

# Incommon Knowledge

A newsletter for supporters of University Libraries



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## On My Mind... a message from the Dean

Cheryl Kern-Simirenko

Historically, information was a scarce commodity. Today we find ourselves in the information age – an information- and data-rich environment where human attention, rather than information, is the scarce commodity. Richard Lanham, author of "The Electronic Word," has characterized this situation as the "new economics of human attention." To be successful in their studies, students need to become productive and proficient users of data and information. In a rapidly changing world where the skills one has at graduation may be obsolete within three to five years, students need the ability to continually refresh their knowledge base in order to be successful in the workplace.

Coping with the information explosion has been described as drinking from a fire hose. The transformational impact of computational technologies and advanced networking is rapidly changing work in science and engineering, routinely generating terabytes and petabytes of data. Coping with the data explosion might be compared to drinking from Niagara Falls.

Information literacy instruction is at the core of turning data into information and information into knowledge. Raw numbers or isolated pieces of data need to be organized into patterns or put into meaningful context. Increasingly, information literacy instruction supports the development of skill sets for utilizing subject-specific informatics: locating, retrieving, evaluating for validity and relevance, visualizing and representing data.

Likewise, information isn't knowledge; information needs to be applied in ways that enhance learning or enable decision-making. The goals of information literacy instruction include development of a set of skills that support locating, retrieving, evaluating for authority and relevance, and successfully applying information. The goal is

to equip our students with the core fluencies in gathering and applying information that will enable them to succeed in their studies and in the workplace; in effect, equipping them to become lifelong learners.

The course-integrated approach to teaching and learning information strategies is proving successful in developing this range of skills and competencies. Based on close collaboration between University Libraries faculty and course instructors, this approach goes beyond the introductory phases of demonstrating databases relevant to the subject and begins to focus on combining the instructor's learning objectives with ones that support information literacy. The emphasis is not only on point-of-need learning, but also on integrated learning outcomes. Active and problem- or project-based learning techniques, supported by customized resource environments, are especially helpful in developing such skills.

Such efforts are being incorporated into the First-Year Experience, the Learning Communities and selected courses in various disciplines. In looking ahead to the creation of a Learning Commons in Bierce Library, where the expertise

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## Did you know?

The books in our collections, if lined up side by side, would stretch from downtown Akron to Cedar Point. (The line can end with UA's copy of David Francis' "Cedar Point: Queen of American Watering Places").

## Librarians out and about

### Phyllis O'Connor receives award for statewide service

Recently, at a briefing on Ohio's Regional Book Depositories held at the Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine (NEOUCOM), Phyllis O'Connor, assistant dean of University Libraries, was presented with a plaque honoring her for "meritorious service to the state depository program."

Ohio has five regional book depositories located in the four geographic

corners of the state that serve 15 state-assisted universities. They were all constructed on the Harvard model (high

density storage to make the most efficient use of space in the housing of rarely or little-used materials).

The five facilities currently house nearly 8 million volumes. Unfortunately, this is 92 percent of the 8.4 million-volume capacity, and requests for additions to the storage facilities have not been funded.

In the face of this space crisis and funding shortage, in October 2005 the Inter-University Council library deans and directors asked O'Connor to serve as the statewide coordinator of Ohio's Depository Program to establish a model for annual operational funding; optimize storage space; recommend document delivery and service standards; and ensure preservation of scarce copies.

The Statewide Depository Working Group that O'Connor chairs has made extraordinary progress toward meeting these goals. Her award is probably just the first recognition for her efforts that she will receive.



### Reinventing OhioLINK

Roger Durbin, associate dean

In 1989, the Ohio education community conceived a bold vision to become "the most powerful statewide library and information system in the nation." Since then it has grown with a range of services and is regarded and lauded as one of the most successful, if not the most successful, academic library consortium worldwide.

In order to keep its leading edge, the OhioLINK community is once again thinking forward and examining new and potent services and resources that will create critical and fundamental changes for its members, and indeed academic librarianship.

### UA Librarian Frank Bove visits China

Roger Durbin, associate dean

In March 2006, 22 academic librarians from around the country visited China as part of the Association of College and Research Libraries' People to People Ambassador program. The purpose of the trip was to exchange ideas for the future of academic librarianship on an international basis, while strengthening the relationship between Chinese and American academic institutions.

Included in the group was Frank Bove, our electronic resources librarian. The visitors arrived with many questions about Chinese academic libraries, which included queries about their experiences with the then-newly instituted presence of Google in their colleges and universities; their concerns about copyright law with

UA librarians, as they were before, will be on the analysis and steering committees that will guide the development of services. Here is a list of task forces and UA participants:

- **Portable Devices Accessibility** — Susan Ashby, Lori Fielding, Melanie Smith
- **Coordinated Book Buying** — Diana Chlebek, Julie Gammon
- **Digitization** — Roger Durbin
- **My Library: Personalized Services** — Jeffrey Franks
- **Transforming User Services** — Joseph LaRose, Bennie Robinson, Russell Tinkham
- **Metadata Strategies** — Karen Plummer
- **Central Catalog Changes** — Russell Tinkham
- **Open Access Strategy** — Delmus Williams



*Library Assistant Professor Frank Bove in China.*

respect to the Million Books Digitization project that China is involved in; and the role of librarians in their higher education institutions. The dialogues that came from these common concerns proved enlightening to participants on both sides of the Pacific.

