

February 2006



Happy Valentines Day

Issue Topics

From the Editor	1
Confessions of a New Librarian	3
Electronic voting: CUS Words from the Chair	2
Conference Breakfast Programs	4
Conference Programs	5
CUS contacts	6



CUStodian

Newsletter of the College, University, Special Libraries Division

of the Alabama Library Association

From the Editor

With CUStodian well and truly launched, I would like to ask you, our readers, to help us make this venture a success. To me, at least, this newsletter will only be a success, if it informs us, or challenges, or inspires us. To that end, I would like to ask for your help in any or all of the following ways:

1. Do you have newly (in the last 3 years) graduated librarians on staff? If so, I would like to know about them, as I would like to invite them to contribute to our "Confessions of a New Librarian" feature.
2. What is going on in your library? Has anyone pub-

lished an interesting paper or given one at a conference? Do you have any new/unusual projects in the works?

3. Do you have a collection that you would like to make better known? As a collector of vintage post and trade cards, I would be overjoyed, to learn of such a collection in a library in Alabama.
4. Do you have an area of expertise or interest that you would be willing to share with us? In this 3rd issue we are bringing you a brief description of informatics. If you would like to write about an interest of

yours, we would be glad to talk with you about it.

There are undoubtedly other kinds of information you would



find useful. A note to me at any time telling me what you can contribute or would like to see would be very welcome.

Colleen Valente, Editor & Chair, Public Relations Committee

Informatics: Information Simplicity by Brenda Turner

We all know the cliché, "If a tree falls in the woods, does it make a sound?" Well here's a modern-day parallel...if information is inaccurate, inaccessible or in chaos, is it useful? The answer is a resounding, *no!*

On July 7, 2005 my focus, my career, changed from Director of Libraries at Faulkner University to Professor of Informatics. I served as Director of Librar-

ies since June 1993 but upon obtaining my Ph.D. from Florida State University in Information Studies in December 2004, I pursued the development of a new degree plan at Faulkner, *Informatics*.

Informatics is the study of assessing and making information more useful. How? The target audience of a product is determined and input from that audience is

solicited. Sounds simple, doesn't it...but up until recently it has not been common practice. Now we ask, listen and observe them using the technology and incorporate what we learn back into the product's design. That's the crux of Informatics.

Usability experts suggest that most new technologies

Informatics

(Continued from page 1)

should pass a “ten-minute rule” simply meaning,

“...novice users should be able to learn how to use a system in under 10 minutes; if not, the system fails (Preece, et al., 2002, p. 16).”

Obviously this doesn't apply to complex systems that offer multiple purposes... but it does to a single-purpose product, like a VCR. .

Surprisingly, scholars report that when the 10-minute rule is applied to VCRs, they often fail. Next time you purchase a new single-purpose technology, time yourself...do you have it up and running in ten minutes?

Two other important “10” rules to remember...the time limit users expect systems to respond (i.e.,

search engines and applications) is 1/10th of a second; and, they expect to find what they're looking for (e.g. on a website) within 10 seconds or else their attention is lost (cited in <http://www.useit.com/papers/responsetime.html> Retrieved Oct. 6, 2005).

Some may ask, “What's the big deal about information usability?” The Usability Professionals' Association thinks usability is a very big deal and recently sponsored 36 hours of activities around the globe during their World Usability Day to highlight the importance of making technology more usable.

The following map illustrates where events were scheduled in more than 70 cities in 30 countries... events included workshops, seminars, competitions, exhibits, and expositions (retrieved from

www.worldusabilityday.org Dec. 13, 2005).

“Why doesn't this work right? What am I supposed to do with this now?” World Usability Day was intended for everyone who has ever asked these questions. Events highlighted the importance of incorporating the user's perspective in the



development, design, and evaluation of technologies...from cell phones to software, testing and retest-

(Continued on page 3)

“...novice users should be able to learn how to use a system in under 10 minutes; if not the system fails”.

Electronic Voting: CUS Words from the Chair” by Ron Dial



RON DIAL

A test of electronic voting was conducted at the end of January for the upcoming election. The ALLA Teller Committee tallied the mail-in ballots and the electronic votes and determined that just over 20% of the ALLA members participated. Many mail-in ballots came in after the official deadline.

The resolution to amend the by-laws to allow electronic voting passed with at

least 98% of the vote. Official ALLA executive committee approval of the resolution will not be available until the March meeting.

It is still unclear whether email notification of the upcoming election will be sufficient, as the majority of the membership has access to e-mail, or whether the membership will need to be notified by postcard and letter.

In the coming months, CUS will try to secure valid email addresses for all those who are members of the division and work at the division level to encourage electronic voting. This year's ALLA president will come from the CUS membership. It should be every member's goal to encourage the greatest possible participation in the upcoming ALLA election

Confessions of a New Librarian by Johnna Childs

When I finished my MSI degree, I knew what career path I wanted. I was going to be a cataloger at an academic library. I had done a brief cataloging practicum at the University of Michigan, and I knew that this was the job for me. During my practicum, I did nothing but original cataloging, so I was under the impression that academic library catalogers did just that -- cataloged all day long.

