Frantic Fall

All branch libraries are reporting that they have been extremely busy during the fall term. Late opening hours have begun and students are demonstrating their appreciation of the additional availability of our facilities through their significant numbers on the premises. No doubt the pressure will continue until the holiday season when we shall all appreciate the opportunity to have a short break to recuperate. Thank you to all who are going the extra mile – or kilometre – right now.

Bill Weintraub spoke last week at a very successful meeting sponsored by the Library and the Friends of the Library. He presented excerpts from his book Crazy about Lili, exploring the lighter side of life in Montreal some years ago and the experiences of a McGill student growing up through this period.

An extremely interesting meeting of the Association of Research Libraries was held in Washington two weeks ago. Various business matters were addressed and the evaluation of size of libraries was again referred to. Maclean’s has placed McGill’s collections at number 8. Does a large collection make a library better? Does it make it more difficult to find the particular item one wants? Is there a large variety from which to obtain desired materials? Is bigger better? These and other questions have been discussed for some time. As libraries move to electronic formats and open access is being encouraged for the transmission of research content, what is the role of the library in improving access to both print and online materials?

These and other questions were addressed by a seminar on the management of digital assets held following the ARL meeting. Co-sponsored by other groups including museums and the Coalition of Networked Information, the seminar emphasised the importance of access to original material in the support of innovation and creativity and the need for research libraries to articulate and promote a vision of the role of digital assets in libraries. Ann Wolpert from MIT, as one of the speakers, stressed that research libraries were well positioned to experiment, that the management of digital assets is a new line of business for libraries, that business planning is not the norm in libraries and that preservation and distribution have new meaning. Value-added services, operational sustainability, evolution, scalability and long-term affordability are important as we go forward in dealing with our digital assets. More details are available at www.arl.org/forum05/#proceedings.

The ARL meeting was followed by a CARL (Canadian Association of Research Libraries) meeting, also addressing the significance of digital assets held following the ARL meeting. Co-sponsored by other groups including museums and the Coalition of Networked Information, the seminar emphasised the importance of access to original material in the support of innovation and creativity and the need for research libraries to articulate and promote a vision of the role of digital assets in libraries. Ann Wolpert from MIT, as one of the speakers, stressed that research libraries were well positioned to experiment, that the management of digital assets is a new line of business for libraries, that business planning is not the norm in libraries and that preservation and distribution have new meaning. Value-added services, operational sustainability, evolution, scalability and long-term affordability are important as we go forward in dealing with our digital assets. More details are available at www.arl.org/forum05/#proceedings.

The ARL meeting was followed by a CARL (Canadian Association of Research Libraries) meeting, also addressing the significance of digital assets, but this time looking at the digitization of Canadian heritage materials. Until now, there have not been clear coordinating strategies, observance of standards, preservation strategies or clear directions and priorities. A three day meeting developed a way forward. A slogan was developed – Canadians will know themselves and the world will know Canadians. Development of appropriate metadata, best practice approaches and a clear method of recording what has been digitized will occur in the future.

Janine Schmidt, Trenholme Director of Libraries
In October, the Norbert Schoenauer Case Studies addition to the Norbert Schoenauer Collections: Housing Archive was launched and may be found at cac.mcgill.ca/schoenauer/cases/. The site features a selection of images from the Schoenauer Archive Collection located in the John Bland Canadian Architecture Collection, McGill University. This latest phase of the Norbert Schoenauer Collections: Housing Archive, completed in the fall of 2005, highlights the general themes representative of Norbert Schoenauer’s work as an architect, urban planner, author and professor.

Quarter Century Club - new members from the Library staff
Steven Blaise, John Cunningham, Donna Hedge and Gail Veli were inducted into the Quarter Century Club this year for having contributed to the McGill community for more than 25 years.

The 38th annual McGill Quarter Century Club gala celebration was held on Thursday, September 29, 2005 at Redpath Hall.

Kendall Wallis’s translation of Günter Bandmann’s Early medieval architecture as bearer of meaning was published this year by Columbia. Choice magazine’s reviewer says, “This book, with Kendall Wallis’s lucid and readable translation into English of a difficult German original, will make this heretofore-daunting work more easily accessible to a wide range of American medievalists and architectural historians. As such, it makes a timely, welcome addition to essential library holdings in those areas.”