Like the other delegates, Bove was fascinated by their side trips to the Great Wall of China and to various cities, such as the seaport of Shanghai and the capital in Beijing. Among the more remarkable experiences of the trip, Bove found that the menu for one meal included frittered scorpions. And yes, he ate one. Here is the picture to prove it.

### Did you know?

The books in the libraries' collections weigh, in total, about the same as a fully fueled space shuttle.

## On the inside

### The Science Circuit

Several former faculty, staff and student assistants returned to campus to “Make the Science Circuit.” Hosted by Dean Kern-Simirenko and Miss Pauline Franks, retired University Librarian, the attendants had lunch in the newly created classroom in the recently expanded and renovated Science and Technology Library in the Auburn Science and Engineering Center. Afterward, visitors toured the facility. Mostly though, they became acquainted with current library employees, reminisced about their working days and enjoyed the camaraderie.

### Back to the Workplace Reunion

Ellen Perduyn, Development

The University Libraries hosted a reunion of former student assistants (who are part of our family of alumni). Attendees had the opportunity to hear Dr. Virginia Gunn, UA Professor of Family and Consumer Sciences, give an engaging talk on her adventures in her research on historic costumes. Dr. Gunn had many examples from the 3000-plus collection of historical costumes that she has amassed over the years and which are housed at the university.

At the reception, a newly acquired book was given a bookplate in honor of this year’s graduating student assistants. Awardees were: Gregory Carlino, Mike Colella, Linnae Hahler, Jessica Holland, Steve Hudson, Garrett Humphrey, Kendra Johnson, Adam Marshand, Prashanth Modugu, Ashley Presutto, Chris Purcell, Jana Reams, Silke Schaefer, Stephen Schwarten, and Jeanne Szakmeister.

### Did you know?

The usable square footage of the main and science libraries and the archives is roughly the same as an apartment building with 120 two-bedroom units.



*Participants at the Science Circuit*

### This City Reads

Library workers reading to children for UA’s Center for Child Development began through the idea of a former student assistant, Mary Bergolc. Every several weeks the teachers would bring their class to the library and Bergolc would read to them.

Don Appleby, in the Circulation Department, would always greet the children when they came in and, on several occasions, served as a “guest” reader. He became the “official reader” once Mary was graduated.

This year the center was to be part of Akron’s “This City Reads” celebration. Dean Cheryl Kern-Simirenko asked Appleby to represent the library at the event. Unfortunately, the weather failed to cooperate — Northeast Ohio was snowed in on Feb. 14.



*“Mr. Don” (as the kids like to call him) is reading to children as part of “This City Reads.”*

Undaunted, Appleby rescheduled the reading for March 8. He read two books to the kids.



## Support for library efforts

### Legacy for Learning Program

Ellen Perduyn, Development

The Legacy for Learning bookplate program is now launched to support acquisitions to the University Libraries. Books are plated and acknowledged for \$125, with a framed memento version for \$200. Annette Marcinkoski, in Flint, Michigan, UA Class of 1955, placed the first order as a memorial to her father, Frank J. Marcinkoski, Jr., UA Class of 1933. A newly acquired book was plated with the inscription she chose, and noted in the Dean's office for reference. We are delighted to offer this meaningful way to celebrate, honor, and remember a special person or event as part of our fund raising efforts.

For information call 330-972-7224; or email [bookplates@uakron.edu](mailto:bookplates@uakron.edu).

### NEH Preservation grant

Julie Gammon, head of Acquisitions

The National Endowment for the Humanities awarded Archival Services and the Archives of the History of American Psychology a preservation assistance grant to support an expert assessment of the conditions under which the departments presently store and



handle materials.

Project goals include an

on-site assessment by an expert of the storage conditions and a written report recommending actions for mitigating preservation concerns. In addition, this project has been designated a "We the People" project because it will "enhance specific events and themes in our nation's history and culture."

### Maslow and the Blackfoot tribe

Rhonda Rinehart, Psychology Archives

The Archives of the History of American Psychology received two grants



Rhonda Rinehart

totaling \$5,500 to present *Abraham Maslow and the Blackfoot Experience*, a conference exploring the historical importance of the psychologist's

fieldwork with Blackfoot Indians. A grant of \$3,000 was awarded from the **American Psychological Association's** Commission on Ethnic Minority Recruitment, and another grant from the **Ohio Humanities Council** for \$2,500 was awarded to introduce this humanities topic to the public.

### 2006 Donors

The following have donated \$100 or more to University Libraries during calendar year 2006. We value our contributors and do our best to make this list accurate and complete. If you notice an error, please contact Ellen Perduyn, Director of Library Development, at 330.972.6056 or at [perduyn@uakron.edu](mailto:perduyn@uakron.edu).

