Tough Times in River City with Unique Opportunities

The economy, layoffs, cutbacks, salary givebacks, job freezes, budget reductions — all pretty grim news. What you may not be hearing or reading about is the demand that this sort of economic period puts on libraries. Librarians know that libraries provide essential services, whether the library supports a town, a school, or an institution of higher education, but in difficult times the services become even more important.

Libraries all across the country are experiencing increasing gate counts as the unemployment levels soar. Public libraries are seeing patrons checking out more and more books and DVDs, instead of buying or renting them. There’s standing room only at children’s story hours in some libraries. Gate counts are up, by as much as 30%. But even as the demand rises, the resources shrink. Like everyone else, libraries, though they serve the public good, are being asked to reduce budgets, staff, and services, and to reduce their hours.

Many people do not know that libraries have been about five thousand years in development. Yes, you read that correctly: five thousand years. Have they seen changes? Most definitely! Will they see changes in the future? You can be sure they will! Change keeps an organization alive and meeting the needs of the community it serves.

In the past couple of years, the Mortensen and Allen Libraries of the University of Hartford have increased hours, partnered with colleges and departments on campus to provide access to more materials, opened the doors to the outside community, and provided a home for the President’s College and the Emeriti faculty. They house Summerplace, the University’s summer program for kids. The Allen Music Library has even launched a pilot music performance program with all music provided by the extremely talented Hartt School students.

The University Libraries have embraced change and the future. The Libraries joined the Westchester Academic Libraries Directors Organization (WALDO) of NY to provide access to more databases with major cost savings. WALDO is one of many consortiums that the Libraries belong to. The latest partnership involves a move from the current legacy library software service (ExLibris) to Koha, an open source collaborative project, in cooperation with nineteen other academic libraries. If things go according to plan, the University of Hartford will be the first academic institution in Connecticut to move to an open source platform.

The Dorothy Goodwin Café was added to the Mortensen Library in May 2008. The day of the ribbon cutting over three hundred people came by to celebrate this wonderful addition. After a heated competitive bidding process among supporters of the library, the first cup of coffee went for $501! The University community has claimed the café as theirs. Faculty meet with peers, students meet with their faculty members, student work groups pop into the café before going to class. The sense of community and the sense of belonging can be felt throughout the Libraries.
The family of Alan Tompkins, former director of the Hartford Art School (HAS), is in the process of donating a collection of his papers to the University Archives. Tompkins died recently at the age of 100. This donation is a welcome addition to our Hartford Art School material. The papers are already in fairly good order, so that all we will need to do is place the material into acid free folders and boxes and put them on the shelf.

Tompkins served as HAS director until 1969 when he returned to full-time teaching. Among his many contributions to the university, Tompkins designed the university’s official seal and medals. Tompkins was the Director of the HAS when it merged with the original Hillyer College and the Hartt School to form the University of Hartford in 1957.

Tompkins helped shape the future of the Art School during his tenure. At a time when art education was going in the direction of undisciplined freedom of expression rather than structured training, he insisted that students follow a rigorous foundation in traditional methods, including drawing. At the same time he was less concerned with tangible showy achievements such as special exhibits than with the development of self-confidence and self-awareness of the individual student.

Tompkins was born in New Rochelle, NY and graduated from Columbia University in 1929. He attended graduate school at Yale. After studying mural painting at Yale, he put his skills to work during the Great Depression. He was responsible for numerous murals in the post offices of Indiana, New York City, Connecticut, and North Carolina. Locally he painted murals at the Maple Hill Restaurant and the Central Baptist Church in Hartford.

During World War II Tompkins was employed as a design supervisor at General Electric where he worked on the designs of kitchen equipment and small appliances. Tompkins became the Assistant Director of the HAS in 1951 and Director in 1957. He retired in 1974.

