By Ezra Greenspan

Professor and Chair of English

In current context, the title of this article may sound like an allusion to the Bush Presidential Library. In actuality, I mean it to apply to the university’s academic libraries. Few institutions on campus will play a more vital role in shaping the future of SMU for our students and faculty in the years to come.

We live, as we all know, in a period of sweeping changes in human communications, changes that are fundamentally affecting the transmission, preservation and accessibility of the written and spoken word. These changes, in turn, are transforming the status and function of professor and student alike: what, where, even how we read and write; what texts we study and in what form they exist, and what shapes our classrooms and libraries take.

Let me make a few observations about this emerging situation from the perspective of the SMU Department of English, which like many of its peers nationally views its relationship with the university libraries as central and mutually sustaining. What we as professors of English teach, study and explicate is centered in the printed word and housed largely in the university’s collections of print. This principle has been understood to be as nearly an “eternal verity” as the values that our texts supposedly communicate. But in this age of dynamic changes in communications, the actual situation is more complicated for English Department faculty, students and — to fill out the circle of relationships — librarians alike.

Definitions of literary culture that could once be set into black-and-white terms can no longer be. What our faculty mean when we say “Texan,” “American,” “literature” and “culture” is less clear than in past generations. Nor can we as simply identify the material embodiment of these constructs, which may come as readily in electronic as in printed or scribal form, in film, photograph, musical score, manuscript or periodical as in the printed book.

Amid all this change, we retain one core expectation: whatever our operating definitions of literature and culture and whatever forms our texts take, we all look to the university library as the central repository and/or mediator for support of our scholarship and teaching. Neither that expectation nor the situational arrangement on which it is based seems likely to change any time soon.

Celebrate Neiman Marcus Fortnight once more at the State Fair of Texas

The first Neiman Marcus Fortnight in 1957 made the pages of Time magazine, where it was described as “Dallas in Wonderland.” The flagship downtown Dallas store celebrated its 50th anniversary that year by creating a French extravaganza. Gallic decor, French fashions, perfumes, food and a visit from designer Coco Chanel captivated shoppers. Dallas’ first international flight landed at Love Field for the occasion — an Air France jet filled with French dignitaries, designers, writers and artists.

For the next 29 years Neiman Marcus Fortnight became one of the most important events in Dallas, bringing the culture, products and celebrities from more than 30 countries to the city, says Anne Peterson, curator of photography at DeGolyer Library. “Mention Neiman Marcus Fortnight to any Dallas woman over 40 and her eyes light up.”

Items from DeGolyer’s collections will be used this fall to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Fortnight and the 100th anniversary.
of Neiman Marcus at the State Fair of Texas from September 28 to October 21. DeGolyer houses the papers of the late legendary retailer and Fortnight creator Stanley Marcus and Alvin Colt, the Tony Award-winning New York costume and set designer who created the Fortnight displays.

The State Fair exhibit at the Hall of State will use DeGolyer collections to capture the essence of Fortnight with videos, photographs, posters, drawings and a video interview with 91-year-old Colt, says Bill Plaisance, senior designer at Neiman Marcus and designer of the exhibit.

A longtime supporter of SMU, Marcus donated his papers in 1993 to DeGolyer. More than 400 boxes of correspondence, photographs, newspaper clippings and posters are included in the collection. Colt gave 550 Fortnight drawings and nearly 1,000 photographs along with blueprints and elevations to DeGolyer the same year to complement the Marcus collection.

In 1957, Marcus, then president of Neiman Marcus, created Fortnight partly to offset the pre-Christmas sales slump. Fortnight soon generated more sales at the downtown Dallas store than the holiday season and was copied throughout the retail world. In 1963 Marcus recruited Colt, who created opulent displays for the next 23 years.

Under Colt’s direction, a live bull was displayed in the china shop for the Spain Fortnight of 1980, and a crocodile splashed in a pool outside the Lacoste shop at the French Fortnight. Colt transformed the main store floor into an English manor hall for the 1967 British Fortnight. And an elephant created from fuchsia orchids stood near the elevators at the 1969 East meets West Fortnight.

“Fortnights are done with a very theatrical point of view,” said Colt in 1984. “It’s not display, interior design or anything like that. Fortnight design has a whole stamp of its own. It’s an experience, and it’s just the same as when the curtain goes up on a show.”