Upon getting my current job at an academic library, I discovered that my impression was quite mistaken. At very large research universities, there are librarians whose primary job is to catalog materials; some catalogers even specialize in the type or language of the materials that they catalog. But

at smaller universities, especially those where librarians are tenure-track, all librarians must do a variety of tasks, including many outside their primary areas of responsibility.

Yes, I am responsible for cataloging, but I also have many other duties, which include chairing and serving on committees, supervising staff, reference desk duty, collection development, writing articles for publication, and serving as the liaison to an academic department. Some of these things I thought I'd never have to do (reference, supervising), and some I have found I enjoy greatly (collection development, interviewing potential employees) even though I had very little knowledge of them when I started my job.

I have learned that being an academic librarian requires flexibility. I've had to develop a number of skills that I never expected to use during my career. My job tasks change frequently. My library starts new projects, new committees are formed, cataloging rules change, software gets updated. I can't rely on some rigid idea of what my job is supposed to be. Librarianship changes, and I have to change with it.

Johnna Childs is the Cataloging Librarian at Auburn University Montgomery



Johnna Childs

Informatics... (Continued from page 2)

ing as needed, then revising products to increase usability.

Informatics students learn assessment techniques for testing usability, they gain an understanding of policies related to information, and are introduced to a variety of philosophies surrounding information behavior. Students also learn technical skills such as telecommunications and networking, database concepts, and visual as well as object-oriented programming. Coursework discusses the aesthetic, effective presentation of information...from the perspective of a website or database, an application or written documentation. Informatics is offered by the De-

partment of Computer Sciences at Faulkner University, one of only ten institutions in the nation offering the degree.

If you or someone you know is interested in making information technologies more us-



Dr. Brenda Turner

able, in learning what makes information work bet-

ter...consider Informatics. Contact me [<btturner@faulkner.edu>](mailto:btturner@faulkner.edu) or the admissions office of Faulkner University for more information; two online classes begin in January. It's the study of people, data, and systems...a great degree by itself or in preparation for an advanced degree in Information Science.

Notes

1 Nelson, Ted (1980) *Interactive Systems and the Design of Virtuality. Creative Computing*, Nov.-Dec., 1980 quoted by Preece, et al. (2002), p. 16.

Reference

Preece, J; Rogers, Y; Sharp, H. (2002) *Interaction Design: Beyond Human-Computer Interaction*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

"INFORMATICS IS OFFERED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCES AT FAULKNER UNIVERSITY, ONE OF ONLY TEN INSTITUTIONS IN THE NATION OFFERING THE DEGREE."

Conference News: Programs

Alabama Go Local Project and its relationship to Health InfoNet of Alabama and to the National Library of Medicine's MedlinePlus site will hold a session at the ALLA Annual Convention on Friday, April 28th, 2006, at 9:00 a.m.

This site was launched in September, (the sixth "Go Local" site in the nation!) with a database of local health services and resources from around the state. Kay Hogan Smith, Project Director and Lee Vucovich, Assistant Director will be the presenters. Kay has been project director of Health Info Net of Alabama since its birth in 1999.

She has also been a reference librarian at UAB Lister Hill Library of Health Sciences in Birmingham since 1991. Lee has been a Reference Librarian at Lister Hill Library for the past two years. Previously, Lee held a variety of positions with St. Joseph County Public Library in South Bend Indiana. This program is being sponsored by the Reference and Adult Services Roundtable of ALLA.



ALLA Convention Approaches!

The beautiful, brand new Marriot



Marriot Shoals Hotel &

Shoals (pictured above) will be the site of "Jazzin It Up", the 2006 ALLA convention in Florence, AL this coming April 25-28. Registration for the convention and hotel information are available at the [ALLA web site](#).