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### Seiberling papers

Phyllis O'Connor, assistant dean

**The Friends of the University Libraries** has provided \$10,000 (which is to be matched by private donations) to begin initial processing of the John F. Seiberling papers from the period 1973-1987. The materials contain 650 cubic feet of congressional files, including: materials regarding Seiberling's congressional activities, correspondence, memorandums, notes, drafts of legislation, miscellaneous materials relating to bills before Congress, reports, and news clippings.



Rich Wisneski

University Libraries has hired librarian Dr. Rich Wisneski who graduated from Michigan State University to prepare an inventory of the materials as a first step to making this rich resource available to researchers.

## Service with a smile

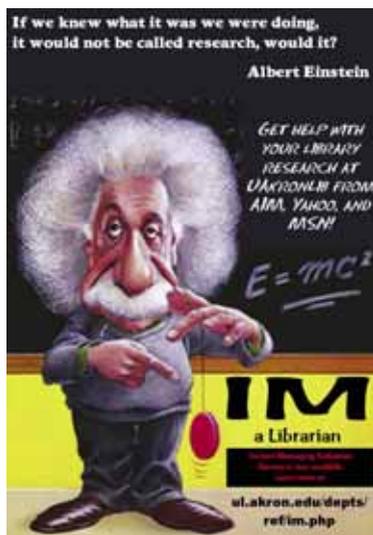
### IM a Librarian – remote reference

Roger Durbin, associate dean

One thing we know from all the surveys we take is that students like to get into quick contact with a real live librarian. Sometimes they would prefer face-to-face help, but often they just need assistance that can be handled remotely.

It is now possible for our students to obtain research assistance from a UA librarian via our Instant Messaging Reference Service.

Starting in January, University Libraries began using students' preferred method of communication — instant messaging. The kind of IM provider students may have doesn't matter. Whether it's Yahoo, AOL, MSN or ICQ, they can get connected.



Posters publicizing the new service have been distributed to residence halls and the Student Union.



Library Associate Professor Joe LaRose at Reference desk

### Help for research woes

Roger Durbin, associate dean

More than 50,000 reference questions a year are posed at the public services desks. Students need help with everything from sending an e-mail and finding a particular book or journal to getting the network printer to work, signing up for a class, making a course schedule change, and gathering the latest data and theories on how political parties shape public opinion.

Librarians, staff, and student assistants are there to provide assistance. Student assistants focus on the technological issues. Staff employees handle general information needs. Librarians work on the heavy-duty, research-oriented topics.

**Did you know?**

It takes 10 people, four businesses and two months to completely order, ship, invoice, receive, pay for, catalogue, process and shelve a library book.



Library Professor Steve Aby helps student with research project

### Information Literacy 101

Roger Durbin, associate dean

University Libraries offers a one-credit course in information literacy called "Information Tools for Academic Success." Affectionately known as Info Tools, four sections are offered each semester. The five-week sections are scheduled for hours when most students are usually finished with other classes and can fit this one in.

Librarians teach the basic skills of information locating, gathering, organizing, evaluating, presenting and representing data in an ethical manner. Often students come with "real life" topics – either ones from class assignments or problems



Library Assistant Professor Mike Tosko teaching Info Tools

in everyday life for which they need information to cope or resolve the issues.

Sessions are held in the Bierce Library classroom and the new one in the recently renovated Science and Technology Library.

**Did you know?**

It took 25,500 trees to produce the paper for all the books housed in the libraries.



University Libraries  
 The University of Akron  
 Akron, OH 44325-1701

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**On My Mind**, continued from Page 1

of various campus specialists will be accessible centrally, the potential for truly enhancing student proficiency and productivity through integrated learning is apparent. The Learning Commons environment will support the integrated teaching and learning of multiple literacies (information, technology, writing, math and visual/multimedia) with subject content in the curriculum, providing additional opportunities for equipping our students with the fluencies essential for success in the 21st century workplace.

### **Cheryl Kern-Simirenko in Goodyear Leadership Network**

The Goodyear Leadership Network for Education, sponsored by the Summit Education Initiative, brings together education leaders in Summit County to learn together about best-in-class organizations, innovative approaches taken by chief executive officers in other sectors, and ties between education and economic development.

Dean Cheryl Kern-Simirenko, who is part of the initiative this year, says that it is proving to be an engaging and enriching experience. She was attracted by the networking opportunities, both formal and informal, offered through the Goodyear Network. As a relative newcomer to the area, she has been able

to connect with other key members of the local education community much more rapidly than would otherwise occur. These links are helping facilitate the engagement goals of University Libraries.

Each participant brings a wealth of experience to bear on the discussions that grow out of both the readings and visits to other successful service-oriented organizations in the area. The participants' diverse perspectives also help stimulate innovative thinking.

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### **Other Contributors**

Don Appleby, Frank Bove, Peg Goodman, Janine Pavkov and Reneé Wilson.

### **Did you know?**

**In full-time equivalent units, student assistants make up nearly half of the libraries' total work force.**