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Comparing Apples to Apples Oranges:  
An Exploration of the Use of LibGuides in ARL Libraries

Rosalinda Hernandez Linares and Anna Marie Johnson

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Introduction

The University of Louisville (UofL) Libraries, like thousands of libraries all over the world, use LibGuides content management software from Springshare to create and maintain several hundred subject guide webpages. Although the librarians spend countless hours every year on their guides, a study of guide usage has never been undertaken. As the authors began to look at the usage statistics for their institution, they wondered if examining only statistics from UofL Libraries would be looking at them in a vacuum. The UofL Libraries is a mid-size to large library system with six separate libraries and is a member of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL). The authors decided to use UofL’s statistics as a reference point in asking the following questions: How did UofL’s usage compare to other, similar libraries? What types of guides have libraries created? What guide types are the most heavily used? How does guide placement affect use? The question of how to increase usage was also important given the amount of funding and time spent on the guides.

A number of challenges were present as the authors attempted to embark on the research. Since UofL Libraries is a member of ARL, the study was limited to other ARL member Libraries. Although LibGuides are ubiquitous at ARL Libraries, collecting usage data was dependent on the goodwill of those libraries as it was not publicly available. The implementation of the guides at institutions can be radically different and those implementations are affected by internal policies that were not readily available. In addition, LibGuides are more ephemeral in nature than it would first appear. They appear, change, and disappear with a rapidity that makes it difficult to do in-depth, meaningful analysis. Nevertheless, this article will provide a snapshot in time of the use of the software across 27 libraries, demonstrate the wide variation in use of the guides, and provide some practical suggestions for increasing usage based on the authors’ findings.

Review of the LibGuides Literature

Online research or subject guides historically known as pathfinders are a staple for many academic libraries: a digestible aggregation of links and content to assist students, faculty, and the public alike in navigating the complex ecosystem of the library. Historically, librarians have relied on traditional websites to house their research guides and pathfinders, a time-consuming process in terms of maintenance (Morris & Grimes, 1999). To address this problem, Springshare introduced LibGuides, a user-friendly, template-based platform to publish research guides in 2007, and from this nascent technology emerged immediate discussions of utility, use, and implementation by academic librarians. Moses and Richard note that “librarians are pleased with the control and autonomy they have over their web content and the ability to communicate with our community” when their library implemented LibGuides (2008). Institutions both foreign (Pin Pin, 2010) and domestic are using them in a myriad of creative ways. Beyond their use as subject and course guides, some institutions initially developed LibGuides as a distance education tool (Arvin, 2009), a current awareness service (Kiscaden, 2014), or, in the case of Grand Valley State Library, used them internally for tenure and promotion management (Harris, Garrison, & Frigo, 2009). Use of LibGuides as a teaching tool for information literacy content delivery (Yelick, Neyer, Bressler, Coffta, & Magolis, 2010) led to their inclusion in discourse on critical thinking and learner-centered pedagogy (Miner & Alexander, 2010). An additional example of this would be the student-created LibGuide assignment described by Scull (2014).

The ubiquitous nature of LibGuides, due in large part to their ease of use, has led to interest in usability testing of this librarian-controlled content (Sonstey & Dejonghe, 2013), which in the past has often rested in the hands of website design or IT specialists. Comparatively, studies indicate content presented through LibGuides versus traditional websites has the same pedagogical impact on students (Bowen, 2014). Public access to the published content of LibGuides has allowed for a cursory exploration of content, running the gamut from the impact of the librarian’s image profile picture (Anderson & Still, 2013) to the facility of LibGuides to host content related to special collections (Ford, Prior, Coat, & Warton, 2014). Rafferty used data from LibGuides to determine if students were using library resources highlighted in instructional sessions (2013). Gaphery and White’s (2010) survey revealed that 19% of the library respondents look to usage statistics to evaluate their LibGuides while 23% had no evaluation method in place. Only 4% had performed usability testing while many of the remaining respondents were interested in beginning some form of evaluation. Foster et al. (2010) examined the results of an effort to market their LibGuides in various ways, finding that marketing increased the use of the guides. No studies have
compared usage across libraries, and although subject-specific content has been studied across institutions (Dougherty, 2013), usage in conjunction with guide types has not been documented or explored at length.