Fortnight was much more than a grand display. “People didn’t travel in 1957 like they do now. Fortnight brought the world to Dallas,” Peterson says.

The State Fair exhibit will include photos of Monaco’s Princess Grace and Prince Ranier, Sophia Loren, Estée Lauder, Joan Crawford and Britain’s Princess Margaret at the annual Fortnight galas.

“Fortnight was a cultural event as well as a marketing event,” said Marcus in an interview before the 1984 British Fortnight. “I was very insistent about bringing in folk art, music, dancers, paintings and other things that we wouldn’t sell but that would help educate the public. I think that’s a very essential part of Fortnight.”

Neiman Marcus’ Plaisance won’t try to re-create Fortnight at the exhibit this fall, but visitors can expect to experience its grandeur.

“It will be very powerful, I promise you that.”

"I was very insistent about bringing in folk art, music, dancers, paintings and other things that we wouldn't sell but that would help educate the public. I think that's a very essential part of Fortnight."

— STANLEY MARCUS
Members of the Libraries Executive Board past and present and the Archives of Women of the Southwest Advisory Board recently were given a historic perspective of “the American woman” in the nation’s capital.

Board members gathered for their annual meeting in February, along with guests from the Archives, and were given a behind-the-scenes look at the Library of Congress’ Manuscript Division, where they learned about collecting, preserving and making accessible women’s history. Among the more than 50 million items held in the Manuscript Division are the papers of Susan B. Anthony, Margaret Sanger and the National American Woman Suffrage Association.

“The Library of Congress staff assembled an impressive range of treasures to help demonstrate the remarkable contributions women have made to the history of America,” said Libraries Executive Board member Dominique Inge. “For me, the reading of selections from the diary of Clara Barton, founder of the American Red Cross, was a particularly moving experience — such large emotions were contained within such a small volume.”

The trip commenced with an evening reception at the home of board vice chair Becky Schergens ('68) and Jack Kinsey and included a tour of the State Department’s Diplomatic Reception Rooms, which hold American furnishings and portraits from the 18th and early 19th centuries.

“LEB’s annual trip provides our members, alumni and friends with a unique opportunity to explore the intricate workings of the Library of Congress,” said board chair Mark Nerio ('78), who is also a member of SMU’s Board of Trustees. “It gives us the chance to spend time with friends — new and old.”

Gaining fresh perspectives on the past in Washington

THE CURTAIN ON 19TH-CENTURY THEATER

“These help track the huge shifts in how actors are portrayed in the 1800s,” Connolly says of the cards, most of which likely are lithographs based on artists’ etchings of photographs. “After souvenir cards, we progressed to actors in costumes in photo studios, then to actors in bourgeois clothing in photo studios and, in the 1890s, to actors in bourgeois clothes in their bourgeois homes.”

“That’s when the middle class could pick up Harper’s Weekly and say, ‘Why, these actors and actresses are respectable folks after all!’ ”

More than 30 other prints also found in the McCord/Renshaw Collection show artists’ idealizations of Shakespearean characters and scenes, rather than replications of specific performances. Some are unbound pages from the 1900 publication Shakespeare Rare Print Collection.

“It’s interesting to note the differences between the actors and actresses,” Connolly says. “As my colleague Professor Gretchen Smith has noted, until Sarah Bernhardt came along, women looked off to the side, as if not to engage and challenge the viewer.”

Junior Emily George unearthed the prints during her part-time job inventorying the immense collection named for two long-time theater professors, which moved to the Hamon Arts Library in 1990 after sitting in Fondren Library for years. “Imagine Grandpa’s basement times five,” says the anthropology major, who last year discovered original sketches by Vincente Minnelli from the 1943 film “Cabin in the Sky.”

Sam Ratcliffe, head of Bywaters Special Collections, says the Shakespeare prints, some of which are water-damaged, will be restored and preserved when all are located. “This is another example of ‘just the tip of the iceberg’ when it comes to the McCord/Renshaw Collection,” he says. “We hope to learn the whole story one day.”

Learn more about the Hamon Arts Library’s collections at smu.edu/cul/hamon.
By trade, Jules Bourquin was an optician, crafting eyeglasses in the early 1900s for the residents of Horton, Kansas. He left his legacy, however, as a photographer, leaving more than 20,000 photographs when he died in 1964 at age 86.

