Envisioning a future with books

By Rita Kirk
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Occasionally, a new student will walk into my office, scan the shelves of books, both old and new, and ask that awkward question: Have you read all these? The question is mirrored in class discussions when, after a robust exchange, a student will ask, "How do you keep up with all this information?" Answer: I read.

Truth be told, libraries as most of us have come to know them are changing. Online texts, blogs and information aggregator sites are displacing the browsing activities that drew many of us to the library when we had a little extra time. And maybe that's it. Time has become the enemy of thinking beyond our narrow set of interests. It has stifled the exploration of ideas merely for the sheer pleasure of it.

During our SMU-in-London program each year, we talk about cultural differences. One of them is the widespread activity of reading on the Tube (the London train system). From commuting executives to children, books are still a part of the visual landscape. Today, as I walk across campus, spotting a single person reading a book for pleasure is rare.

I do not bemoan our changing culture. Rather, I celebrate the leadership of people like Gillian McCombs who envision the library of the future. The vibrant salon or coffeehouse of other eras will soon become alive outside the silent stacks. Perhaps we will even start carrying a book or two with us when we leave.

In the DeGoyler, a beautiful exhibit drew my attention recently, "Remember the Ladies!" I couldn't help notice the elegant, practiced handwriting in letters. The quaint collection of cookbooks and news coverage of the visionary leadership by those who pioneered for women's rights contextualized some of the same struggles that we face today on proper roles and personal goals. I desperately wanted a cup of tea and a place to talk with someone about what we were seeing. I can hardly wait for that space. You'll find me curled in a comfy chair waiting for you.
The archives’ primary materials have already attracted the attention of scholars, students and other researchers, according to Russell L. Martin III ’78, ’86, Director of DeGolyer Library. Martin says researchers who use the archives have an opportunity to “enlarge their understanding of history and come away with a deeper appreciation of the essential role women have played in the shaping not only of the American South- west but of our country as a whole.”

The exhibit draws from the Archives of Women of the Southwest, as well as from the DeGolyer’s other women’s collections, to “illuminate women’s roles in society and the manner in which they shaped the culture, art, education, business, social issues, law and politics in Texas, the Southwest and beyond,” says Pamela Anderson, DeGolyer’s Head of Public Services and curator of the exhibit. Spanning more than a century of the words and images of women, the exhibit includes many one-of-a-kind artifacts such as letters, diaries and scrapbooks. A multitude of other resources, from cookbooks and trade catalogs to postcards and photographs, also bring the past into sharper focus while demonstrating the range and depth of the DeGolyer’s collections, Anderson says.

She and University Archivist Joan Gosnell began working on the exhibit last summer. SMU students Irina Bogdanova, Margaret Elder and several other students who work in the library assisted with compiling and arranging the materials. The “Remember The Ladies!” exhibit is free and open to the public and continues through December 14.

For more information: smu.edu/ contributed from page 1

Women’s history: From recipes to equal rights

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For more information: smu.edu/cul/degolyer

Lessons learned from The Big Short

Panelists unraveled the complexities of the financial crisis in a discussion of The Big Short. Inside the Doomsday Machine, by Michael Lewis. Sponsored by Friends of the SMU Libraries September 13, the event continued a campus-wide, cross-discipline exploration of the 2012 Common Reading selection. James Linck, Distinguished Chair in Finance in SMU’s Cox School of Business, moderated the lively conversation. Speakers included Callum Clark, President, Prothro Clark Company; SMU Trustee Mike Condon; John Duca, Vice President and Senior Policy Advisor, Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas; and Adjunct Professor of Economics in Dedman College, and Kitty Kirk, Director of the Maguire Center for Ethics and Public Responsibility and president in the Division of Communication Studies, Meadows School of the Arts.

Condon set the scene by describing the “perfect storm,” pressure on Wall Street to create new instruments tied to the booming mortgage market, ratings agencies that “were duped” into putting their stamp of approval on toxic bonds, and a system that encouraged mortgage lenders and borrowers to cheat the numbers. A distorted incentive system also fueled the meltdown, said Linck. “If you tell me that you’re going to pay me to originate a loan, and it doesn’t matter if the loan is defaulted on, then you’re going to have a lot of loan originations,” he said. “And if the people who buy the loans can then sell them and know they’ll be bailed out, we have a system that’s bound to go crazy.”