Tompkins lived the last years of his life at the Duncaster Retirement Community in Bloomfield. He continued to paint and to be actively involved with the art world until his death. In 2007, the University held an exhibition of Tompkins’s work honoring his 100th birthday and the Hartford Art School’s 130th anniversary.

From the Archives of the University of Hartford.
All Aboard – Next Stop – Koha

Monday, April 6th, Randi Ashton-Pritting, Ben Ide, Laurie Haggan and Kristina Edwards attended the WALDO/LibLime/Koha Second Mid-Course Review meeting held at St. John’s University. The agenda was jam-packed with information regarding our training schedules and rollout plans, new feature demos and specialized breakout sessions on reporting, circulation, holdings, displays and acquisitions.

There are several exciting features on the horizon, such as the ability to have text messages sent to patrons indicating when materials are ready for pick-up. Development work is underway for setting up patron proxies, which will make it easier for graduate students to check out materials for professors. A mapping feature is in the plans as well, which will enable patrons to see the exact physical locations of the items they are searching for.

Libraries staff are keeping themselves very busy testing and playing with bibliographic and patron data which was migrated a month ago from Voyager to a test Koha database. We have received lots of feedback from staff and student employees which has helped us in analyzing the ways in which we can enhance our data to make it more user-friendly. As a result of the feedback, we are collaboratively working to change the names of shelving locations and greatly reducing the number of item types which has inundated our current catalog. This will make it both easier for patrons to find materials as well as make it easier for Library staff members who catalog, retrieve, and circulate it. Behind the scenes we are diligently performing cleanup projects in an effort to ensure all the final data is as accurate as possible. Inventories are under way, reclassification of materials is taking place and authority work is being performed on items that were lacking it.

The go-live date for our actual switch to full Koha is slated for Tuesday, July 14th. A special thanks goes out to all Libraries staff who have had to reschedule summer vacations in order to attend on-site, week-long training sessions scheduled for the week of June 22nd.

Jason’s Joe

On February 13, 2009 the University community celebrated the 10-year anniversary of Jason Pomposelli of the A&S Dean’s Office. The event was held in the Dorothy Goodwin Café. Over 100 people came to celebrate Jason’s anniversary. What stemmed from the celebration of Walt Harrison’s 10-year anniversary quickly became the talk of the University. The big hit for the day... the Jason look-alike masks the Library made for the event. The Goodwin Café was the perfect spot to gather on a cold winter’s morning. Congratulations Jason and may you have another 10 years!

Election Day was One for the Books

The Presidential inauguration, January 20, brought many of the University community to the Dorothy Goodwin Café. Because this election was really one for the books, the Mortensen Library was the perfect spot for witnessing history in the making. The community began to gather about 11:00am for the swearing in of Barack Obama followed by speeches and the parade. Special thanks go to Media Technology Services for setting up the large screen viewing and to AraMark for the most patriotic cake seen this side of the Hogg River. About 60 people viewed the event that day.
The demand on the Woods Family Classroom for Learning and Instruction comes from many directions: instruction in the use of the library for our new students, instruction on new databases, courses for the President’s College, and a host of other activities. In fact, this demand has risen to such a level that we can accommodate only a fraction of the requests for use of the room. Those who have used the space know that it is the finest classroom on campus. Improvements are always being made and explored, not just in the equipment in the classroom, but all across the libraries. It is extremely important to the Mortensen Library that we be able to offer our community the best we can provide in technology and software in a stimulating learning environment. Because of the pressure on this space, planning is beginning for a second classroom as the next stage in the renovation of the Library.

Over the summer of 2008 the iCOMMONs area was completely revamped. Not only did the changes make the area physically more attractive and friendly, but they have also caused the librarians to rethink how they work with students and faculty. Currently the Mortensen Reference Office is off to the right as you enter the building, around the corner and through a door. Hmm, not the welcoming feeling that is being created elsewhere in the building. Soon the office will move. By moving the department closer to the students and the reference materials, we will open up a perfect space for our new classroom. By building two walls and making some other adjustments, we will have solved two major problems — insufficient instructional space, and providing a permanent home for the President’s College. The President’s College and the Emeriti Association will have first claims on the new space, thereby reducing pressure on the Woods Classroom, but for most of the time, it will be available for other instructional uses.

