive Board, remembers “spending a lot of time in the stacks” of Fondren Library as an undergraduate, English major. While earning a Master’s in educational guidance and counseling from the University and a Ph.D. from East Texas State University, she clocked many additional hours performing more complex research.

“The Internet was not available then. If we needed a journal article, we would have to look it up in the catalog, then turn in a request for it,” she recalls. “My table would be piled high with books and journals.

The ability to follow a paper trail is a skill she continues to exercise in genealogical research. An aunt who compiled “seminal family history” in the 1920s-40s sparked Lancaster’s serious interest in genealogy.

“I’ve been in courthouse rooms that were so dusty and disheveled that I’ve shuddered as I’ve looked around, not knowing what might be nibbling away nearby, said Lancaster, who has sifted through all manner of old records, some dating back to the 1800s, while delving into her distinguished family tree.

The room of Lancaster’s family and SMU have long been intertwined. Lancaster, who has devoted most of her adult life to philanthropic endeavors, is a Director Emeritus of The Meadows Foundation, established in 1948 by her uncle, Algur H. Meadows, and his wife, Virginia. The Foundation supports numerous arts, health, education and public service initiatives. It also gives generously to SMU and the Meadows Museum, the core collection of which is the renowned trove of Spanish art assembled by the late Mr. Meadows.

Lancaster has served on the SMU Board of Trustees (1986-91) and the Meadows School of the Arts Executive Board (1996-91). She is the recipient of an SMU Distinguished Alumni Award in 1991.

She and husband Olin C. Lancaster Jr. are also Mustang parents. Their two sons graduated from the University. Olin C. Lancaster III earned a history degree in 1981 and is Divisional President, Men’s Wear for Ralph Lauren, and George Lancaster graduated with a degree in communication arts and advertising in 1985, and is Senior Vice President for Corporate Communications with Hines, an international real estate investment firm. They also have a daughter, Julie Lancaster, an actress whose credits include numerous televisions and movie roles.

Lancaster clearly embraces technology — she took the self-portrait, which appears on the left, with her iPhone — and the new possibilities it creates for libraries.

“I’ve always been surrounded by books, and my fondness for libraries is a natural extension of my love of literature and history,” she says. “Books are our cultural legacy, and SMU Libraries is using digital technology to preserve materials in a different form that maintains the integrity of the originals. They’re doing fabulous work!”

Digital collection provides ‘new dimensions’ to Texas art

Complete sketchbooks by Jerry Bywaters and DeForest Judd are among the unique assets that art scholars and enthusiasts located anywhere on the globe can view in the “Texas Artists: Paintings, Sculpture, and Works on Paper” digital collection.

Marc Bateman, ’71, vice president and treasurer of the Texas Art Collectors Organization (TACO), notes that the online resource “adds new dimensions for research and appreciation” of many of the state’s trailblazing artists.

Bateman and other members of TACO learned about the collection during a special program hosted by Central University Libraries in November. Sam Ratcliffe, head of the Bywaters Special Collections, and Ellen Buie Newyck, curator, joined Cindy Booke, CUL Digital Collections Developer, in providing an introduction to the searchable database.

“One of our organization’s educational goals is to increase awareness and participation in the effort at SMU,” says Bateman. “This digital collection, which contains approximately 5,000 digital images of paintings, sculpture and works on paper, is a joint project of SMU’s Bywaters Special Collections in Hamon Arts Library and Norwich Center for Digital Services in Fondren Library Center, the Dallas Museum of Art, and the Dallas Public Library’s Texas/Dallas History & Archives Division and Fine Books Division.

“The importance of the digital collection to scholars and collectors will only increase as SMU expands its database,” says Bateman. “That is one of the main things that makes it so exciting: the fact that it is dynamic and evolving so rapidly.”

More than a dozen early Texas artists are represented in the collection. Some of the artists’ family members attended the event, including Helen Bowling, daughter-in-law of Charles T. Bowling; Pat Bywaters, grandson of Jerry Bywaters; and Mary Belle Judd, widow of DeForest Judd; and their son, DeForest Judd Jr.

Annotations

Jeff Whittington, a senior producer of KERA Radio’s “Think” series and host of “Texas Artists,” contains approximately 5,000 digital images of paintings, sculpture and works on paper. Call 214-768-3225 for reservations.

Welcoming a Texas treasure

An acclaimed novelist Jane Roberts Wood (left), shown with Gillian M. McCombs, Dean and Director of Central University Libraries, read from her latest work, Out the Summerhill Road, at National Endowment for the Humanities.

Jane Roberts Wood, a fellow of both the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities, has donated her literary archive to SMU. She is a lauded novelist whose fiction about life in small-town Texas became a book survey of Texas fiction that included an exhibition and programs titled “Seminal Family History in the 1920s-40s: Sparking a New Art Form.”

“Making SMU’s rare books, photographs and other materials available online is incredible advancement that transcends technology; it really is a new art form.”

Science Librarian Benjamin Toon: desired future career

Growing up my parents encouraged me to use technology, including an early TI calculator (1976) for Christmas, an Atari 2600 (1977), a TI 99/4a (1981) and a Hyundai PC XT (1986),” he recalls.

Now Toon’s lifelong interests merge in his role as Science Research Librarian at Fondren Library Center. In addition to “general duties like working at the reference desk” he serves as a program liaison between CUL and the Computer Science, Electrical Engineering and Engineering Management, Information and Systems programs.

He holds a Bachelor’s degree in history from the University of Texas at Arlington and earned a Master’s degree in information science from the University of North Texas. Before joining SMU in July 2011, Toon was a market research analyst with Fujitsu Network Communications in Richardson, where he also acted as a corporate librarian.

“Two years I’ve been the sole information professional in an organization, so it’s great working at SMU Libraries with people who have similar missions of supporting students, faculty and staff with the best information resources possible,” he says.

He also worked previously for Alcatel in sales and marketing and as a library director for DeVry University at Dallas.

“It was at DeVry that I caught the ‘teaching bug’ and the desire to instruct students led me to consider working at SMU,” he says.

Classroom training on the use of library resources, as well as collection development and outreach to engineering faculty, are among the services he provides as a program liaison.

The shift from the corporate world to the realm of higher education has been a fulfilling transition, Toon says.

“I love working in a collaborative environment with my peers and supervisors,” he says. “We share ideas on improving our services, and it gives me an opportunity to learn from some great people as well as share what I’ve learned over the years.”
Taking a Tex-Mex break

Central University Libraries spiced up its traditional finals week Coffee Breaks one evening with Tex-Mex treats. Presented in partnership with dining-services provider Aramark, the free snacks included quesadillas, salsa and chips. From December 6-13, approximately 4,700 cups of coffee, hot chocolate and hot tea were served in Fondren Library Center, says Cindy Gautreaux, CUL project manager. In addition, Coke donated 624 bottles of Powerade, Fuze and Vitaminwater given away during the eight-day event.

Praise for the ‘immortal Pickwick’

Archives of Women of the Southwest endowment goal – almost there!

Library Contacts

DeGolyer Library/Special Collections 214-768-2253
Fondren Library — general library information 214-768-7378
Fondren Library
Information Desk 214-768-2326
Circulation/Reserve 214-768-2329
Government Information Resources 214-768-2331
Friends of the SMU Libraries 214-768-1939
Hamon Arts Library 214-768-2894
Norwich Center for Digital Services 214-768-4584

Website

Central University Libraries: smu.edu/cul/