“We privatized gain and socialized risk,” Duca said. “We had a housing market that was driven by price appreciation. It was a bubble.”

“The housing and financial markets ‘feed off each other,’” added Duca. “When the bubble was building, housing prices were rising, and the problem was hidden.” Overleveraged homeowners were able to sell their homes for more than what they owed. But when prices dropped, the house of cards collapsed. The crash was not “a bolt out of the blue,” said Clark. “When you see the degree to which housing prices became unhinged from people’s incomes, collapse was a dead certainty, but the timing was hard to call.”

He called the book “an interesting story of our time” populated with Wall Street insiders focused on making profits and indifferent to the underlying engine of the machine and others who cast an analytical eye “to the plumbing” and figured out what was happening. All of them ended up “wildly wealthy,” he noted. The losers were “the little people who, in many cases, lost everything,” said Kirk. “And that’s the tragedy of the book.”

“We have to be careful about the dreams we’re sold as an American public. Lots of people should have known that the deal was too good to be true, but they wanted to believe: There’s plenty of culpability for everyone.”

Lessons learned from The Big Short

Panelist John Condon describes the “perfect storm” that led to the financial crisis.
Actor Stephen Tobolowsky’s ‘dangerous’ new book

Character actor Stephen Tobolowsky explored the twists and turns of a creative life during a program and book signing sponsored by the Friends of the SMU Libraries October 3.

Tobolowsky was on campus to promote The Dangerous Animals Club, a book he described as “true stories from my life” – an afternoon, decades ago, when he was held at gunpoint in a Snider Plaza grocery store. The incident was resolved without gunfire, and Tobolowsky left with his groceries and an unforgettable story to tell.

The Friends event was something of a homecoming for the actor-writer, known as “Tobo” to the friends he acknowledged in the audience. Among the family he introduced was “the most important man in the room,” his father, physician David Tobolowsky. Dr. Tobolowsky served as director of medical services at SMU in the 1970s.

In an hour-long monologue that qualified as performance art, Tobolowsky touched on matters both serious and lighthearted as he threaded a theme of creativity through a patchwork of stories: in side-splitting detail, he recalled a first creative writing effort when he could not find information in an encyclopedia about Moses Austin, he borrowed details from his original “Rinty” and his successors. “He appeared in every format – silent, ‘Rintin Tin Tin was Zelig-like. You didn’t know how he would figure back into his life” – an afternoon, decades ago, when he was held at gunpoint in a Snider Plaza grocery store. The incident was resolved without gunfire, and Tobolowsky left with his groceries and an unforgettable story to tell.

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And in a heart-pounding narrative, he described a true story from his life – an afternoon, decades ago, when he was held at gunpoint in a Snider Plaza grocery store. The incident was resolved without gunfire, and Tobolowsky left with his groceries and an unforgettable story to tell. The Friends event was something of a homecoming for the actor-writer, known as “Tobo” to the friends he acknowledged in the audience. Among the family he introduced was “the most important man in the room,” his father, physician David Tobolowsky.

Tobolowsky Dr. Tobolowsky served as director of medical services at SMU in the 1970s. During a question-and-answer segment at the end of the program, Tobolowsky was asked when he knew a story was complete, and he replied: “As a writer your story is never finished.”

For more information: stephentobolowsky.wordpress.com

Heavy metal fanfare for photo by Robert Yarnall Richie

The rock band Van Halen trained a heavy metal spotlight on DeGolyer Library when it chose a Robert Yarnall Richie photograph for the cover of its comeback album. “A Different Kind of Truth.” The dramatic moment on a Henry Dreyfuss-designed New York Central locomotive used for the album cover cover is among 80,000 photos in the DeGolyer’s Ritchie collection. The library’s connection to the photo garnered substantial local media coverage when Van Halen played in Dallas in June, and the story was picked up by the music community. Mentioned on Air Metal Mania – an online site dedicated “to the glory days of 1980s rock and metal” – and Brave Words and Bloody Knuckles, a multichannel outlet for the “metal community,” A selection of Ritchie images may be viewed online at digitalcollections.smu.edu/all/coll/...
**CUL behind the scenes**

Meet three staff members creating an exceptional library experience

Many Central University Libraries (CUL) staff members perform their tasks in areas rarely visited by the public, providing vital services that have an impact on everyone who relies on the library’s resources for research and enrichment.

