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## People Profile: David Gray

Editor

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# David Gray

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**BORN & LIVED:** Born in West Virginia, grew up in Ohio, and lived in Kentucky, North Carolina, Virginia and WV.

**EDUCATION:** BA in Philosophy and MA in English from Morehead State (KY) and MLS from University of Kentucky. Also a Secondary Teaching Certificate in English from UNC - Chapel Hill.

**FIRST JOB:** Reference Librarian at Davis & Elkins College in Elkins, WV.

**PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES:** I had an earlier stint at Marshall University as ILL Librarian, left to become Librarian at Blue Ridge Community College in Virginia, and came back to Marshall as Collection Development Librarian about 3 years ago.

**IN MY SPARE TIME I LIKE TO:** Run, read, collect books, watch movies. I have cheesy book and movie reviews on personal Website: <http://webpages.marshall.edu/~grayd/index.html>.

**FAVORITE BOOKS:** White Noise by Don DeLillo, That Night by Alice McDermott, anything about baseball by Bill James - I could go on and on.

**PHILOSOPHY:** I studied enough Philosophy to realize that I could never in a million years articulate a coherent personal philosophy.

**GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW:** Continue to both build the physical collection and increase information access in a challenging budgetary environment.

### Out of the Box . . . from page 36

through the mail, or, increasingly, over the Web. Websites such as **Alibris**, **ABE**, and others have made these transactions much easier, even when large want lists are involved. Additionally, libraries have also dealt with used bookstores by exchanging gift books or other unwanted items for credit.

There are several advantages of using a bookstore. First, from a collection development standpoint visiting a bookstore offers a librarian a rare chance to inspect the books firsthand before purchase. In some stores you may also find the staff has particular subject expertise or the store may specialize in one or more subject areas, including local or regional subjects. Second, the immediacy of pulling the books off the shelves and taking them back to the library is a pleasant change from placing an order and waiting days or weeks for the books to arrive. There are potential benefits on the acquisitions side

as well. Many stores will offer significant discounts to libraries, and while discounts may vary according to the dollar amount purchased, in many cases bookstores may match or exceed the discount level of jobbers. A large library purchase may be incentive enough for a bookstore to be flexible with their billing terms as well. And used bookstores typically offer lower prices even before library discounts are considered.

On the other hand, there are reasons why bookstores aren't typically the first choice for libraries. Bookstores are not designed to deal with the volume of requests and all the requirements that libraries place on their book vendors. They may not be able to offer the number of titles or match the discounts of jobbers, not to mention the lack of other services that libraries take for granted, such as status reports, claims and returns, and pre-processing. Even when purchasing on a small scale librarians face challenges if they wish to buy books at a bookstore. If you are browsing and choosing titles off the shelf then you have the real possibility of buying duplicates of titles your library already holds. Some librarians may not feel comfortable enough in their knowledge of, or familiarity with, certain subject areas and may be reluctant to purchase titles without reviews, even when the books themselves are readily available for review. Finally, if shipping is not available you must be prepared to load heavy boxes of books into your vehicle and then unload them again at the library.

### Discount Wholesale Bookstores — Filling the Gaps

You may have purchased books for personal use from **Daedalus** or **Edward Hamilton** catalogs or from discount bookstores in outlet malls, but there do exist wholesale bookstores that operate on a scale large enough to make them worthy of consideration for libraries. One example is the **Green Valley Book Fair**.

**Green Valley Book Fair** (<http://www.gvbookfair.com/>) is a wholesale book enterprise near Harrisonburg, Virginia that offers 500,000 books at discounts ranging from sixty to ninety percent. They don't stock used titles, but do have out-of-print titles - primarily remainders, overstocks, and hurts, which are books returned to publishers because of slight damage to the book or dustjacket. They carry books from a number of publishers, including academic presses. While the stock constantly changes, publishers have included **Oxford**, **Cambridge**, **Smithsonian**, **Twayne**, **Harvard**, **Princeton**, **Que**, **Knopf**, **HarperCollins**, and **Macmillan Reference**.

What kind of library would be interested in using a resource like **Green Valley**? **Marshall University Libraries** have a collection of less than 400,000 monographs and a materials budget that is fairly low, with firm orders totaling less than \$200,000 annually. An Amigos examination showed that between 1989 and 1997 we bought only 32% as many titles as our average peer institution, which has led to quite a few gaps in the collection. **Green Valley** offers an opportunity to take a small amount of money and fill in a few of these gaps and strengthen the general collection.

### Nuts and Bolts of Buying

**Green Valley** works with libraries and accepts purchase orders or credit cards, but offers no additional discounts to libraries beyond their normal discounted prices. Shipping is available at cost. With this many books to inspect it can take a whole day or more to go through the stock and we have typically chosen several hundred titles. **Green Valley** agreed to have one of their employees search **Marshall's OPAC** to screen for duplicates. This reduces the number of duplicate titles to a very small number — our last shipment of over 500 titles included 6 duplicates that slipped through, and **Green Valley** will accept those as returns. The searching process may take them several days, but when completed the books and invoice are shipped with the whole process taking two weeks at the most.

### Results

The charts below show the number of titles purchased in the last three years and their cost. The average discount from list price for the past three years has been 74.43%.

