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Library Profile — Acquisitions Department — State University of New York at Buffalo

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Column Editor: **Barbara Dean** (Arlington County Public Library)

Who We Are:

The State University of New York at Buffalo is the largest of the four University Centers in the SUNY system. The University Libraries at the University at Buffalo comprise 10 units or branches, and the Acquisitions Department in Central Technical Services provides services to all of them, with the exception of our Health Sciences and Law Libraries. Along with traditional acquisitions functions, the staff of 19.9 FTEs provide many expanded services, from copy cataloging to government document processing. The materials budget is divided into over 125 separate funds, totaling \$4,000,000 annually.

The Acquisitions Department is responsible for adding new bibliographic and holdings records to BISON (the University Libraries' version of NOTIS) for material which is to be ordered or which has been received as the result of a standing or blanket order, approval plan, gift, or through a depository arrangement for US Federal, Canadian Federal, New York State or European Communities documents. The department is responsible for placing all orders and receiving all library materials in

all languages and formats, including electronic, and in most disciplines. The department's Periodicals Section is responsible for receiving, recording, processing and delivering current issues of over 8,000 periodicals in all formats and languages subscribed to by the General Libraries, Music and Poetry. It is also the department's responsibility to maintain control over material which is in process and to play a major role in the creation of bibliographic records for retrospective US Federal documents. The Acquisitions Department is also responsible for the Libraries' mail and delivery operation.

The department is staffed by Libraries faculty, professional staff, and classified staff and contributes significantly toward the Libraries' efforts to support the teaching and research missions of the University. All staff in the department come in contact with staff elsewhere in the University Libraries on a regular basis.

The activities of the Acquisitions Department are fully automated and extensive and ongoing use of sophisticated technology is made by all staff in the department. In par-

particular, the department has been extremely active on two electronic fronts: providing access to electronic journals, newspapers, books, and pamphlets available on the Internet, and the scanning and mounting of selected government documents, making them available on the Internet.

New Initiatives:

In 1991, after our online catalog became live, responsibility for copy cataloging of most materials that have LC copy was shifted to the Acquisitions Department. Approximately 65% of materials processed for the General Libraries fall into this category. By cataloging these materials at the point of receipt, we have cut down on handling and delays dramatically. Throughout the year, a box that arrives from a vendor is opened, received, LC copy materials are cataloged, end-processed, and shelf-ready in 24-72 hours. The Receipts Section numbers only 1.5 FTE plus 20 hours student help, and all approval receipts, along with upwards of 15,000 firm orders are handled there. We are blessed with staff members who have stunning capabilities, and who are eager to lend a hand in any area; aside from this, two additional factors have contributed to this success.

First, we have been using the LC resource file at the University at Buffalo for the past seven years. This file, updated monthly, contains current LC cataloging for the past two to three years. Anyone with access to BISON can search this file and instantly derive copy into BISON. No new commands are necessary, and no OCLC access or expertise is required.

Secondly, the Acquisitions Department has made great use of Microsoft QuickBasic and Visual Basic to automate functions that had been time-consuming and tedious. With the press of a button, the clerk can export a record into the system and order or receive. Receipt tickets, bindery tickets, spine labels, and many other forms are produced off of the system, using programs we have written in the department. QuickBasic has been used very successfully at the point of ordering as well: for example, a matching program captures the screen and checks the ISBN prefix

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Profiles Encouraged



Barbara Dean
Head, Acquisitions,
Arlington County
Public Library
and Director,
1998, Charleston
Conference

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Born: I was born in Sycamore, IL, located 60 miles west of Chicago, and spent the first 20 years of my life there. I then moved to De Kalb, IL, six miles away to live in campus housing at Northern Illinois University. My BA is from Northern.

Current residence: Waldorf, MD, about 30 miles from another big city, Washington, DC. I'm learning to appreciate the country once again. We're in a neighborhood outside of town with woods across the street and next door.

Job summary: Paraprofessional work at

Colonial Williamsburg Foundation in VA, Penn State, Council on Library Resources, Fairfax County (VA) Public Library, and now Arlington County (VA) Public Library. I'm doing what I really like—being the acquisitions librarian and working with a great staff.

Interests: Reading—I haven't done much of it lately and I really miss it—history, ballet, art, and clothes.

Current reading: I am reading Fresh Start by Julee Rosso. I'm trying to develop an ability to cook with less fat and more herbs and spices.

Family: One partner, George by name, four inside cats, and two stray cats who live in our shed and get their meals delivered twice daily by George or me.

Biggest surprise: How challenging it is to move to a new job, and have the division re-designed and a new ILS installed 3 months later.