What do George Frideric Handel, a 128 year old box of histology slides and William Osler have in common?
To find out, visit the newest Osler Library virtual exhibition, William Osler and the Teaching of Microscopy at McGill, written, produced and narrated by Dr. Richard Fraser, Department of Pathology, McGill University with the help of Instructional Multimedia Services.

www.health.library.mcgill.ca/osler/virtual.htm

Remote storage reopened for Life Sciences, Howard Ross, Schulich, Education, and Macdonald Libraries
Regular runs to the Currie Gym Library Remote Storage area have resumed and the facility has been re-opened for access by users wanting to consult materials on site. Life Sciences Library Staff plan to visit Currie Storage three times per week to process requests, and the library delivery truck will stop at Storage two times per week to pick up and to return Storage materials. Efforts to standardize retrieval procedures are ongoing, but for the moment, please consult the appropriate "home" library’s web pages and / or staff for information on how to access materials in Storage for these Libraries.

ERRATUM
In the July issue of Library Matters @ McGill, we implied that Jennifer Innes currently works in “circulation, at the reserve desk and in serials.” In fact, Jennifer works in Information and Research Services at the Humanities and Social Sciences Library.

I’ve been drunk for about a week now, and I thought it might sober me up to sit in a library.
- F. Scott Fitzgerald
**QuestionPoint Online Reference Service Slated for Implementation in the Library**

McGill University Library has purchased a subscription to QuestionPoint, an online reference service developed by the Library of Congress and OCLC. QuestionPoint will allow us to enhance our ‘Ask a Librarian’ service (www.mcgill.ca/library/assistance/askus/) in a number of ways. Here are some of the features QuestionPoint offers:

- **Live Chat with Patrons:** Liaison Librarians will be available for online sessions with patrons at designated times.
- **The ability to refer questions to subject specialists and branch library service accounts.**
- **Reference Management Tools:** QuestionPoint can be used as a reference management system to track questions and generate usage statistics.

Global and Local Knowledge Bases: We'll have access to a database of previously asked and answered question pairs developed by libraries that subscribe to QuestionPoint. We’ll also be able to develop a local database of questions and answers particular to McGill. This will cut down on duplication of effort and make our service more efficient.

We’re currently setting up a test site so we can get used to the software, but soon we’ll begin managing e-mail questions through QuestionPoint, and by the end of January 2006 we will start offering online chat. You’ll be asked to test our ‘Ask a Librarian’ site to submit questions and use the chat feature when it becomes available. This is a good way to experience virtual reference from the patron’s point of view.

The Library has offered e-mail reference service for years now, and during that time the number of e-mail questions has grown dramatically, as has the number of different web forms. As more people turn to the Internet for information, it becomes increasingly necessary to provide our patrons with service that is reliable, convenient, and fast, while they’re online.

If you would like to learn more about QuestionPoint, visit www.questionpoint.org.

**QuestionPoint Implementation Team:**

- Erica Burnham
- Maryvon Côté
- Jim Henderson
- Valerie Mayman
- Debbie Meert
- Louise Robertson
- Cecilia Tellis

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**Client Service Tips**

by Joseph Hafner, Music Cataloguer (Library Technical Services)

☞ **Use the “Home on the Range” motto: no discouraging words.**

Instead of I can’t or They won’t let me..., use a positive but truthful alternative such as Let me see what we can do, that’s a tough one, here are some options. Replace That’s a problem with That’s a challenge. Say Here’s how you can...instead of You’ll have to... And what do you do when a customer asks for something that’s flat-out against policy? Put yourself on his or her side. A good phrase: That would run us head-on into university policy, so let’s try to come up with an alternative.

**“Sorry, Glad, Sure”: Skills for Service Excellence**

**A Workshop for McGill Library staff**

Two additional sessions will be offered in November. The dates, times and locations are:

**Thursday, November 10th**
2:00 – 5:00 p.m.
Bronfman Building
Room 426
4th floor

**Tuesday, November 15th**
2:00 – 5:00 p.m.
Bronfman Building
Room 426
4th floor

**To register:**
1. Obtain your supervisor’s permission
2. Send email to susan.fabrizi@mcgill.ca, (tel. 4681) indicating the date and time you prefer.
Jim Henderson, Life Sciences Librarian

Jim attended the 9th International Congress of Medical Librarianship (ICML9) in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, September 19 – 23, 2005, where he presented a paper on aboriginal health information that was well received. The theme of this year’s congress was, “Commitment to Equity.”

Jim found that the ICML is a broadening experience, especially with the Brazilian setting. A number of presentations, posters and events extended his background knowledge and brought up developments that may be important in the future. Presentation topics ranged from information management support to health professionals in primary care clinics in poor areas of South Africa, to using Wikipedia as a source of health information. Jim’s own presentation on aboriginal health information was well received, generating the possibility of participation in a workshop on indigenous knowledge preceding next year’s IFLA meeting in Seoul, South Korea. The reach of the meeting was international and wide-ranging, if heavily weighted to a Brazilian view.

