An antidote for inquiring minds
By Mark Nerio, chair, Library Executive Board and member of SMU Board of Trustees

A diploma is not the only thing I received from SMU. I fear I also was given a curse.

This curse seems to manifest itself regularly. Its symptoms result in constant inquiry, curiosity, exploration, and the general seeking of answers.

 Mostly, I find myself immersed in books—lots of books—as a result of this curse. And not just any books. They tend to be nonfiction, and move from theme to theme over the years.

For example, I went through one year in which I read Russian history, the next year U.S. borderlands, followed by Mexican history, then Chicano studies, Vietnam, and the U.S. presidency. I now have two huge hardback books sitting on my nightstand, each with a bookmark 25 to 40 pages in. After I started John Adams, it was preempted with Caro’s third Lyndon Johnson biography. Yet just yesterday, I bought Sandra Cisneros’ Caramelo (it’s quasi nonfiction).

The curse ends not with mere reading. Interesting facts with superscripts cause me to hunt in the back of the book for the corresponding footnote. I need two bookmarks for reading—one to mark my place in the text and another to mark my place in the footnotes.

This curse, I recall, began to take hold while I was studying in the Fondren stacks. Rather than leave my carrel for a break and risk losing my spot, I would wander through the shelves, leafing through the volumes with the most intriguing titles. Many a good study hour was lost to these wanderings.

To my great satisfaction, I learned, as a member of the Library Executive Board, I was not alone with this affliction. Others too share this curse, some with afflictions greater than mine. For on the board sit readers, researchers, collectors, authors, and of course, librarians.

Yet, in retrospect, this curse actually has served me quite well. It seems that having exposure to and knowledge of myriad important topics, people, countries, cultures, struggles, and triumphs has equipped me to survive, even thrive, in times of difficulty, whether they be personal, professional, or otherwise.

While I know of no cure for the curse, there is a three-step treatment prescription.

Go to the library. Read. Repeat.

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Librarian uses first-person accounts to tell Fort Burgwin history

A family reunion of sorts took place last summer in the library at Fort Burgwin, home to SMU-in-Taos. Descendants of one of the fort’s first doctors attended Fort Burgwin’s 150th anniversary open house and lent family heirlooms to the library for display.

A large photograph of Army Assistant Surgeon H.R. Wirtz and a prayer book inscribed to his daughter were displayed, along with other historical exhibits created by Fort Burgwin librarian Linda Sellers.

Wirtz’ great-great granddaughter, Luisa Mylet, who lives near Fort Burgwin, recently had learned of her ancestor’s connection to the fort. Her cousins remembered the photograph of the mustachioed doctor and found it for the display.

Wirtz was one of the early doctors at the fort, established in 1852 to protect the wagon road from Santa Fe to Taos and settlers from raiding Jicarilla Apache and Ute Indians. Now the site of SMU-in-Taos, much of Fort Burgwin has been rebuilt. Facilities include classrooms, a library, offices, and residences for faculty and students. Each summer SMU-in-Taos offers classes in the humanities, sciences, and the arts.

Sellers researched and prepared historical exhibits for the living history open house June 22-23, which attracted 400 visitors.
While volunteers provided a visual demonstration of fort life, visitors could study the letters, journal entries, books, and official reports written by fort residents. "The actual words of the people who were there 150 years ago bring the history of the fort to life," Sellers says.

The exhibit included the thoughts of Lydia Spencer Lane, wife of Lt. William Bartlett Lane, as she described her October 1856 journey from Santa Fe to Fort Burgwin in her book, *I Married a Soldier or Old Days in the Old Army* (University of New Mexico Press, 1893, 1996).

"Our station was to be Cantonment Burgwin, four days' march from Santa Fe, over a frightful road, if it could be called a road . . . In some places the wagons had to be let down with ropes, and nothing was thought of a drop of two or three feet from one rock to another."

The 5,200 volumes at the SMU-in-Taos library include a growing collection of materials relating to the history of Fort Burgwin, Sellers says. Last summer she photocopied and compiled 300 pages of Fort Burgwin military records from the Arrott Collection at Highlands University in Las Vegas, New Mexico, to add to the library's resources. The SMU-in-Taos library also contains numerous other resources about the military and the West.