Profiles Encouraged



Robin Lent
Head, Collection
Development,
University of
New Hampshire
Durham, NH
and **Director, 1998
Charleston Conference**
<rslent@unh.edu>

Early on: I was born in Miami Beach, Florida and grew up in Pittsburgh and St. Louis.

Current residence: Durham, NH

Education: BA, Washington University; MLS Columbia University; MA University of New Hampshire.

Summary of job experience: I have been in and out of libraries since 1970. Also worked as a freelance researcher, helped found an adoption agency, was managing editor of a scholarly journal, taught English composition, am now Head of Collection Development at the University of New Hampshire.

Family: Three daughters (Kate, 24 years old, living in Norfolk, Virginia; Abby, 21 years old, living in Gunnison, Colorado; Lucy, 9 years old, fourth grade in Durham). I also have four stepchildren ranging in age from 18 to 39. My husband, Don Lent, is a painter who teaches at Bates College and is running for State Legislature in New Hampshire this fall. We consider our three cats—Billy, Fritz, and Teddy—family members.

Most recent accomplishment: This is ongoing and daily: negotiating the demands of job, home, being a soccer mom, and helping my daughter navigate the landmines of fourth grade.

Biggest goals: Finish my novel. Climb Mt. Washington.

Two recent fond memories: A three-day walking tour of Yorkshire that I took with my husband, my sister, and her husband to celebrate my 50th birthday. Coming to Charleston for the first time and seeing the palm trees at the airport; the soft air and "southern smell" reminded me of childhood days in Miami.

Books I've enjoyed recently: John McKee, *Story*; Roxann Robinson, *This is My Daughter*; Jonathan Harr, *A Civil Action*.

Pet peeve about this profession: Librarians who graduated from the Door-mat School of Library Science.

If I could do anything: I'd like to be Head of a Foundation that would dispense money to any organization or person that I wanted to support.

Biggest surprise: How surprising life is. 

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will be more efficient to be able to search and retrieve an article read several months before from an online file rather than attempting to locate the print issue.

The Future

Despite the fact that the proliferation of computers seems to have merely redistributed the printing function, there is a unique opportunity ahead of us. As access to data is made available anytime from anywhere, the Web offers the ability to replace local print files in various locations with fewer centralized electronic files. With an upcoming generation of employees who thrive on **Palm Pilots** instead of **DayTimers**, the time is near when software will evolve to locally store those files of greatest interest and bookmark with confidence those files to be accessed again at a later date, knowing they will still be available.

The basic Web ad today resembles a billboard which is a passive experience like television. Ads of the future will be more customized, focused on the users' interests and interactive in nature, requiring some action or involvement on the part of the user.

The Web is about information and communication. As we make the transition into the electronic world, our behaviors and habits will change to take advantage of more efficient methods of communication and workflow. Individuals and organizations will redefine the extent to which use determines value and what is worth saving.

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against a list of preferred vendors. Approximately 30% of our requests have vendors "self-assigned" in this way. We have perhaps 50 different programs such as these in service throughout the department.

Encouraged by these successes, we constantly look for ways to improve upon the services we provide. In the past few years we have automated many parts of the tedious government document check-in procedure. In particular, a program wherein we scan shipping lists and check the scanned file against our exclusion list, automatically producing **SuDoc** labels as needed, has cut processing time by 75%. The programs are available at: <http://ublib.buffalo.edu/libraries/units/cts/acq/gpo/>. Another project has involved the scanning of certain government documents, providing access to them from a "popular documents" index. Many of the selected documents are pamphlet-sized or one to four page works; providing access to electronic versions not only preserves the content long

It's a brave new world—full of exciting partnerships. Established publishers are faced with reinventing themselves. New companies are introducing innovative applications. The challenge is to make cost-effective use of technology and there are no models showing the way. The successful organization will develop an understanding of how customers use information in communicating with each other and enhance the process.

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after the flimsy paper version has disintegrated or disappeared, it also opens up the world of document information to the library user who may not be aware of their content. See the site at: <http://ublib.buffalo.edu/libraries/units/cts/acq/doctab.html>.

Our mission statement, which we all agreed upon early in 1997, reflects our desire to maintain a healthy work environment, an efficient operation, and to constantly look forward:

To provide the best quality service we can to our patrons by doing it right the first time; To capitalize on our strengths, particularly our ability to get it in and get it out; To communicate effectively; To listen attentively and understand others needs/requests; To understand role, responsibility, and authority; To develop and enjoy mutual respect; To strive to acquire sufficient resources to achieve our objectives; To create a nurturing environment for every individual on our staff; To be aware of the impact of our environment on our mental and physical well-being, and to keep it healthy; To effectively and eagerly respond to our changing circumstances. 

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