Some presentations will have application at McGill. Laurie Thompson of the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas presented a case study of reorganizing a large academic health library. While the staff complement is much larger than McGill Life Sciences’ Library (over 50), her experience identifying what to focus on and what methodology is most effective will be useful in determining what changes could be made and how to implement these changes efficiently. Building project reports were delivered on the whole campus at the University of Colorado, and by a Norwegian group from Trondheim on a hospital-library complex. The former will feed into work on Life Sciences Library redevelopment and the latter, perhaps, into the MUHC Glen Yards site library. A number of papers will be useful in determining how to teach medical students how to find and use information effectively in communicating with patients.

The highlight of the meeting was the presentation by Iain Chalmers, the doctor whose perinatal trials database was the precursor to the Cochrane Library. Dr. Chalmers delivered a soundly researched, dramatic paper, “The scandalous failure of scientists to cumulate scientifically”. He gave a number of examples of studies which did not review the literature properly and did not place their results in the context of previous work, resulting in unnecessary repetition and slow adoption of important new treatments. His delivery was effective and his conclusion that, “All new research...should [include] scientifically defensible synthesis of existing research evidence, and reported setting the new research in the light of the totality of the available...,” carries significant implications for health librarians.

ICML9 was an opportunity to track national health library development and international collaboration. The effectiveness of BIREME in coordinating developments in its region was quite apparent in the parallel session on the virtual library, BVS, and from the number of presentations and posters derived from BVS, SciELO (open access journals) and other BIREME projects. The new Global Health Library initiative from the World Health Organization will become an important tool in the future. It was apparent that Canada continues to drop behind in coordinating access to health information.

The Congress closed with the approval of drafts of two Declarations, one on open access in developing countries and one on the promotion of “broad and equitable access” to health information, the latter directed to governments and international organizations.

The proceedings of the meeting are being made available on the Congress web site at: www.icml9.org

Jim also attended the Canadian Association for Health Services and Policy Research (CAHSPR) / L’Association canadienne pour la recherche sur les services et les politiques de la santé (ACRSPS) 2005 Conference, held in Montreal, September 16 – 18, 2005. Its theme was, “Canada’s Health Priorities: Building and Maintaining Research Capacity.”

During a half day of the CAHSPR / ACRSPS meeting he attended to present a paper on information access, Jim listened to two plenary sessions and toured the poster presentations. David Mowat, Director General of the Public Health Agency of Canada, gave an intelligent, informed review of the human resources considerations needed to build public health research capacity. Gilles Paradis of the MUHC described the success of multi-institutional public health research collaboration in Quebec. At lunch, Steven Lewis, a consultant well-known from his work with the Saskatchewan Health Quality Council, Michael Wolfson, Statistics Canada, and Martha Jackman, University of Ottawa, delivered three excellent, succinct lectures. Posters ranged from knowledge transfer to immigrant health, measures of quality of care to health profession workforce issues.

Also during lunch, the Association’s new bilingual journal, Healthcare Policy, was launched.

Jim’s paper assessed how readily information on innovations useful to the Canadian health care system is available. Using Michael Rachlis’ 2004 book, “Prescription for Excellence: How Innovation Can Save the Canadian Health Care System”, he examined where information on innovations might be located using various databases (including the web via Google) and where publications cited by Rachlis could be found. The paper showed that information on innovations was not, in most cases, readily located – innovation is taking place in Canadian health care but not being transferred in any systematic way. The majority of the audience was researchers, most with access to electronic journals, who seemed to feel they had reasonable access, although did appreciate the difficulty in locating information on innovation. Surprisingly, some important grey literature cited by Rachlis was not readily available, with electronic versions no longer on the web. The other papers in the session were on data processing. A number of people remarked that they were pleased to have such a presentation and to have a librarian in their midst.

The people in attendance were clearly key figures in Canadian health care and the presentations were all of a high caliber.
Conference Tidbits

the ability of AACR2 and MARC to handle electronic resources.

For two days, the Forum brought together over twenty metadata specialists, who presented the issues surrounding their work; from Dublin Core for government web pages, to folksonomies in social book marking and multimedia film metadata. Metadata continues to gain recognition as one of the most important investments for web sites to ensure good resource discovery and information management. Practitioners share a need for standards, schemas, taxonomies, and application profiles.