"I have tried to collect all published books and articles that relate to the fort," she says. "Every summer students in classes ranging from Spanish to history select aspects of fort history as paper topics."

When the open house ended, Sellers returned the Wirtz family heirlooms to Luisa Mylet. With gratitude, Mylet presented Sellers with a clay storyteller doll. To Pueblo Indians, the storyteller doll represents the passing of information from one generation to the next — a fitting tribute to a librarian.

A unique film collection housed in the chilled walk-in vault below Owen Fine Arts Center soon will become widely available to students, researchers, and museums. The Hamon Arts Library recently received a grant to convert the Tyler, Texas, Black Film collection in the G. William Jones Film and Video Collection to DVD format.

"This represents a major step in making this collection available to a wider audience," says Tinsley Silcox, director of Hamon Arts Library.

The films preserve what Film Professor Rick Worland calls "a forgotten chapter in film history." In the 1930s and '40s, independent filmmakers produced films for as many as 1,200 segregated theaters. Although the film companies were white-owned, most of the films featured African American screenwriters, directors, and actors and actresses. They provide historians with a unique aspect of early African American life without the Hollywood interpretation of all-black-cast films.

As the civil rights movement began in the 1950s, production of the African American-cast films ceased, Worland says. In the 1960s the films were deliberately forgotten and denounced as "Jim Crow" cinema. In the early 1980s, however, the owner of a warehouse in Tyler, Texas, asked Bill Jones, the late cinema professor at Meadows School of the Arts and founder of its video archives, to look at a stack of film canisters he discovered in a corner of the warehouse. Those films now constitute the Tyler, Texas, Black Film Collection.

The original nitrate films were converted to safety film in 1985. A professional projectionist must be hired to show the films now stored as heavy reels of 35-mm film, Silcox says. The films have been shown to scholars, students, and groups interested in film history.

The Hamon Arts Library will use a $65,200 TIFB grant to create 1,000 DVD sets of the films that will be distributed at no charge to school districts, museums, and community organizations. Each film will include an introduction and commentary by a Meadows School of the Arts film professor.

"African American high school students today have no idea these films existed," Silcox says. "They grew up on reruns of The Cosby Show. But their grandparents would have gone to segregated theaters to see these films."

Making the films available in DVD format continues the films' preservation that began 27 years ago, Worland says. "I think that Bill Jones would be pleased."
Library upgrades technology services

Technology improvements at Central University Libraries will enhance research capabilities for students, faculty, and staff, says Mary Queyrouze, systems librarian. Library users with laptop computers now can go online without having to be near a physical connection. In addition, an upgrade to PONI helps patrons customize their searches. "Chat with a Librarian," a popular pilot project last spring, also has become a permanent feature of online services.

- **WIRELESS COMPUTING** Patrons at Fondren Library Center (Fondren Library East and the Science and Engineering Library, DeGolyer Library, and Norwick Center for Media and Instructional Technology), Hamon Arts Library, and the Institute for the Study of Earth and Man can connect to the Internet from laptop computers using a wireless system. To receive a signal, users must obtain an 802.11b type wireless card, available at the SMU Computer Corner.

Reaction has been positive, Queyrouze says. Patrons appreciate the quick and efficient Internet connection. Because wireless transmissions are easier to intercept than wired connections, Queyrouze urges caution when using the wireless system to send confidential e-mail.

For more information contact the individual libraries or visit the Web site www.smu.edu/help/studentguide/wireless.asp.

- **PONI UPGRADE** When PONI, SMU's library information system, was upgraded last summer, several features were added, says Beth Walker, CUL user education and outreach librarian. Using "My Library Account," patrons can set their search preferences automatically to basic search, advanced search, title, author, or preferred database. The new "My Book Bag" feature enables library users to save as many as 1,000 records in their library accounts to view at a later date. In addition, library users now can save their most often used searches through "Save Query," also found in "My Library Account."

- **CHAT WITH A LIBRARIAN** After a successful pilot project last spring, "Chat with a Librarian" will become a permanent feature on the Central University Libraries Web site in November. Patrons can use a Web-based chat session to ask questions, receive a reference librarian's response, and ask follow-up questions. The service will be available 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 12 p.m. to 3 p.m. Fridays.