So, what will the future bring for the University Libraries? Of course we will do our share with the budget holdback. But tough times create unique opportunities. We will continue to create partnerships and collaborations to increase access to resources. We will continue to improve our services, hours and facilities in whatever ways we can. We will continue to open our doors to our community, even after hours.

Do you need a great space for a reception? I know where there’s a piano …
President’s College – Upcoming Programs for Fall 2009

The President’s College, the outreach arm of the University Libraries, offers short noncredit courses and other programs for members of the larger community. The program, under the direction of Humphrey Tonkin, chair of the Mortensen Library Board, is also open to current and retired faculty and staff of the University. While anyone can participate in the courses, one can also become a Fellow of the President’s College. The $100 annual fee provides parking privileges, library borrowing privileges, discounts on events on campus, and also a substantial discount for President’s College courses. To sign up, or to be added to the President’s College mailing list, contact Judy Kacmarcik (kacmarcik@hartford.edu) or call 860.768.4269.

For updated information or to register for this event, visit the President’s College web site:

www.hartford.edu/presidentscollege/

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Quotable Facts About America’s Libraries - Did you know?

- 63% of adults in the US have public library cards.
- Americans go to school, public and academic libraries 50% more often than they go to movies.
- Reference librarians in the nation’s public and academic libraries answer more than 8 million questions weekly. Standing single file, the line of questioners would stretch from New York City to Juneau, Alaska.
- A 2006 poll conducted for the American Library Association found that 92% of respondents expect libraries to be needed in the future, despite the increased availability of information via the internet.
- Academic librarians answer 72.8 million reference questions each year.
- College libraries receive less than two cents of every dollar spent on higher education.

Sources: ALA Office for Research & Statistics; ALA Public Information Office. 2006.
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**Student Merit Awards**

Every April, the Mortensen Library Board of Visitors recognizes six outstanding student employees from the University Libraries. This spring’s winners represent the Allen and Mortensen Libraries. They received their awards and gift certificates from the University Bookstore at the April 15th meeting of the Board.

**Heather Baxter** is a graduate student pursuing her Master of Music degree in Oboe Performance and has worked for two years in the Technical Services department at Allen Library. Heather has proven to be one of our most reliable employees. In addition to her superior dependability, the quantity and quality of Heather’s work consistently exceeds expectations, and she has the wonderful knack of knowing exactly what needs to be done when and adjusting her workflow accordingly. We can always go to Heather with urgent projects knowing that she will finish them quickly with the utmost attention to detail and with the knowledge that the finished product will be of the highest quality.

**Kimberly Ehart** is a junior in the Creative Writing/Art History program and has worked for Circulation for six months. It is unusual for a student working this short of time to win this award, but Kimberly is the exception. She is dedicated, hardworking, signs in immediately and begins working at whatever task might be needed. Her supervisor says she is enthusiastic and extremely quick to learn all the aspects of the job. She also says she is a mind reader and goes from one task to another with a smile on her face. There is no question as to her taking her responsibilities seriously and with much dedication. Needless to say, this student has a great attitude and her supervisor would love to clone her.

**Shawna Fagon** is a Junior majoring in Psychology who has worked in Mortensen Technical Services for the past three years. During her tenure at the library, Shawna has done excellent work on all of the cataloging projects she has been a part of, always being very thorough so all information is expressed in a clear and concise fashion. Self motivated and adaptable, Shawna can pick up any task at any time, keeping herself busy between assigned projects and while there are no supervisors present. Always punctual, hardworking, and self-sufficient, Shawna has been a pleasure to work with, and a great asset in many of our major projects.