In 2013, the Library Information Technology Association (LITA), a division of the American Library Association, published the book Using LibGuides to Enhance Library Services, a practical primer on creating effective LibGuides, with essays from longtime users on implementation, including a vocabulary list, checklists, and an exploration of broad issues to be considered when incorporating LibGuides. At its core, Using LibGuides is a response and how-to distillation of the academic discourse surrounding best practices generated by LibGuides in its early years (Dobbs, Sittler, Cook, & Library Information Technology, 2013). Pertinent to the topic of LibGuides usage, Baldwin and McFadden’s chapter of this volume provides a rubric for measuring the value of LibGuides (2013). This rubric includes aspects such as economic value, instructional role value, value in distance learning, and incidental value, which are combined to create a score indicating how much value one’s library is realizing from its LibGuides implementation. While the authors address effectiveness through intra-library assessment, no direct guidance is given on how to compare or assess LibGuides across institutions.

Springshare’s LibGuides has been a catalyst for librarian-driven creation of online research tools and its flexible platform has seen use in many other library-specific initiatives. Use of LibGuides has increased exponentially across institutions, making LibGuides omnipresent in the landscape of academic libraries. At the same time, their mutable and transient nature makes it difficult to capture, collect, and analyze data that might inform assessment of LibGuides based on usage statistics. The following examination of LibGuides usage includes the average number of guides per institution, the average usage of the guides, the most used guides by guide type, the number one most used guide at institutions, the presence of a top ten list, usage disparities that appeared in the data, and guide types that were absent from the top twenty guides at each institution.

Methodology

In the Winter of 2014, using Springshare’s Community website, each member library of the Association of Research Libraries was searched; it was determined that at the time of the study 100 of the 125 or 80% of ARL libraries used Springshare’s LibGuides. Next in Spring 2014, individual e-mails were sent out to the LibGuides administrator in each ARL library who used LibGuides. Libraries not directly affiliated with a college or university were excluded. Special libraries, such as law school or medical school libraries were also excluded. If the institution had a main library LibGuides presence and secondary guides through an affiliate campus, school, or department, only the main library LibGuides data was used. Data was received from 27 (including the UoFL Libraries) of the 100 libraries for a 27% response rate. The data included the guide titles and number of views per month for each guide in the library’s system from July 1, 2012–June 30, 2013. Guides that had been deleted over that time period were titled [Deleted], and their lack of monthly views reflected their change in status. The LibGuides corpus from the 27 institutions included 8,438 total guides.

After collecting the data, the authors focused on a manageable subset of guides. This subset included the top 20 guides from each institution; this threshold was chosen because it included guides that accounted for at least 5% of the total views of all guides. These top 20 guides, 540 in all, were extracted from the original dataset. Finally, the authors manually scanned and categorized the title. This categorization was derived from the “Uses for LibGuides” section of Using LibGuides to Enhance Library Services (Dobbs et al., 2013, p. 12) and included the categories of subject, course-specific, general library services, the research process, technology, other, e-books, data, and citation management. The latter three categories were not a part of the “Uses for LibGuides” section but were of interest to the authors since they appeared regularly in the top-twenty data set.

Results

Number of Guides and Hits per Institution

From the Springshare website, the authors recorded the number of guides available at all 27 ARL Libraries who made their LibGuides statistics available. The average number of guides per library was 313. The numbers of guides ranged from 107 to 625 [Table 1]. Total views of all guides at each institution varied widely and, in many cases, were independent of the number of guides, with some as few as 30-40,000 total views and one as large as 1.6 million views. In addition, six institutions had over half a million total views [Table 2]. The average number of views per institution was 390,564. UoFL Libraries had a total of 397 guides created at the time of the study, placing it in the top third of this sample in terms of number of guides, but total views was 363,129 a number that was squarely in the middle of the ranking by number of views.