Visit "Chat With a Librarian" on the CUL home page at www.smu.edu/cul.

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**NEW TITLE FOR MCCOMBS**

Gillian M. McCombs has a new title – dean and director of Central University Libraries.

“My decision to confer the title of dean is based in part on national trends and in part on the results of an extremely positive review of Gillian’s performance over the past four years,” says Provost Ross Murfin. In addition, as dean, McCombs can best represent the library’s interests, Murfin says.

McCombs came to SMU in 1998 from the University at Albany, SUNY, where she served as assistant director for technical services and systems. Educated in England, McCombs earned a Bachelor’s degree in French and European literature at the University of Warwick and a Master’s degree from Leeds School of Librarianship, and a Master’s degree in Public Administration from the University at Albany.

A nationally recognized leader among university librarians, McCombs is the author of books, chapters, and refereed articles on various library topics. Among other professional activities, she is chair-elect of the university libraries section of the American Library Association and serves on the board of advisers of the University of North Texas School of Library and Information Sciences.

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**Fundraiser a runaway success**

Library donors ran for their checkbooks to support Central University Libraries’ first Zero-K Run on Labor Day, September 2. Instead of spending hours training, sweating, and bulking up on carbs, Zero-K planners suggested that each donor send a gift and instead use the time reading a "fast-paced novel."

“We are very happy with the results for the first year,” says Amy Carver, CUL development officer.

One virtual runner wrote, “I’m exhausted just filling out the running form. Will I ever get my breath?”

Those who gave $25 or more received a faculty favorites book list; runners at the $50 level received an "I survived the Zero-K Run" T-shirt.

Contributions will be used to help fund the Information Commons planned for Fondren Library East. The Information Commons will combine the computer labs from the third floor and basement in a new location on the first floor. Reference librarians and technical support staff will be located nearby to provide technical and research support.

For those who missed the Zero-K, it’s not too late to participate, Carver says, and no training is necessary for next year’s event.

For more information, call 214-768-3225.
Friends programs provide something for everyone

The Friends of the SMU Libraries planned its 2002-2003 programs to appeal to booklovers of all kinds, says Judy Searles, Friends director. Collectors, readers, and travelers will find programs with special appeal.


The November 21 program coincides with a DeGolyer exhibit opening, "Owen Wister’s The Virginian: The Writer and His Work at 100." The program will include the exhibit opening and lectures about Wister from Dallas author and historian Darwin Payne and E. A. Lilly Professor of English Marshall Terry. A screening of the 1929 The Virginian will follow the lectures.

A dramatic reading of O’Henry’s Christmas classic, Gift of the Magi, is planned for the annual holiday luncheon December 6 at Popolo’s Restaurant.

The Book Road Show, a popular program similar to PBS’ Antiques Road Show, returns February 2. Members bring several items for appraisal by local book experts. At the end of the hour, each appraiser talks about interesting items they encountered during the session.

On March 1 members can participate in hands-on bookmaking at a workshop given by Pamela Leutz, bookbinder and owner of The Gilded Edge Book Arts Studio of Dallas.

Other spring events include Tables of Content, the Book Club co-sponsored with the Meadows Museum and the annual May dinner meeting. For more information, call 214-768-3225 or visit the Friends Web site at www.smu.edu/libraries/friends.

Welcome new Friends

Temple Ashmore  
Nell Beck  
Steven S. Demers  
William H. Grumbles, Jr.  
J. Marcus Gutierrez  
Marla Harper  
Jane and Peter Harris  
Barbara Hawn  
Helen D. Johnson  
Nancy Kaboli  
Kirsten Kahl  
Dodie and Don LaPiana  
Wan Lin

Kimberly Lloyd  
Nancy White Marshall  
Todd Mayfield  
Sharon and Allen McKemie  
Waseem I. Minhas  
Deborah J. Myers  
Pamela Nelson  
Virginia Postrel  
Donald H. Relyea  
Patricia Roberts  
Laura Shearer  
Rasmi Simhan

*New members of Friends of the SMU Libraries since April 15, 2002

English faculty member becomes Friends president

The new president of Friends of the SMU Libraries Pam Lange ('71, '73), is experienced as a writer, historian, television producer, poet, and faculty member.