DeGolyer Library will showcase its Bourquin photographs at the exhibit “Rock Island in Focus: Jules A. Bourquin, Kansas Photographer, 1898-1931” June 5 through August.


More than 4,000 Bourquin photographs and negatives are part of DeGolyer’s collection of 500,000 historic photographs and Western history.

In the early 1900s Horton was a railroad town of 4,200, a crossroads of the Rock Island Railroad’s main routes west, northwest and southwest. More than 800 workers at machine shops there built and maintained locomotives, passenger cars, freight cars and other equipment.

“The photographs form a wonderful record of the people, urban landscape, unusual visitors and community events of Horton.”

— I.E. QUASLER

New DeGolyer exhibit focuses on historic Midwestern railroad town

The Bourquin works at DeGolyer reflect the photographer’s fascination with trains between 1898 and 1925. The waiting crowd assembled at the depot, the weathered faces of machine shop workers, train accidents and the excitement of unloading a circus train are among the images in the collection.

“Locomotive engineers were a favorite subject,” Quasler says. “Many a young boy aspired to be up in that cab, in charge of such a powerful machine. Jules does not try to glorify these men. Rather he seems more interested in capturing their human qualities, such as dignity and maturity.”

The population of the northeastern Kansas town has dwindled to less than 2,000. Many residents left after Horton lost the Rock Island’s main route to Kansas City in the 1920s. Others left when the shops closed in 1946.

“I appreciate those many times when a young man in a small Kansas town looked through a shutter and decided that what he saw was worth recording,” Quasler says.

Linking to Nature

SMU researchers have a powerful new tool at their fingertips: Central University Libraries now subscribes to Nature, the international weekly journal of science, on the Web.

“Nature is a superb weekly journal that publishes original, groundbreaking research across all scientific disciplines. It is a huge service to our community to have it available online,” says Curt Holleman, deputy director and head of collection development for SMU’s Central University Libraries.

The site contains published magazine content as well as new, peer-reviewed research made available ahead of its print publication through the journal’s Advance Online Publication feature.

“This journal is an essential component of research in the biological sciences, publishing seminal work at a rapid pace,” says Larry Ruben, professor and chair of biological sciences. “Electronic access to Nature is critical to our research efforts, and it is a great benefit to the science departments that we now can access the journal in a timely way, and directly from an office or lab computer.”

Learn more about SMU’s online library resources at smu.edu/cul/or/.
From Columbus to Bush: Friends tour Harlan Crow Library

On February 11, 1865, sculptor Clark Mills met with President Abraham Lincoln to create a life mask of his face. Mills coated Lincoln’s face with oil, then with a layer of wet plaster paste. The resulting likeness preserved Lincoln’s haggard face, just two months before his April 14 assassination.

Members of the Friends of the SMU Libraries saw the Lincoln life mask (below) and other rare presidential treasures in March on a private tour of the Harlan Crow Library in Dallas.

During the last 30 years Dallas businessman Harlan Crow has assembled a collection of 8,000 rare books, 3,500 manuscripts, correspondence, paintings, photographs and sculptures that reflect 500 years of American history. It includes the 1493 Latin printing of Columbus’ letter to the Spanish court announcing his discoveries, a deed to George Washington’s Mount Vernon estate, a silver tankard created by Paul Revere and correspondence from all of the U.S. presidents during their presidencies.

A display case in the two-story library features recent acquisitions, including Harry Truman’s handwritten letter to Washington Post music critic Paul Hume after his harsh review of Margaret Truman’s performance. “Some day I hope to meet you. When that happens you’ll need a new nose, a lot of beefsteak for black eyes . . .”

“If there is a theme to the collection, it is the theme of conflict,” says Sam Fore (below left), full-time librarian for the collection and guide of the tour.

In addition to American history, Crow’s collection includes items related to Nicholas II, the Duke of Wellington, Winston Churchill and Napoleon I.

Filmmaker brings untold stories to life

As an SMU student worker, Q. Ragsdale (’02) assisted with video production at the Norwich Center for Media and Instructional Technology (CMIT). Now a freelance filmmaker, she has given a copy of her first award-winning film to CMIT’s film collection.

