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Reading in a Digital Age: Issues and Opportunities--Part Two

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Against the Grain

"Linking Publishers, Vendors and Librarians"

Reading in a Digital Age: Issues and Opportunities — Part Two

by **Tony Horava** (Associate University Librarian, Collections, University of Ottawa, Ontario, Canada) <thorava@uottawa.ca>

In February we featured articles on the many dimensions of reading in a digital age. There were more articles than we could publish at one time; therefore, this month is our second themed issue on this crucial and challenging topic. We continue to explore ways in which reading is being bolstered, reappraised, and reimagined in our communities. **Brenda Boshela and Brian P. Hall**, in their piece, "Building, Sustaining, and Transitioning the College Reader: Going from a Shared Experience to Sharing the Experience" describe various strategies that the Reading Center at **Cuyahoga Community College** employs to develop literacy, such as annotation modeling, picture books, and the "Say, Means, Matter" technique to develop better analytical skills. Ultimately, say the authors, "We are not just building a strategy for literacy success for individual students within the confines of the college environment. We are providing the tools

and supports to sustain and transition literacy successes beyond our circle of influence and into the circles of influence that our students have within their homes and communities."

Dede Elrobeh, Cindy Ortega, and Renee Smith, who work in the **Glendale Community College GCCReads** program, in their piece, "GCCReads: Creating Community Through Reading" describe a collaborative effort between the College Library and the Reading faculty to aid students who are underprepared for college. The overall goal of the program "was to increase academic preparedness and persistence through the fostering of leisure reading and campus engagement among developmental reading students." The highly collaborative program fostered mentor/mentee relationships, outreach with the community, making reading fun, and promoting literacy. Student success is perennially difficult to define, but comments such as "I read my favorite chapters over and over again when I used to feel gloomy...I have

recommended this book to lots of my friends" are clear signs of success of this program.

David M. Durant, in his piece "Resistance is Not Futile: Why Print Collections Still Matter in the Digital Age," thoughtfully argues that in our era of ubiquitous screen reading we shouldn't view print as inevitably destined to disappear. He challenges the notion that print is no longer desired or valuable as a form of knowledge and learning, and that different formats are essentially interchangeable with little impact on the user. He argues that viewing "... print's disappearance as 'inevitable' not only flies in the face of much of the evidence, but constitutes nothing more than a reductionist, self-fulfilling prophecy. Inevitability is a choice, one most libraries would be well-advised not to make."

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Bruce and Katina Strauch's daughter, **Ileana Jacks**, and their grandson, **George Wilton Jacks** looking forward to the baptism on Sunday, June 14th.

If Rumors Were Horses

The past few months have been hectic. In the **College of Charleston Addlestone Library**, we have been dealing with many interviews replacing retiring librarians. Plus it seems like everyone caught some sort of sickness or other. But it's now spring/summer and we have made all the new hires so things are looking up!

We have been able to secure new meeting space in the **Gaillard Center** which is about five blocks east on Calhoun Street from Marion Square and the Francis Marion hotel, only a few blocks from the downtown Marriott Courtyard on Meeting and Calhoun. The **Center** was supposed to open in May for **Spoletto** but the opening was delayed. The grand opening is now scheduled for October 18. The **Gaillard Center** is a state-of-the-art facility with a performance hall that seats 1800-2000 people and six large breakout rooms. We will still use the

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Bet You Missed It

Press Clippings — In the News — Carefully Selected by Your Crack Staff of News Sleuths

Column Editor: **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel)

Editor's Note: Hey, are y'all reading this? If you know of an article that should be called to *Against the Grain's* attention ... send an email to <kstrauch@comcast.net>. We're listening! — **KS**

MITFORD WAS FOR REAL

by **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel)

Nancy Mitford's famous fictional creation Merlinford in *The Pursuit of Love* was but a thinly disguised Lord Berners, a monocle-wearing fop, novelist, painter and composer of music for **Diaghilev's Ballets Russes**. Faringdon House in Oxfordshire was the scene of homosexual revels where guests were greeted by flurries of doves in rainbow hues. Nancy called the house Merlinford.