**Scott Lauzier** is a senior in the Politics and Government program and has worked in Circulation for the past two years. His supervisor says that Scott is always prepared to see tasks through to completion and is never interested in doing only half the job. He has not only been willing to learn, but willing to retain the knowledge gained. His cheerful and expressive demeanor is a byword among our student workers and he is clearly committed to being part of the community. Students can be categorized as two types in Circulation — those who check the corridor for shelving and those that wait for instructions. Scott always checks because it is a point of pride to have a clean cart and sorting area at the end of the shift.

**Kristin Lewter** is currently in her senior year pursuing the Bachelor of Music degree in Vocal Performance and has worked in the Allen Library for approximately a year-and-a-half. During her time at the circulation desk, Kristin has gone above and beyond to take on additional projects including some technical services responsibilities. She was also of great assistance last year in the project of organizing our individual sheet music collection and making sure everything was correctly represented in the database. We can always count on Kristin to be ready and willing to begin work on any new project and have the self-motivation and diligence to see it through, no matter how complex the task.

**Hollie Lyko** is a Painting/Ceramics major in her junior year and has worked in the Periodicals unit of Technical Services for the past two and half years. Hollie pays close attention to the books she mends, making sure that she does what is needed so the book is usable, and will not need to be mended again any time soon. In the past, mending has been a two-person task, but this year Hollie has taken it on by herself and has put in a lot of effort to make up that difference. She seems to truly enjoy her job of mending books. Her supervisor not only appreciates all the work she does, but wants to commend her on her willingness and ability to teach her many things about the mending process.
**Angels and Demons in Mortensen Library**

**George Lechner**, Reference Librarian at Mortensen Library and adjunct professor for AUC’s Italian Renaissance courses, was a featured speaker and a script consultant for the History Channel’s two hour documentary titled *Angels & Demons: Decoded*. Lechner was among a group of historians, physicists, theologians, and cryptographers chosen to discuss and critique author Dan Brown’s book in light of the current motion picture *Angels & Demons*. Ron Howard, the film’s director, and Tom Hanks, who plays the role of art historian Robert Langdon, were also prominently featured in the program.

The documentary was filmed primarily in New York, Zurich, and Rome by Prometheus Pictures of Los Angeles and will air throughout the spring on the History Channel. Lechner, a specialist in the field of Italian art and symbolism, has previously appeared in another documentary regarding the occult sciences in the Renaissance which aired on the A&E network as well as the BBC in 2005. He is also the author of the article “The Magical and the Mythical in Bernini’s Sculpture” featured in the best-selling anthology *Secrets of Angels & Demons* published in 2004.

In the present documentary Lechner spoke on aesthetic and mystical aspects in the art of Bernini as a reflection of religious reform movements in seventeenth century Rome. ✶

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**University Libraries Donors – July 1, 2008 - April 30, 2009 (cont’d ➔ page 6)**

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I attended my first Music Library Association (MLA) national conference and was quite impressed (and somewhat overwhelmed) with the variety of informational sessions offered. My colleague, Sam Cook, and I coordinated our schedules in order to cover the most content possible, and were still unable to attend everything we wanted to attend.

The most heavily attended sessions were a panel on copyright issues and music librarianship; a panel on the future of the compact disc as a viable delivery format; and the annual Hot Topics In Music Librarianship discussion, co-led by former Allen Library staff member Tom Caw. The copyright session discussed not only the basics of copyright, but also what music librarians as a group are doing to influence copyright legislation, particularly the “Orphan Works” legislation, which would allow people to use works after a good faith effort has been made to create a licensing agreement, but where no copyright owner can be traced. This is important because it would allow libraries to digitize and preserve rare materials for which a copyright holder can not be found to gain permission for preservation activities. The Music Library Association, in conjunction with the Association for Recorded Sound Collections, is also lobbying to include sound recordings in the federal copyright laws—they are currently governed by state laws, making recording preservation projects especially difficult and complex from a legal standpoint.