Ragsdale’s film, “No Ways Tired: Kathlyn Gilliam and the Desegregation of Dallas Public Schools,” was awarded best documentary at Dallas’ 2006 Juneteenth Film Festival. The 32-minute film profiles Kathlyn Gilliam, the first African-American woman to serve on the Dallas Independent School District school board and the first to serve as its president.

Ragsdale was attending a meeting where Gilliam, who served on the board for 23 years, was introduced as one who had paved the way for other black women. “I was sitting behind her and had no idea who she was,” says Ragsdale, a Dallas native. “I felt it was my duty to tell her story.

“I was impressed with her perseverance. She always had more opposition than support. Her hard work began the desegregation of Dallas schools.”

Ragsdale works full-time at Flava TV but spent eight months writing, editing and directing the film on evenings and weekends under the auspices of her film company, Orange Moon Media.

“I like to pick topics I don’t know anything about,” says the self-avowed bookworm. “To me, making a film is like a book report come to life.”
Art meets snark in Hamon Arts’ ‘Vanity Fair’ exhibition

Jerry Bywaters, famous for the landscapes and still lifes that would help define Lone Star Regionalism, enjoyed a different artistic life as an SMU student: He drew cartoons for the Hilltop humor magazine The Crimson Colt, which he also founded and edited. His devotion to humor in art carried over into the caricatures he collected from old British Vanity Fair magazines.

Those words and images found their way into SMU’s Jerry Bywaters Collection and are at the heart of a Hamon Arts Library exhibition. “The Art of the Caricature: Prints from Vanity Fair, 1869-1900” runs until April 29 in the Hamon’s Mildred Hawn Gallery, featuring 40 full-page examples of Victorian and Edwardian caricature from the British weekly.

“Once these caricatures gained popularity with the British public, most of the celebrities portrayed overcame their reluctance and accepted them as having some cachet,” says guest curator Beverly Mitchell. Some of the magazine’s targets achieved lasting fame, either through accomplishment or through accident of history; others, their heyday long forgotten, have won a measure of immortality through their printed parodies. One subject, actor Henry Irving, has another connection to SMU: His stage makeup kit has been part of the McCord/Renshaw Collection on the Performing Arts since the 1940s and is displayed next to his caricature.

Artists Carlo Pellegrini and Sir Leslie Ward, under the pen names APE and SPY, created many of the drawings — whimsical yet elegant portraits of socialites, politicians and other "men of the day" such as artists Frederic Leighton and Thomas Nast, novelist Emile Zola and Russian tsar Alexander III. The small handful of women profiled included scientist Marie Curie (depicted with her husband, Pierre) and Georgina Weldon, who earned notoriety by acting as her own divorce lawyer after her husband tried to have her declared legally insane.

Founder and editor Thomas Gibson Bowles provided the accompanying tongue-in-cheek biographies under his pseudonym, “Jehu Junior.” As Vanity Fair’s own name suggests, Bowles had a fondness for skewering celebrity that shows through, Mitchell says. “He took a special interest in selecting the caricatures. They tend to reflect his point of view.”

Two of Vanity Fair’s “men of the day”: novelist Emile Zola (titled “French Realism”; January 24, 1880) and Alexander III of Russia (“My August Master”; October 11, 1884)

Pioneering journalist Julia Scott Reed wrote stories about Dallas’ black community from the 1950s through the 1970s that otherwise may have gone unwritten. Now, part of her story will be preserved at DeGolyer Library.

Photographs dating to 1944, a letter from Judge Barefoot Sanders and a mayor’s proclamation of Julia Scott Reed Day are among the items in the collection, which recently was donated by Reed’s daughter, Gayle Coleman, to DeGolyer’s Archives of Women of the Southwest. “This is something that needs to be shared with our children, grandchildren and future generations,” Coleman said at a January 28 reception at DeGolyer attended by about 60 friends and family members.

Reed reported for the Dallas Express early in her career and joined The Dallas Morning News in 1967, where she wrote “The Open Line” three days a week until 1978, when she suffered a debilitating stroke. She died in 2004 at age 87.

“While much of Julia Scott Reed’s journalism has been preserved in the pages of The Dallas Morning News, her papers at SMU are a useful source for visual materials,” said Russell Martin, DeGolyer director. “There are perhaps 50 photographs of people and events in the African-American community, mostly from the 1960s and ’70s. These help document the black experience in Dallas in the latter part of the 20th century.”