There will be something for everyone; wonderful programs, exhibits,

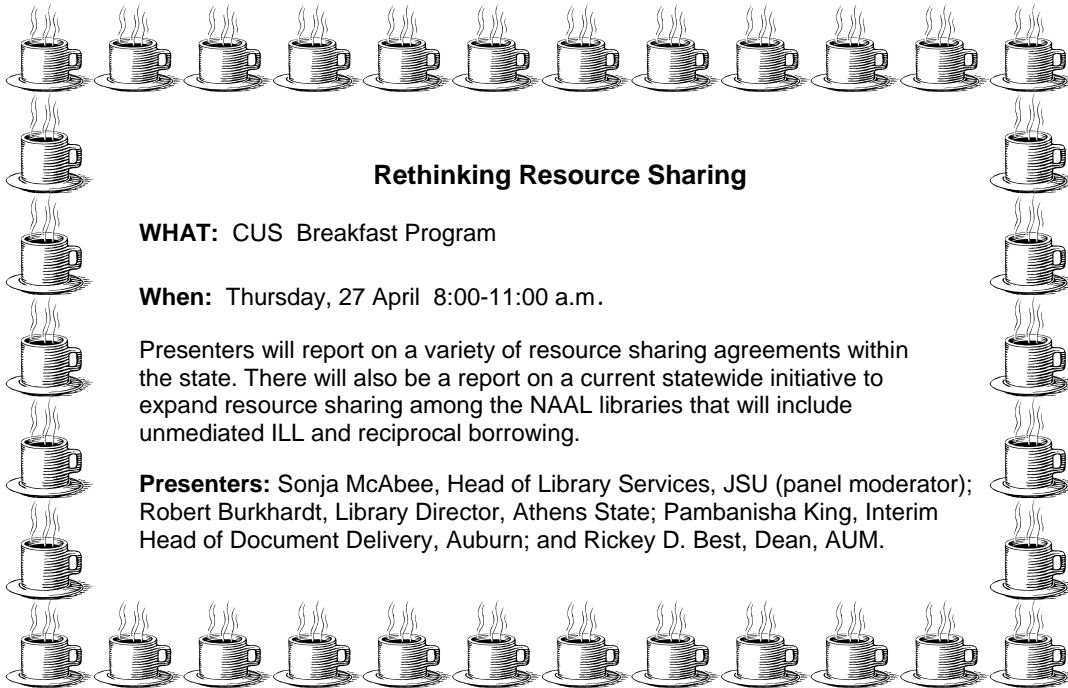
old colleagues to catch up with and new colleagues to be come acquainted with. So make plans soon to attend!



Convention Center at the Marriot

*There will be something
for everyone; wonderful
programs, exhibits, old
colleagues to catch up
with and new colleagues
to be come acquainted
with*

Conference News : Breakfast Programs



Rethinking Resource Sharing

WHAT: CUS Breakfast Program

When: Thursday, 27 April 8:00-11:00 a.m.

Presenters will report on a variety of resource sharing agreements within the state. There will also be a report on a current statewide initiative to expand resource sharing among the NAAL libraries that will include unmediated ILL and reciprocal borrowing.

Presenters: Sonja McAbee, Head of Library Services, JSU (panel moderator); Robert Burkhardt, Library Director, Athens State; Pambanisha King, Interim Head of Document Delivery, Auburn; and Rickey D. Best, Dean, AUM.



RASRT is Jazzing It Up!!

WHO: Reference and Adult Services Round Table (RASRT)

WHAT: Breakfast Program!

WHEN: Thursday, April 27th, 2006
8:00 a.m.-10:00 a.m.

WHERE: Alabama Library Association Annual Convention
Florence, Alabama

PROGRAM TITLE: The Future of Reference Service

Internet Babies and Reference Librarians: Making Sure They Get the Goods

This program will feature guest speaker Dr. Elizabeth Aversa, Director and Professor of the School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa. Panelists Dr. Shirley Laseter, Director (Maxwell AFB Air University Library, Montgomery, AL), Ms. Betty Tims, Head of Public Services (Auburn University Montgomery Library, Montgomery, AL) and Ms. Barbara Clotfelter, Head of the Business, Science and Technology Department (Birmingham Public Library, Birmingham, AL) will address the ways in which their libraries highlight various methods of publicizing on-line reference resources to patrons, emphasizing material evaluation.

Pre-registration is required, so check your conference form and sign up today!



Alabama Library Association

CUS Division

The CUS Division promotes library services and librarianship among ALLA and constituent association groups.

The mission of the CUS Division is to support its member libraries' needs for ongoing information in four critical areas; information resources, education, leadership and innovative practices.

CUS Division members represent committed library and information professionals and technical staffs at approximately thirty-nine (39) universities and colleges, sixty (60) two-year and technical colleges, and numerous special libraries with interests in business, science, medicine, energy, art, sports, and more!



All Valentine cat graphics in this issue used with the kind permission of [CatStuff](#).

Your ALLA / CUS Division Officers

Chair: Ron Dial — Air University

Chair/Elect: Tyrone Webb— Bevill State Community College

Secretary: Bethany Skaggs— Jacksonville State University

Immediate Past Chair:

Robert Burkhardt— Athens State University

Member-at-Large for Projects: Jodi Poe — Jacksonville State University

Member-at-Large for Bylaws: Jeffrey Luzius— Gadsden State Community College

Member-at-Large for Planning :

Margaret Alexander—Tuskegee University

Member-at-Large for Programs:

Paula Barnett-Ellis— Jacksonville State University

Committee Chairs:

Public Relations

[Colleen Valente](#), Auburn University at Montgomery

Publications

Bill Hubbard, Jacksonville State University

Research

Amy Prendergast, University of South Alabama

Legislative Development

Donna Chow, South University