The panelists for the discussion regarding the compact disc as a viable format were drawn from a diverse group: Rachel Barton Pine, concert violinist; Henry Fogel, Former President of Chicago Symphony and American Symphony Orchestra League; James Ginsburg, President/CEO of Cedille Records; Ted Ferguson, VP of Digital Product Strategy, Universal Music Group; and D. J. Hoek, music librarian at Northwestern University. The panel discussed the problems with the current digital media distribution model; the decaying state of the recording industry as a whole, particularly with regard to the classical music market, and the performer’s perspective.

The Hot Topics in Music Librarianship session was a lively discussion this year, with many of the topics relating to fiscal concerns and uncertainty of funding for future projects, as well as some discussion about the implementation of the new RDA cataloging standard, which is nearing its testing phase. When discussing relying on vendor records for cataloging, which some libraries have used to reduce costs, one librarian shared a discussion she had with a vendor who had not even heard of RDA, demonstrating the need for qualified catalogers in the profession.

I cannot even begin to touch upon all that I heard and learned. I attended sessions by a music librarian who went to Italy to study how Italian music libraries worked; a session about digitizing rare manuscript scores with grant funding; a session about three female Chicago musicians (a composer, a conductor and a blues singer); a session about the particular quirks involved in cataloging recordings of ethnic music, and the list goes on.

One session in particular may be influencing us here at the Allen Memorial Library — I was able to attend a session by Phil Ponella of Indiana University about the Variations 3 project, an open source streaming audio project which we have recently formed a committee to explore implementing here at the University of Hartford. Stay tuned for further developments in this area.

I want to thank University Libraries for allowing me to attend this exciting and informative conference, I feel I learned a lot from this experience.
As a first time attendee of the Music Library Association conference, the week-long excursion presented me with excitement and anxiety. I had little idea what to expect from spending five days surrounded by others in the music librarianship field. My worries quickly faded, however, as I soon discovered the Music Library Association to be an incredibly warm and welcoming group. Although I knew few attendees when the conference began, I had met many members ranging from first-timers to institutions in the field by the time I departed.

An overarching theme throughout the conference was how to weave existing and new technologies into what we have always done, in addition to the implications that these technologies will have on the music librarianship field. Of particular interest were the presentations on the viability of physical formats in a digital age, particularly in the area of recordings and periodicals. One discussion went as far as to question the relevance of libraries when such a vast quantity of information, including scores and audio recordings, is available from any computer with an internet connection. The overall stress level in the room reduced to normal rates, however, as further discussion reminded us all that despite a significant shift in how we transmit information, we will always be needed to help organize and guide our patrons to that information.

The conference also presented new ideas on how to improve and add to the services we offer. These included the use of Facebook to promote the library, instant messaging for reference questions, Blackboard for better communication with our student workers, new techniques for processing scores, ideas for improving library instruction, a wide selection of new electronic resources, and more. I hope that we are able to start bringing some of these ideas into both Allen Library and University Libraries as a whole to continue improving the services we bring to our patrons.

One of the most exciting moments of the conference took place at the MLA Business Meeting, where the culmination of the awards presentation was the awarding of the MLA Citation to Linda Solow Blotner, former Head of Allen Library at the University of Hartford. This honor, the highest given by the Music Library Association, was presented to Linda for the contributions she has made to the music librarianship profession throughout her entire career as an author, editor, reviewer, indexer, and, of course, music librarian.

Despite the cold Chicago weather, this conference turned out to be a truly enjoyable and educational experience. Next year’s conference will be held in sunny San Diego, California and I look forward to once again joining my music librarian colleagues throughout the country for this great opportunity.

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The University Libraries and the President’s College were actively involved with the most recent Community Day. The Mortensen Library was the host to the storytelling, free samples of New England coffee — thank you Jim, a special display from the Connecticut Historical Society and computer animation events by the Center for Professional Development.