During the DeGolyer reception, Gillian McCombs, Central University Libraries dean, noted that young people today often assume equality for women and minorities already has been achieved — until they leave school and enter the real world. “The playing field is not always level, and that is why creating and documenting the archival record of this journey is so important.”

The Remember the Ladies! Campaign is working to endow an archivist position dedicated to the archives, which document the history of women in North Texas and surrounding regions.

Learn more about Archives of Women of the Southwest at smu.edu/cul/degolyer/aws.htm.

Julia Scott Reed was one of the first African-American reporters hired full time by a major daily in the South.
Finding treasure: Sculptor sees beauty in everyday scraps

On an early spring day, the bed of George Tobolowsky’s truck is loaded with rusted pipes, metal scraps and a twisted pile of steel tubing. But step inside his home to see what he creates from what he calls “dumpster digs.”

The contemporary North Dallas house is a backdrop for Tobolowsky’s sculptures created from metal scraps that are cut, polished and welded together. “I like to take found objects and create art by changing the metal from its found state,” he says.

Tobolowsky (’70, ’74), a member of the SMU Libraries Executive Board, minored in sculpture under James Surls and completed business and law degrees. But the businessman, attorney and entrepreneur did not return to sculpture until about three years ago.

“George always had the predisposition for being creative,” says Surls, now a well-known sculptor with a studio in Carbondale, Colorado. “I never had to prod or cajole him into working; he took that upon himself. In art, that’s the fuel that drives the train – you have to have self-discipline.”

Tobolowsky put sculpture aside but remained active in the arts, serving on the Meadows School of the Arts Executive Committee and chairing the Meadows Museum Building Advisory Board. His interest and expertise in map collecting drew him to the Libraries Executive Board.

At a friend’s suggestion, three years ago Tobolowsky entered and won a competition for new Texas talent. Since then, his work has been featured in solo shows at Forty Five Ten, Gerald Peters Gallery and the Meadows School of Art in Dallas. Surls and Tobolowsky will show their work together this summer at the Martin Museum of Art at Baylor University.

With titles like “Work Papers” and “The Road to Success,” Tobolowsky says most of his work reflects his business experience. He owns several Dallas franchises. Other pieces like “Two for the Road” remind him of favorite movies. But each piece starts with one of the hundreds of metal scraps he keeps in his Mountain Springs, Texas, studio.

Tobolowsky is of the old school of sculptors, Surls says. “Sculptors like him historically love things that are heavy.”

They love the beating, banging and physicality of the work.”

After his latest junk yard trip, Tobolowsky reaches into the back of his truck and pulls out a circular piece of metal with triangular and moon-shaped cut-outs. “Now this,” he says, “will make a great piece of art.”

Welcome new Friends

New members of Friends of the SMU Libraries who have joined as of March 16, 2007.

Julio Ayala
Anne Brabham
Mr. and Mrs. William Cravens
John S. Dryden
Melissa Fetter
George Illes Sr.
Kenneth M. and Jacqueline Jasinski
Sims Jasinski
Andrea L. Kyprianou
Roger Lester
D’Ann Mateer
Lynn B. McCoy
Anne E. Peterson
Bruce Treut
Chris Van Wagoner
Dan Vasquez
Exhibits

- Through June 29 Marshall Terry & the Art of Fiction: One Writer’s Life, DeGolyer Library
- Through April 29 The Art of the Caricature: Prints from Vanity Fair, 1869-1900, Hamon Arts Library
- April 25-May 31 Faculty Recognition Exhibit, Fondren Library
- June 5 - August "Rock Island in Focus: Jules A. Bourquin, Kansas Photographer, 1898-1931," DeGolyer Library

Events

- April 14 Tables of Content, Collins Executive Education Center, reservations required
- May 1 Friends Annual Dinner and Meeting, Mercury Grill, reservations required
- May 3, 5:30 p.m., Meadows Museum Lecture Neiman Marcus at 100, the Fortnights and Fashion in Dallas, by DeGolyer photography curator Anne Peterson

For event and exhibit details call 214-768-3225.

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
Norwick Center for Media and Instructional Technology 214-768-3199

Web site

Central University Libraries smu.edu/cul/