SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

ubc library bulletin

No. 131 February 16, 1976

TERM PAPER CLINIC

During the month of February, the Sedgewick librarians, with the help of some students from the School of Librarianship, are holding a "term paper clinic." It's an extended reference service for students writing term papers: an interview is conducted, in which the topic is clarified; then an appointment is made for a further meeting; and in between, the librarian examines the reference sources for the topic and prepares an outline which guides the student to the material.

Response so far has been excellent. Posters were prepared and signs on the Reference Desk advertise the clinic....students seem to respond much more enthusiastically to an offer of concrete help with term papers, than to traditional offers of unadorned reference service. If the clinic continues to go well, it may be worked into a more general orientation programme in the fall.

MAIN LIBRARY CONSTRUCTION

The work outside: all those trenches, the mud, the noise...will eventually turn into improved lighting around the Main Library. It'll be somewhat safer to stroll around the old pile at night. Work should be finished by the end of the month.

The work inside: the level 5 concourse turnstile has been moved inside the stack entry at last. Catalogue cabinets are in place in the vacated area and, after a bit of trouble when the drawer dividers were found to be 1/16" too big, the moving of drawers is in progress. All the files are expanding southward. Tedious work, it's true, but it should make for a more comfortable fit.

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS ACQUISITION

The records of the Cariboo Gold Quartz Mining Company Limited, operators of the gold mine at Wells, B.C. from 1933 to 1967, were donated to the University by Mr. J. Royden Morris, former president of the company, and eventually presented to the Special Collections Division by Mr. John B. Evans, Department of Mineral Engineering, UBC. They consist of minute books, documents, reports, and correspondence which reflect the various operations and activities of the company and its subsidiaries, Gold Quartz Hospital and Wells Company. The photograph albums are of special interest as they portray the mine operation and the development of Wells and the surrounding countryside, 1927-1941. The records also include maps and news clippings.

BESTSELLER

Due to the popularity of the last Librarian's Annual Report to Senate, the 1973/74 edition, supplies are gone. But requests for copies are still being received. Any persons with copies they can part with should turn them in to Lily Wilson in the Librarian's office.

PERSONAL SECURITY: A NOTE FROM THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN

Taken as a whole, the University community is equal in size to a small town. In any community there are bound to be unstable individuals whose behavior deviates from the norm and whose responses to given situations are unpredictable. We have all encountered such people in the course of our work, especially those of us who work in the service divisions and branches.

I have urged the University Administration to provide committed patrolmen to the Library during the late evening hours and especially at closing time. Their duties would be to be on hand to protect staff members if confrontations occur, to assist in clearing the buildings, to guarantee the security of the buildings after closing, and to inspect the buildings after closing to ensure that no one remains in them.

But additional help of this kind will not guarantee that unfortunate incidents won't occur. Staff members must use caution in dealing with individuals whose behavior appears exceptional. Do nothing to provoke an extreme reaction from such individuals. Damage, misuse, and theft of University property are less important than the safety of individual staff members. Please steer clear of potential trouble, and immediately call the University Patrol should difficulties arise.

IMPERSONAL INSECURITY

In recent months, considerable amounts of money have been stolen from the Main Library's coin-operated copiers and from the cash register in Copy Services.

Recently, a meeting of the University Administration has reaffirmed the University policy concerning theft, loss, or damage. When it is believed an article of equipment, the property of U.B.C., has been deliberately damaged, lost, or stolen, the damage, loss, or theft must be reported to the University Patrol immediately. The Patrol will notify the R.C.M.P.

The Patrol Office would like to be notified also of thefts from staff or students in the Library.

OPEN HOUSE

Open House is coming up soon: on March 5th and 6th. In keeping with the zeitgeist, displays will be simple. They'll concentrate on personal interaction, in the form of ½ hour tours through the Main Library. An information booth will greet visitors in the entrance hall. Tours will follow a route through Ridington, up to Government Publications, down to the Main Concourse, up to Special Collections, down to Maps and Asian Studies, through the stacks and up to the level 3 turnstile exit. In Sedgewick, there will be a skylight/stairwell audio-visual display after dark on both Friday and Saturday.

RECENTLY READ AND RECOMMENDED

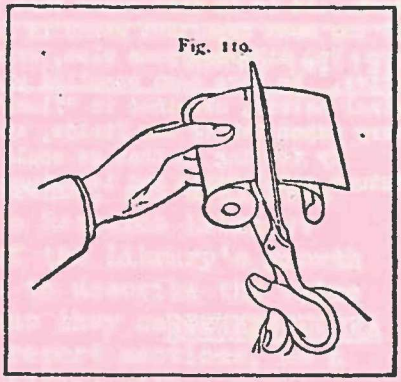
The expected avalanche of recommendations has failed to cover even a corner of a desk blotter. We'll try again: everyone is invited to submit titles of books they've read recently and liked. For everybody else's delectation and/or edification. All subjects are acceptable. Send your list, with your name & division, to Michael Kasper, Main Library, I & O Division.