The President’s College celebrated the day by the reading of all of Edgar Allen Poe’s poems. Community Day also coincided with the 200th birthday of Poe. The University cannot wait until next year’s Community Day to see what the President’s College produces — I know it will just be magical.
Staff Happenings

Sam Cook, Public Services Librarian, Allen Library, married Janice Bishop on June 28. The wedding was held in Averill Park, NY at Crystal Lake. Sam and Janice met as students of the Hartt School in 2002 and both worked as student employees in the Allen Library. Janice currently teaches middle school band and general music in Vernon, CT.

Alison Heath Cotton and John Thomas Rusczyk were married in a lovely backyard ceremony on May 30th. It was attended by over 100 friends and family members. Alison has worked for the Mortensen Library as Circulation, Reserves and Stacks Coordinator for the past four years and looks forward to continuing to work at the University. John works for International Aid Programs and will continue to do so in the future.

The University Libraries is pleased to announce that Jennifer Crum has joined the Allen Library as the Public Services Coordinator. She began working at Allen in January 2009, after three years of part-time and summer work at the Allen Library as a graduate student. Jenny has a BM degree in Cello Performance from the University of Northern Colorado and a MM and a Graduate Professional Diploma in Cello Performance from the Hartt School. She is an accomplished cello performer and teacher, as well.

On Friday, May 1, during the last day of the annual conference for the Connecticut Library Association (CLA), Jennifer Olson was awarded a scholarship from the CLA’s Career Recruitment Committee. This scholarship is based solely on merit and this year the competition was steep. In explaining why she deserved this award, presenter Kim Farrington quoted from one of Jennifer’s letters of recommendation: “Jennifer Olson brings to the field of library science an expertise and skill set which I believe to be unequalled among her peers. She has a keenness of mind and persistence of vision that lend aptitude to everything she does.”

On hand to congratulate Jennifer were her colleagues Randi Ashton-Pritting, Alison Cotton, Barbara Dessureau, Ben Ide, and Nick Wharton. Please join us in extending our congratulations to her. We are so very, very proud.

Recognition Day

On May 4, 2009 the University hosted its annual Recognition Day to pay tribute to our faculty and staff for their valued service to the University. This year the University Libraries had three staff members recognized: Laurie Haggan for five years of service and Judy Kacmarcik and Barbara Dessureau, both for 15 years of service. A special reception was held at the 1877 Club in the Harry Jack Gray Center. Congratulations! Where have the years gone?

Food-4-Fines – Win-Win-Win

The Circulation Departments of the University Libraries recently offered our patrons a wonderful alternative to paying their Library fines: Food 4 Fines. For every nonperishable food item they brought in for donation to local food pantries during National Library Week, April 13 - 19, we waived $2 of their fines.

To get the word out, there was an announcement in UNotes and flyers were posted in the libraries, all on-campus housing units, and outside the Bookstore and Gengras Student Union. Our Circulation student workers decorated boxes to receive the first donations at each library. The week before the drive, we mentioned the upcoming drive to patrons who had outstanding fines and fees.

The drive was coordinated with the Center for Community Services who distributed the food to the Hartford Rescue Mission food pantry the following week. We all won: the local food pantries received over 300 donations, the students had their fines waived, and the libraries got back their books!

Laurie Haggan, Judy Kacmarcik and Barbara Dessureau receive their service awards.
To:

Become a Friend of University Libraries

Whatever your reading interests might be, libraries are always eager to serve as the primary resource for information. Your contribution will enable the University Libraries to enrich subject collections in support of the University’s academic programs. Your help is much appreciated — and much needed so that we can continue to support our patrons with quality services and materials that have become our trademark.

Join us!

- $100 - $249 - Patrons of the Libraries
- $250 - $499 - Pacesetter Member
- $500 - $4,999 - Director’s Circle
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