Senior lecturer in English since 1998, Lange teaches English as a second language to international students at SMU. She encourages her students to use the library for research. "My goal is to make the students curious about the world beyond themselves," she says.

Before joining the SMU faculty, Lange coordinated family history workshops, seminars, and reading series as humanist-in-residence at the Dallas Public Library in a position funded by a National Endowment for the Humanities grant. When the grant expired, she became editorial director of the library producing a variety of publications and initiating an author interview program, "Conversations," on the library’s cable channel. She continues to host the program for the Irving Public Library.

Lange, who prefers modern fiction and poetry, won the PEN-Texas poetry award in 1999. She describes herself as a book accumulator instead of a collector.

"I’m not interested in just keeping a book in pristine condition," she says. "My pleasure is in reading it."

As Friends president, Lange says she wants to continue the positive direction forged by past presidents. In addition, she would like to raise awareness of the history of SMU by collecting and combining archival materials that are stored in locations across campus.

"I want to focus on preserving and organizing the archives in time for the University’s centennial in 2011," she says. "We desperately need a University archivist, and I would like to support and spread that idea as widely as possible."
Friends grants strengthen collections, expand services

The Friends of the SMU Libraries gave $23,960 in grants to the Central University Libraries in 2002. The funds will be used for items ranging from conservation to upgrading digital reference services.

- $6,000 to Fondren Library Center to purchase a microform scanner for microfilm and microfiche viewing and scanning.
- $3,440 to Central University Libraries Collection Development to purchase Daniel Defoe’s Political and Economic Writings and his Travel and Historical Writings, as well as the first year’s subscription to Index of Christian Art.
- $3,000 to CUL to help finance annual report production.
- $2,610 to the Bywaters Special Collection at Hamon Arts Library to fund conservation and care of a 1938 mural design for the Dallas Post Office lobby by Jerry Bywaters and a 1935 landscape by Frank Reaugh.
- $2,300 to CUL to support the digital reference project.
- $2,300 to the Norwick Center for Media and Instructional Technology (NCMIT) to help fund a portable LCD projector for use in classrooms.
- $1,110 to the Science and Engineering Library to purchase chemistry and biology reference materials.
- $1,000 to support two $500 library school scholarship awards.
- $600 to NCMIT to purchase supplies for the SMU video archives series on the history of the University.
- $600 to the Institute for the Study of Earth and Man Library to purchase back files of the journal Mexicon: News and Studies of Mesoamerica.
- $500 to fund the continuing excellence library staff recognition awards.
- $500 to the SMU-in-Taos library at Fort Burgwin to convert the official fort records from microfilm to CD-ROM.

Kudos to staff award winners

The Council of Library Directors honored four staff members and two teams at a reception for the 2002 SMU Libraries Staff Recognition Awards May 1 at the Anderson Gallery in Cox School of Business.

John Phinney was named employee of the year. Toni Nolen was honored for outstanding achievement, and Lois Nickel was recognized for continuing excellence. Alicia Frias was the outstanding student assistant.

For the first time CUL gave an award for team efforts. The CUL Recycling Ad-hoc Group (RAG) received the libraries’ team award. Team members were Maria Bellavance, Hillary Campbell, Chris Leamy, John Phinney, Erika Ripley, Sandra Setnick, and Troy Sherrod. Honorable mention was given to the CUL exhibits committee. Team members were Kay Bost, Shannon Cain, Joel Eatmon, Joseph Milazzo, Ellen Buie Niewyk, John Phinney, Dave Schmidt, Barbara Stockton, and Brad Wehring.

Following are excerpts from the winners’ nominations.

JOHN PHINNEY “John works tirelessly with students. The students know that the library will be open the posted hours even if John has to stay overnight to have it open the next morning in inclement weather.”

TONI NOLEN “She unfailingly shares her knowledge with colleagues and can assist readers with most any type of research need.”

LOIS NICKEL “Lois’ investment in seeing that every aspect of technical processing is performed according to the standards set by the superintendent of documents is not just exemplary – it is absolutely necessary.”