Following is an introduction to three highly skilled library professionals working behind the scenes to ensure CUL runs like clockwork.

**Order of magnitude**

To meet the research needs of the SMU community, CUL adds new materials regularly, and almost every request passes across the desk of Geailya Armour. Armour: a library specialist in Technology Services/Acquisitions, orders books and other research materials as well as a variety of media.

Faculty, students and staff work with library subject specialists to make their requests. Approved requests are then sent to Armour. She also works with the CUL collection development staff, which assesses user needs and determines which materials should be acquired to meet them.

“We use the GOBI online system to order materials,” says GOBI (Global Online Bibliographic Information), a web-based acquisition and collection development tool offered through YBP Library Services, a distributor of print and digital materials for academic libraries.

"However, not all materials are available through GOBI. In those cases, we often use Amarian or other online retailers for purchases,” she explains. "And, if a book is no longer available, we rely on several vendors of out-of-print materials to find what we need.”

When a rush order is received from a vendor, it is marked with both a “notify” and location flag and sent to the Cataloging Department for processing. The Cataloging Department then alerts the requesting student, faculty or staff member when it is available for check out.

Even after 32 years on the job, Armour says "every day is different. I really enjoy the variety and the opportunity to help our patrons obtain the materials they need.”

**Cataloging collections**

Online databases bring some of the rare collections of DeGolyer Library to scholars around the world. The first step in finding those materials is a search made possible by the descriptions written and organized by Catalog Librarian Katherine Schacht.

For the numerous unique items, I create records for our library catalog and input them into the OCLC, an international database of libraries’ holdings,” explains Schacht, who has worked at SMU for 16 years. Among the details included in an entry are the name of the item, publisher information, a brief physical description and access points such as names and subject headings used for searching.

A favorite aspect of her job is "seeing the many interesting resources acquired by the library, ranging from rare books and maps to popular ‘dime novels’ of the late 19th- and early 20th-century and ephemeral materials such as trade catalogs and broadsides.”

“I enjoy the challenge of making these materials accessible to researchers,” she adds.

Schacht graduated from SMU in 1973 with a Bachelor’s degree in Spanish and says her language training has come in handy when working with some of the DeGolyer’s collections.

Her most recent project was cataloging a collection of 1880s advertisements written by “commercial rhythmist” WN Bryant for business enterprises in Texas. Louisiana and the portion of Oklahoma then called “Indian Territory.” The ads were printed in Dallas by Jan A. Dorsey & Co. The materials have been digitized and are available online through CUL’s digital collections (digitalcollections.smu.edu/illc/).

A borrower be

“Both a borrower and a lender be” could serve as the motto of the CUL Interlibrary Loan (ILL) service. SMU’s libraries make materials available to thousands of academic and public libraries through the ILL system. And, when a library patron needs a book, journal or other resource not owned by the University, ILL Specialist Billie Stovall becomes a borrower.

**WELCOME NEW FRIENDS**

New members of Friends of the SMU Libraries who have joined as of October 22, 2012

Kelly Baxter
Mr. and Mrs. Michael M. Bosse
Anne Carpan
Brooke Clement
Janna Coleman
Janis Cravens
Joanne Early
Lee Ford
Diana Grumbles
Brenda Guyton
Michelle Hahn
Nicki Metz Hober
Laura Johnston
David Martindale
Michael Haig, Jr.
Ann Richards
Gary Richards
Kerry S. Redickha
Zoltan Szentkiralyi
Neil Thomas, Jr.
Cynthia Ward
Karen Weiner
Nancy Yates
Visit smu.edu/friends for more information about membership in the SMU Libraries.