Salvador Dali, Gertrude Stein, Stravinsky, Margot Fonteyn, Noel Coward, Evelyn Waugh, H.G. Wells, and Elsa Schiaparelli were all part of the madcap fun. **Berners** was driven about the countryside wearing a fright mask with a clavichord in his Rolls so he could compose.

Berner's lover was **Robert Heber-Percy**, known as "Horrid Mad-boy," photographed by **Cecil Beaton**. Curiously, **Robert** got enraged by **Beaton** gossip and punched him in the face. The 70-year-old **Beaton** banged his head, suffered a debilitating stroke and died six years later. Most believed it was murder.

A riveting new book tells the story of all this in *the Mad Boy, Lord Berners, My Grandmother and Me* (HarperCollins, \$35).

See — **Christopher Mason**, "Social Network," *Town & Country*, April, 2015, p.40.

QUEEN'S ENG

by **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel)

English pubs woo the American market. The *Economist's* readership is 52% American. So what do you do with those troublesome words like "shag," "rubber" not to mention "lairy" and "jollies?" Then there's "defense" v. "defence." And Labour et al. with the "u." *The Economist* is sticking with British.

And why not? NPR has taken up the word "whinging."

See — **Sophie Gilbert**, "Mind the Gap," *The Atlantic*, March, 2015, p.29.

LOST TIME FOUND

by **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel)

Charles Kenneth Scott Moncrieff fought in WWI, afterwards a journalist and a spy. And the famous translator of **Marcel Proust**. He was both a fervent Catholic and a gay man on the fringe of **Oscar Wilde's** circle.

A raft of **Moncrieff** letters turned up at — where else — the Harry Ransom Center at UT-Austin. Which owns everything. Most were about romance with the explicit bits in foreign languages.

Because he was, after all, a master linguist.

Farrar, Straus and Giroux is publishing **Jean Findlay's** *Chasing Lost Time*. Most of which is drawn from a cache of letters she inherited from her great, great uncle, **Moncrieff** himself.

See — **Brenda Cronin**, "The Double Life of Proust's Translator," *The Wall Street Journal*, March, 13, 2015, p.D5.

Future Dates for Charleston Conferences

Preconferences and Vendor Showcase

Main Conference

2015 Conference	4 November	5-7 November
2016 Conference	2 November	3-5 November
2017 Conference	8 November	9-11 November
2018 Conference	7 November	8-10 November
2019 Conference	6 November	7-9 November

Reading in a Digital Age ... from page 1

Herman Peterson, in his piece "A Librarian Teaches Reading: Opportunities, Challenges, and Classroom Practices" gives us a snapshot of what it is like to teach developmental reading at the Diné Navajo tribal nation in the Southwest, where students have grown up with a predominantly oral culture rather than a literate one. He notes that "the act of bringing prior knowledge to bear on a reading aids immeasurably in comprehension. Helping the students to be successful in reading is more important than broadened horizons. Once they are successful readers, then they can find out other things on their own."

Anne Burke, Janette Hughes, and Renee Sanson, in their article, "Libraries and the New

Digital Frontier: Support for Communities and Classrooms" discuss the challenges for educators and librarians in adopting and integrating new technologies to encourage digital literacy in the new world of abundant networked information. They note that libraries have "become an important support for teachers to make suggestions as to what digital texts and applications could be useful for young adults learning and developing literacy skills. Libraries are an important productive space to suggest ways to build and nurture a digital community of learners."

And I have a piece on "social reading" that probes the implications of public versus private reading — how does this distinction affect our understanding of how we read in a digital culture? There are many questions that come to mind when I think of the impact of technology on the goals, styles, and expectations of read-

ing. How does this affect the ways in which we learn and share new knowledge? How does it affect our relationships with each other? It is a paradigm shift and we're only beginning to understand what it all means.

The contributions in this issue speak to the ongoing importance of a sustained dialogue with our various communities, listening closely to their needs, and ensuring that our strategies and goals in supporting reading are relevant, supportive, and forward-looking. As librarians and educators, we have a crucial role to play in the transformation of reading and the impact on the lives and success of our patrons and students. Reading remains the lifeblood of libraries, in its many cultural forms and media, connecting people with ideas, information, and knowledge. I hope you enjoy the diverse perspectives included in this issue! 🌸