ALICIA FRIAS “Alicia is the ideal of all student workers. She is reliable, intelligent, dedicated, and eager to take on new tasks.”

RECYCLING TEAM “Excellent job in promoting recycling.”

CUL EXHIBITS COMMITTEE “Exhibits are quality productions, visually attractive, and relevant.”

BIRTHDAY TEA CELEBRATES WOMEN’S ARCHIVES SUCCESS

The 10th anniversary of DeGolyer Library’s Archives of Women of the Southwest was celebrated October 15 with a tea hosted by Gail Turner at the home of President and Mrs. R. Gerald Turner. The archives contain correspondence, speeches, documents, and records of more than 40 significant women and women’s organizations. Historic family letters and diaries describing daily life in early Texas also are among the resources available in the archives to scholars.
Alabama scholar uses DeGolyer and Map Library resources

Historic maps, newspapers, travelogues, and rare books in DeGolyer Library provided an Alabama scholar last summer with details about little known Indian tribes that still live in Texas.

Sherry Shuck, assistant professor of history at the University of Alabama-Birmingham, conducted research at DeGolyer on the Texas migration and settlement of the Alabama-Coushatta Indians. Shuck is completing her manuscript, “Voices from Southern Borderlands: Alabamas and Coushattas – 1500-1859,” one of the first scholarly works about the separate but closely associated tribes. Her work at DeGolyer was supported by a Clements-DeGolyer grant designed to encourage scholarly research at the library.

“Historians used to think the Alabamas and Coushattas were part of the Creek Indians,” she says. “My research has found distinct cultures and tribal identities for each tribe.”

Small in number, the Alabamas and Coushattas survived not through warfare but by forming alliances, Shuck says. “They were incredible negotiators. At various times in their history they were aligned with the Comanches, British, French, and Americans.”

The Alabamas and Coushattas migrated from what is now Alabama to Louisiana, and then to the Big Thicket of East Texas. Using historic maps from the Edwin J. Foscue Map Library, Shuck identified Alabama and Coushatta settlements along the Neches and Trinity rivers, in East Texas. She also used DeGolyer’s collection of Texas travelogues from the 1830s and 1850s.

Shuck also used DeGolyer resources to search for historical documentation of the tribes’ roles during the Texas Revolution. Although the tribes did not fight in the war, Alabama and Coushatta legends say they provided food and shelter for settlers who abandoned their homes to flee from Santa Anna’s army in 1836, known as the “Runaway Scrape.” When most Indian tribes were forced to leave East Texas in 1839, the Alabama and Coushatta were allowed to stay.

“One of the reasons they stayed is because of their good relations with the Texas government,” Shuck says.

Staff rewrites book on recycling

Before last year, several Central University Library staff members kept shopping bags at their desks. Every evening they filled the bags with newspapers, magazines, and colored paper and carried them home to recycle because the SMU recycling program accepted only white paper.

As a result of a two-year CUL recycling project, mixed paper recycling as well as other improved recycling measures are now available at the libraries.

“I’m gratified at the number of people who do now recycle,” says Sandra Setnick, chair of the CUL Recycling Ad-Hoc Group (RAG). Setnick and her committee investigated several options, then implemented a plan to improve recycling at the libraries.

The library probably produces more materials that can be recycled than other campus departments, Setnick says. New books arrive in cardboard boxes filled with paper packing materials. The Collections Department receives publishers’ catalogs, announcements, and newsletters. Periodicals that are no longer current are discarded.

As a result of the committee’s efforts, mixed paper recycling bins for magazines, colored paper, and newspapers are now located inside the loading docks of Fondren Library, the Science and Engineering Library, and in Central Information Processing in the basement of Fondren Library. Can and bottle recycling containers are placed at the entrances of Fondren Library Center and in the break areas of Fondren and Hamon Arts Libraries. The committee also publicized the University’s white paper and cardboard recycling programs to staff members.

“The library staff has been very diligent in their recycling effort,” says Robert Taylor, custodial manager and director of the University’s recycling program. “Everyone wants to recycle as long as it isn’t an inconvenience. The library committee was interested, even if it was an inconvenience.”