“Members of the SMU community fill out an online form, telling us what they want. They might be seeking a book, a journal article, a conference paper, microfilms of old newspapers — the requests cover the spectrum of materials,” says Stovall, who started working at Fondren Library Center in 1975 in circulation and joined the ILL in 1990. She earned a Bachelor’s degree in humanities with a concentration in history from SMU in 2006.

Although every effort is made to borrow items, there are occasions when archival materials are not circulated, she explains. In such cases, faculty members, in particular, often work with colleagues at other universities to obtain the materials they need.

Overnight shipping, Web-based tools and membership in networks such as the Greater Western Library Alliance, which SMU joined earlier this year, expedite the process, she says. Articles are often available online within 24 hours.

“We’re so fortunate that our administration has provided us with the best equipment and up-to-date software,” she says. “This helps us get materials to those who need them so quickly.”

Stovall has been lauded for her knowledge and resourcefulness. For example, in his book The Spanish Frontier in North America (Oklahoma University Press, 1991), the late historian David J. Weber states, “The efficiency of Billie Stovall in our Interlibrary Loan Office saved me costly and time-consuming travel to other collections.”

She also has been recognized by the library for her contribution to the cataloging department and her name has appeared in the acknowledgements of several graduate theses and dissertations.

*Annotations*

Sam Childers
Mining the ‘true gems’ of SMU’s libraries

Historian Sam Childers specializes in writing micro-histories in which he focuses on “one very special event in a short time frame.” Capturing these brief moments in time, with credible details demands substantial research and primary research requires outstanding librarians like those of SMU, he says.

Childers serves as President of the Friends of the SMU Libraries, which he joined five years ago, in part because of the borrowing privileges that come with membership at the Associate level and higher.

“The collections of SMU’s libraries are unparalleled resources in North Texas, and the ability to access them as a Friend is a very valuable benefit,” he says.

That access played a vital role in a recent project. While writing an article for the journal White House History, he struck gold at DeGolyer Library with a collection of works related to Theodore Roosevelt. “The piece is on presidential valets, and at the DeGolyer I found a book by James E. Amos, Roosevelt’s valet,” he explains. The book, Theodore Roosevelt: Nero to His Valet, was published in 1927, and from the title it is clear the extent in which the valet held his employer’s employ. “SMU’s libraries have so many true gems like that book,” says Childers.

Childers’ resume reflects his passion for history. A 1995 graduate of Texas Woman’s University with a B.S. in history, Childers has served in various positions with the Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza, the Margaret Mitchell House and Museum in Atlanta and the Old Red Museum of Dallas County History & Culture. He now devotes his time to writing, with an emphasis on his special interest, presidential history.

Among his current projects is a book on Lady Bird Johnson’s four-day train tour of the South in 1944. “I was lucky enough to meet Mrs. Johnson before she passed away in 2007,” he says, “and I’ve been spending a lot of time at the Johnson Library in Austin.”

While he appreciates the technology that allows him to access library resources via the Internet, nothing compares to the thrill of holding a letter written by a figure like Mrs. Johnson, he says. “There are still many resources that are available only in a physical format, so you have to go to a library for them. We are so lucky to have the special collections of DeGolyer Library and other SMU libraries, which are filled with such treasures,” he adds.

“But SMU’s libraries are so much more than repositories,” he adds. “They are gathering places, welcoming environments for all who love to learn.”

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INSIDE

Celebrating the Archives of Women of the Southwest

Rin Tin Tin and 'Dangerous Animals'

Singing the praises of Hamon resources

Believe it: Offbeat objects from special collections

Believe it or not, this 32-inch TI-001 Disk "Platter," ca. 1972 (below), contains only 100 megabytes of storage capacity, meager by today’s standards but among the most robust options of its day. The platter and other components of the then state-of-the-art Texas Instruments Advanced Scientific Computer (ASC) were among the weird and wonderful treasures borrowed from Central University Libraries’ diverse collections for the exhibit "SMU, Believe It or Not?" The exhibit in Fondren Library Center ran June 25 through September 10.

Among the 25 items in the exhibition were souvenir playing cards (below left) distributed to train passengers (DeGolyer Library, Ephemera Collection); and pencils used to promote Dallas and Texas businesses (DeGolyer Library, Advertising Pencil Collection).