Leah Gordon, LC Cataloguing: BELLOW, Saul. Humboldt's Gift. 1975. (fiction) PS 3503. E 4488. H 84. 1975. Main Stacks.
DRABBLE, Margaret. The Realms of Gold. 1975. (fiction) in LC Cataloguing.

Bruno Pruno, I & O Division: GINZBURG, Natalia. No Way. 1974. (fiction) PQ 4817. I 5. C 373. 1974. Main Stacks.
VITTORINI, Elio. Women of Messina. 1973. (fiction) PQ 4847. I 77. D 613. 1973. Main Stacks.

SERIALS REVIEW PROJECT

Over the past year, the situation has gone from worse to appalling. Subscription prices have increased to the point where they consume 2/3 of the Library's collections budget. With relatively little hope of a substantial raise in the budget, the Administration is preparing for possible reductions in serials commitments. Ultimately, as much as $275,000, or 32% of the total subscriptions expenditures, may have to be recovered. As the first step, a review project, an exercise in selective cancellation, has been in the works for over a month. The various subscription-originating divisions and branches are now examining their lists and establishing priorities. Plans are to determine which subscriptions can be dropped, in 8% blocks - the first 8% (called "category 5") representing the most expendable titles...the fourth block (called "category 2") being titles to be cut (see illus.) in extreme circumstances. In March or April, when the lists are complete, and if the new budget doesn't provide enough money to maintain collections as they are, an assortment of economies - among them, perhaps, mass cancellations - will begin.



Below are some comments on the situation from division heads involved.

Lois Carrier, Social Sciences Division, writes:

To approach the exercise on a positive note, it is a time to assess the collection both qualitatively and quantitatively - a time to trim away excesses and dead wood. Included will be journals for which we've received no issues for months or years (and which seem not to have been missed!), duplicates that are now an indulgence, non-scholarly material that is marginally desirable but not vital to teaching or research, and of course those journals that are simply not used.

These decisions are more often difficult than easy, especially when they are to be made in such a short time. The danger of hasty decisions is an ever present one.

The effect of trimming on the collection as a whole could be an alteration of its role as a research collection, reducing it to a purely functional, working role, supporting the teaching and research of the university - with no frills.

The impact on the other libraries of the province may be profound. The UBC Library has traditionally been the resource library of the province, and will likely continue to be regarded as such despite hefty cuts. In this light it appears essential that library networks reach a point where responsibility for collecting in specific areas is clearly defined and rigidly practised.

Interlibrary Loans will no doubt feel the effect of fewer journals in increased borrowing for faculty and students.

Rein Brongers, Science Division, writes:

Libraries are like gardens, the comparison is hardly new. They need sowing and planting, watering and fertilizing, weeding and pruning, and tidying up.

"Water" has been supplied seasonally by the taxpayer. "Fertilizer" used to come somewhat less regularly, through private donations, notably the MacMillan gift in the mid-sixties. The other functions such as planting and weeding, and also the guiding of visitors, have all been part of our job.

With lots of water, plenty of fertilizer, and a minimum of weeding, our garden seemed to thrive. Now both water and fertilizer are in short supply, at the very time when the growing garden's appetite is becoming insatiable - bushes and shrubs (journals) taking light and nutrition away from plants and flowers (books).

To rectify the situation, we can no longer limit ourselves to gentle weeding; we shall have to cut and prune. Alas, drastic but judicious pruning will be much less to everybody's liking than the gentle removal of a bit of dead wood. What's more, we are bound to make some mistakes - and some enemies, when someone's favourite shrub gets the axe.

So far, we have found it easy enough to decide which are the major trees (e.g. Engineering Index, Chemical Abstracts) which we simply dare not touch. It is not too hard to place the Morning Glory and other unnecessary weeds, pretty though they may be, in category 5. Establishing category 2 (to be cut only in extreme circumstances) is harder but not impossible. It seems to be our quota for categories 4 and 3 which we are finding hardest to fill...

However, we are trying. After all: if you do not prune in the fall, you have got to do it in the spring, a season whose name alone introduces a note of optimism and hope. Perhaps it will be a "wet" one.

Chuck Forbes, Humanities Division, writes:

The exercise now being engaged in to pare periodical and continuation subscriptions by $275,000 will obviously be a major concern to students, scholars, and librarians in the humanities.