Recycling group members include Maria Bellavance, Hillary Campbell, Chris Leamy, John Phinney, Erika Ripley, Sandra Setnick, and Troy Sherrod.
Library supports Literary Festival with more than just words

A graphic designer, a poet, and a literary magazine editor are among the guests who will speak at the SMU 2002-03 Literary Festival series. For the first time in recent years, a Friends of the Libraries grant is supporting the student-run festival, now in its 28th year.

Instead of the traditional weeklong event, the literary festival committee planned a series that features a different author each month. "A yearlong festival is more flexible for students and it’s easier to schedule authors,” says senior English major Alison Harper, literary festival chair. Harper also serves on the Central University Libraries student advisory council.

Committee members selected authors who Harper describes as "up-and-coming, young, and hip.”


A three-day series in March will highlight four writers from literary journal McSweeney’s, which features works that Time Magazine characterizes as “too uncommercial to make the glossies – experimental fiction, absurdist humor, and erudite essays.” Edited by best-selling author Dave Eggers, an article in Time says the quarterly journal usually sells out as soon as it hits the stands. Neal Pollack, Arthur Bradford, Sarah Manguso, and Gabe Hudson will speak during the series, March 22-24.

"The Literary Festival is a chance for students to bring in whom they want to see,” Harper says. "And the writers appreciate the fact that they were selected by students.”

All events begin at 8 p.m. and are free and open to the public. For information on locations, authors, and events, visit the Web site people.smu.edu/pcouncil/litfest, or call 214-768-4466.

Scholarships open new chapters for recipients

When faced with two exceptional candidates for its annual staff scholarship, the Friends of the SMU Libraries created two scholarships – one for each applicant. “They were both of such high quality in terms of their work at SMU, their grades, and goals for the future,” Friends Director Judy Searles says.

Hillary Campbell of Hamon Arts Library and Joseph Milazzo of Government Information Resources received scholarships to pursue Master’s degrees in library and information science at the University of North Texas.

Campbell says she always wanted to be a librarian. As a child, she created her own public library complete with a card catalog for her dolls and stuffed animals.

Since 1998 Joseph Milazzo has worked with the digitization of the library’s World War II document and photograph collection. He says the project inspired him to go back to school. "It made me realize that there is exciting work in this field,” he says. "To make the decisions that I’m interested in making requires a Master’s degree in library science.”
Events
• November 21 Friends of the Libraries, Owen Wister’s The Virginian: The Writer and His Work at 100, 6 p.m., Texana Room, DeGolyer Library
• December 6 Friends of the Libraries Holiday Luncheon, noon, Popolo’s Restaurant
• February 2 Friends of the Libraries Book Road Show, 3 p.m., Texana Room, DeGolyer Library
• March 1 Friends of the Libraries Bookbinding Workshop, 2 p.m., Umphrey Lee Center
• April 5 Friends of the Libraries Tables of Content, Meadows Museum

Exhibits
• Through December 15 “Peter Ligon: The New York Drypoints,” Hawn Gallery, Hamon Arts Library
• Through January 31 “David Weber, Borderlands Scholar,” Fondren Library Center
• November 21 – December 31 "Owen Wister’s The Virginian: the Writer and His Work at 100,” DeGolyer Library
• February 3 – March 14 “Shuler Museum of Paleontology,” Fondren Library Center

Library Phone Numbers
DeGolyer Library/Special Collections 214-768-2253
Friends of SMU Libraries 214-768-3225
Fondren Library – recording 214-768-7378
Fondren Library – Information Desk 214-768-2326
Fondren Library
  Circulation/Reserve 214-768-2329
  Government Information Resources 214-768-2331
Hamon Arts Library 214-768-2894
Norwick Center for Media and Instructional Technology 214-768-3199
Science and Engineering Library – general 214-768-2444
Science and Engineering Library – reference 214-768-2282
Systems Office 214-768-3229

Web Sites
All SMU Libraries www.smu.edu/libraries/
Ask-a-Librarian www.smu.edu/cul/help.html
Government Document Collection www.smu.edu/cul/gir
Online Resources www.smu.edu/cul/or/
World War II Materials worldwar2.smu.edu
Edwin J. Foscue Map Library www.smu.edu/cul/maps