For more information about the program and to view many of the presentations, consult the Forum web site at:
www.collectionscanada.ca/metaforum/014005-05209-e.html

Pamela Miller, History of Medicine Librarian (Osler)

Pamela attended the 35th Annual Meeting of the American Osler Society in Pasadena, California, April 10 – 13 2005. This year’s meeting honoured the life and career of Earl Nation, one of its charter members.

As a member of the membership committee, Pamela attended the annual business meeting before the main event, fortuitous as arrangements for future meetings were discussed. Montreal is the site of the meeting in May 2007, coinciding with the annual meeting of the American Association of Medical History. Pamela will be in charge of local arrangements.

The Annual Meeting of the Osler Society of America provides an excellent opportunity to promote the holdings of the Osler Library and also to see first-hand the results of research based on our resources. It is an opportunity to see what we are doing well, and to learn about new trends, interests and needs in the history of medicine.

On a social level, Pamela finds the Annual Meeting to be a unique opportunity to meet researchers interested in Osler and in his library. From the moment one emerges for breakfast until the very end of the day, members are eager to meet and to talk about their work. Many of the members support the Osler Library financially and so it is a good opportunity to talk about its resources and recent developments. Tours are always arranged with libraries, history and the history of medicine in mind—this year, a guided tour of the Huntington Library. The final banquet was also held at the Huntington Library, and Pamela was introduced to the director.

The opportunities for personal development are extensive. It is during these informal meetings that news and ideas are exchanged.

Pats on the Back

To Louis Houle, Schulich Librarian:

Hi,

I am a new graduate student here at McGill and I would just like to commend you and the library services at McGill for the quality of your research resource services. By your subscriptions and the access granted to McGill students, you make it incredibly efficient to get papers and information. It makes research so much more efficient.....and Fun!!!

Thank you
Guru Sosale
(MECH)

To Sheila Farthing, Collection Services, Gifts:

Dear Ms. Farthing,

I am writing to you today, the 17th of July 2005, from the express train to Beijing from Tianjin, China where I have been learning Mandarin at Nankai University. This is my last visit to Beijing, so I am making a point to make one last visit to the library under construction in the district of Houhai, many of whose books originated from McGill’s libraries.

I have just completed the first level Chinese language course, which is the reason for my being in the middle kingdom this summer. It has been the opportunity of a lifetime and a privilege to study this rich language among its native speakers. It has also been an opportunity to share with the local Chinese some literature and non-fiction so easily accessible to Canadians and McGill students. I was able to do this by aiding Alain Cislaghi in his plans to establish a free public library in Houhai, the historically rich district of Beijing surrounding Houhai Lake. Mr. Cislaghi, a native Montrealer, has been living in Houhai for over two years and has fallen in love with its residents, its peaceful atmosphere and prevailing beauty. Unfortunately, gentrification and tourism threaten to make the Houhai of past centuries unrecognizable. Particularly, Houhai’s characteristic hutong architecture and communal living are quickly becoming a rarity in the fast growing capital of Beijing. By establishing a small public library, Mr. Cislaghi's goal is not only to open a window to foreign literature for locals, but also to occupy one of these old structures with a non-profit community oriented institution.

From what I have seen of the library itself, it is quite modest but is nevertheless being very well received by local Chinese who wander in off the street for a look and sometimes spend hours on end flipping through the many English and French books. These local readers, Mr. Cislaghi tells me, are very grateful for the free access to a foreign language library. Due to McGill University’s generosity, the library is now stocked with an abundance of new and used books of a high standard. For this, Mr. Cislaghi is very thankful. I too, am grateful for the chance to share some of the richness of Canada with my host county.

Xiexie McGill daxue!
Sincerely,
Daniel Shemie,
Philosophy and East Asian Studies student

Praise us as we are tasted,
allow us as we prove.

-William Shakespeare, Troilus in Troilus and Cressida, Act III, Sc. 2
THE MACDONALD LIBRARY RARE BOOKS
PRESERVATION PROJECT

by Leanne Walker, MLIS II student

The Rare Books Room at the Macdonald Campus Library got a boost this past summer with the aid of a federal student challenge grant to preserve and stabilize this collection of valuable books. Before the project took place, the rare books collection was made up of approximately 800 books with a strong focus on entomology, along with some natural history and domestic economy - including a few Mrs. Beeton's cookery books - as well as a sizable collection of books relating to Macdonald Campus and McGill history. The collection includes several folio-sized books which needed immediate attention as the shelves they occupied were warping under their own weight, raising concerns as to the effect this was having on the structure of the folios themselves.