The estimate of the periodical/continuation list is given as $995,000; our share of this (per the computer cost printout) is $70,375. The problem is how to allocate 8% blocks of $5,630. Our reference items, except for possible duplications in the system, will certainly take priority; for the most part we must find the $5,630 blocks within the stack periodicals and continuations. With an average journal price of $18.69 (it is slightly less for monographic continuations, but impossible to get accurate estimates per volume), this means that each of our 8% blocks has about 302 titles. Looked at this way, we could stand, at the very worst, to loose roughly 1200 titles, or 40% of our collection.

This, of course, takes little regard of any equitable subject or departmental distribution of the 8% blocks. To be fair, a pro-rated distribution might necessitate the cancellation of many very low-priced titles, which would mean a loss of even more than 40% of our total.

To accentuate and magnify our difficulties, we are in a distinctly less advantageous position than others when relying on the Center for Research Libraries for back-up support. The CRL Expanded Journals Project, which aimed at providing titles in a ratio of 50% science & technology, 25% social sciences, and 25% humanities, reported recently that the actual ratio was 62% science & technology, 27% social sciences, and only 11% humanities.

Here at U.B.C., reduced buying in the areas of the humanities would probably have more dire consequences than in, say, science or technology. A lack of abstracting/indexing services and tools (even in English-language material) forces us to be cautious in abandoning our serial collecting in the humanities.

Humanities material, generally speaking, tends to increase in scholarly value with age. Its potential for the future, therefore, must always be weighed along with the more utilitarian guides such as use. Frequency of use, as a criterion for

collection evaluation, must, in itself, be used with extreme caution when dealing with material in the humanities. As John Burchard stated more succinctly than I could, "the search for the information itself is a major part of his [the humanist's] task...It is in this sense that the library for the humanist is truly his laboratory...[and although] frequency of use of some of the most important works is low, to remove them on the basis of such frequency would destroy humanistic libraries."

We, like everyone else, expect problems if the worst comes upon us. The process of evaluation has, however, been informative. We have been supplied with some valuable printouts of information which have made us aware of material of a very marginal nature, obtained in "flush" years, which certainly can be "jettisoned". Unfortunately, this material is not usually very expensive in our fields, and therefore not productive of large amounts of money.

My feeling is that we could cancel up to 16% (two blocks of $5,630) without irreparable damage being done to present or future scholarship and learning. Past this, we would be getting into serious difficulty.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR LIBRARIANS

The School of Librarianship, in cooperation with the Centre for Continuing Education, announces a series of Spring/Fall workshops for practicing librarians. The first programme, entitled "Total Library Service for British Columbia? Implications of Recent Reports", will be held Friday, February 27th, at Vancouver Community College, Langara...a full day of lectures, panel discussions and seminars, ending in the adoption of resolutions to be forwarded to the government. For more information, call the Centre for Continuing Education, 228-2181, locals 253 or 212.

WANTED

The following items are needed to complete the Library's holdings:

CANADIAN JOURNAL OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, 1974-no. 1.
CANADIAN MUSIC EDUCATOR, Vol. 16, no. 2 (Winter 1974).
CANADIAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION. INFORMATION SERVICES SECTION. NEWSLETTER, Vol. 1, no. 3-4 (1968/69); vol. 2, no. 2-4 (1969/70); vol. 3, no. 4 (1971).
CANADIAN LITERATURE, any issues, especially recent ones.
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL (Toronto), Vol. 28, no. 3 (1973).
NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE, Vol. 145, no. 1-4 (Ja-Ap 1974); vol. 146, no. 3-4 (S-O 1974).
PRISM INTERNATIONAL (Vancouver), any issues, 1971-1974.
QUEEN'S QUARTERLY, Vol. 77, no. 1 (1970).
SOLEIL DE COLOMBIE, Vol. 6, no. 51 (Ap 26, 1974).
WESTERN LIVING (later WESTERN LIVING AND VANCOUVER LIFE), Vol. 1, no. 6 (1971).

Contact Graham Elliston, local 2304, if you can supply any of these.

UPWARD MOBILITY

The following recruitment notices have been received recently by the Library. For details and contact addresses, see Michael Kasper, I & O Division.

University of ARIZONA (Tucson). Head, Central Reference Library. (Deadline for applications: March 15)
CONCORDIA University (Montreal). Director of Libraries. (Letter dated: Dec. 23, 1975)
University of NORTH CAROLINA (Chapel Hill). Music Librarian. (Deadline: April 1)
SYRACUSE (N.Y.) University. Rare Book Bibliographer (Deadline: March 1)