The challenge grant provided funding for two positions; Leanne Walker and Chris Klein, to work on the project under the guidance of Sharon Rankin, Acting Macdonald Campus Librarian. Ann Marie Holland, Preservation Librarian and Jennifer Garland, a student assistant, provided the preservation objectives and training in conservation techniques, while Eleanor Turner, Database Maintenance, and Pat Riva, Cataloguing Librarian, guided the process of updating the ALEPH database with the record location changes made to the collection at the end of the project.

The project consisted of seven main goals:

- Stabilize the collection by applying conservation treatments especially designed for non-circulating, rare books
- Move the heavy folio books onto secure shelving
- Find and separate books relating to the history of Macdonald College and Campus and the surrounding local area, as well as books relating to McGill and its history, in order to form a new, separate collection—the Macdonald History Collection
- Integrate an additional 140 books which were selected from the circulating items in the Lyman Collection by Dr. Richard Virr, and Ann Marie Holland
- Rearrange the shelves in call number order and create a location guide for the room
- Pack selected cookery books, transfer and re-shelve them in the Rare Books Division, McLennan Library Building
- Update the catalogue records in Library Technical Services with all of the location changes

The project thus consisted of much shifting on the limited shelving available in the Macdonald Rare Books Room. It was suggested that the folio books be shifted to the bottom shelves (the sturdiest) of the book cases that circled the room, but which were already occupied with rare monographs. The second step was to search through the collection to find any books or pamphlets that would be suited to go into the new Macdonald History Collection. As well, there was the issue of integrating the additional 140 books according to LC classification into the collection on limited shelving space, as well as re-integrating the books that had been displaced by the folio collection. Most importantly, throughout the project, was the process of assessing the books and applying the necessary conservation methods to stabilize the collection as much as possible from further deterioration, such as replacing lost covers with acid-free boards and keeping detached covers together with cotton ties and mylar wraps.

The two major accomplishments of the project were a stabilized and expanded rare book collection, and the creation of a new history collection. The Macdonald Rare Books Preservation Project proved valuable in providing the opportunity to make these rare volumes useable and thus helps to ensure that the knowledge and history they hold will continue to be available for future Macdonald and McGill users.
What’s on your reading list?

Now that the McGill Book Fair has come and gone, you must have another stack of books to get through, right? Well, even if you missed the fair we bet there’s a good book lying on your night table or stashed in your tote bag. As we’re naturally very curious folks, we’d like to find out what you’re reading. I suppose we could peer over your shoulder as you read on the bus or métro, but that would be terribly uncouth. Instead, we’re going to rely on your good-natured spirit and your willingness to provide recommendations on great books!

Email Cecilia Tellis (cecilia.tellis@mcgill.ca) and let us know what you’re reading.

“Literature take-outs” and would you like fries with that?

What’s your talent?

The Library Matters team already knows that there are gifted photographers and writers amongst staff, but we’re certain that many of you have some other hidden talents. Do you compete in any sport? Bake prize-winning pies? Create gallery-worthy art? Now’s not the time to be modest! We want to hear about your exceptional skills.

This month, we’re pleased to reveal that there are some songbirds among us. Some of you may recognize this smiling face as the person who joyfully delivers new and in transit books to your library, George Forbes. But did you know that he’s also a gospel singer who is passionate about music? His latest CD, Face the Giant is comprised of 7 songs that he composed himself. Bravo, George! When’s the next concert?
EVENTS

• Exploring EndNote II: Using Cite While You Write — November 3, 4:30pm, Schulich Library; November 8, 1pm, Electronic Classroom, Humanities and Social Sciences Library

• Exploring EndNote: The Essentials:
  • November 14, 12:30 pm, Electronic Classroom, Humanities and Social Sciences Library;
  • November 17, 10:30 am, Schulich Library of Science and Engineering
  • November 17, 12pm, MacDonald Campus Library Electronic Classroom;
  • November 18, 12pm, Electronic Classroom, Humanities and Social Sciences Library
  • November 22, 1 pm, Electronic Classroom, Humanities and Social Sciences Library
  • November 23, 12pm, MacDonald Campus Library Electronic Classroom
  • November 23, 12pm, Electronic Classroom, Humanities and Social Sciences Library

• Library Trends: Medical Informatics Curriculum for the MD — November 4, 12:15pm, Marvin Duchow Music Library, Room A512

• 4th Annual McGill Centraide Trivia Contest — November 9, 6:30pm, New Residence Ballroom

• McGill Town Hall — November 16, 12pm, Chancellor Day Hall

• Exploring EndNote II: Using Cite While You Write (CWYW)

• Exploring EndNote: The Essentials

• Sorry, Glad, Sure

• Remembrance Day

• Thanksgiving (USA)

For more McGill events, consult the Community Calendar: www.mcgill.ca/calendar/