Most Used Guides by Guide Category

In the top-twenty data set, subject and course guides were the most prevalent [Table 3], but the variety of subjects covered made it difficult to draw conclusions related to the use of the guides. Subject guides amounted to 55% of the top twenty most used guides (Figure 1) and ranged from broad subjects such as Psychology to more specific subjects such as Ethnomusicology. Course guides were the next most common at 11%, and these tended to focus on very specific subject areas related to the courses with which they were associated. The next most common guide type was general library services, accounting for 10% of the total. Not surprisingly, guides dedicated to some aspect of research instruction were the next largest category with 7%. The catchall category of other and the category of citation management accounted for 5% each. Guides dedicated to providing information on data sources made up 3% of the
total, while e-books and technology guides represented 2% of the guides in the data set. In UoFL's top-twenty guide set [Table 4], these percentages were reasonably consistent with the overall data set totals in that subject guides made up 55%, course guides made up 10%, and general library services 15%. Citation management, the research process, and e-books were each represented one time.

**Most Used Guide at Each Institution**

At some institutions, uneven usage was evident. For example, UoFL was one of seven universities where the number one guide had close to or over 100,000 views [Table 5]. Since the median number of views for this most used guide was a little over 33,000, these guides stood out. Of the seven guides in this group,

- three were A-Z database lists which provided links to every database subscribed to by the library
- two were guides helping students navigate some part of the research process
- one was a library using a LibGuide as their homepage
- one was a subject guide from an information-intensive discipline

Two A-Z database guides, at the time of this study, were linked from their main library webpages. Such exposure drives up use considerably. Logically, guides used as comprehensive lists of databases would be heavily used guides as well, because they act as a single access point or conduit of access to a wide array of aggregated database links. Unsurprisingly, all of the comprehensive database guides in the high-use group were the number one most-viewed guide at the institution.

Looking at the remaining number one most-used guides by institution beyond database lists, there was a diversity of guide categories [Table 6]. Nine were either subject or course guides, five were research process guides, one was a guide to newspapers, one was a guide to citation management, one was a library webpage, one was the LibGuides homepage for that institution, and the remaining five were categorized as general (i.e. a list of universities, a page for a specific software, etc.).

One interesting finding for the authors was that UoFL Libraries had the largest disparity between the number one guide and the number two guide in terms of views. Schools, where the top guide had over 100,000 views all had significant gaps between the most used guide and the second most used, but none were as large as the authors' institution [Table 7].

**Presence of a Top Ten list**

In addition, 13 of the 27 schools who responded (or just under 50%) had a “Top Ten” guides link on their pages at the time of the study. The presence of a top ten list, which is generated by the LibGuides system based on the number of views, could potentially influence the usage statistics of the highest-use guides by perpetuating the use of those same guides.

**Guides Categories Not Present in the Top Twenty**

What’s missing from the LibGuides surveyed? Although there were LibGuides on a variety of topics, certain areas were not well represented. Scholarly communication, for example, was the topic of just two of the 540 top twenty LibGuides. Open access and faculty research were also absent in the top twenty. Obviously, this may not represent a lack of information since these topics may be a part of library webpages, but simply that LibGuides is not seen by librarians at these institutions as a heavily-trafficked venue to provide information to faculty. Due to the high number of course guides and related subject guides, students seemed to be the target audience for most guides. It is also possible that library web policies could affect the type of guides created at some institutions. For example, at UoFL, LibGuides is used for the library collections and tutorial or instructional information while regular webpages are used for all other library information such as services, hours, etc.

**Discussion**

Although the use of LibGuides is common to 100 of the 125 ARL Libraries researched in this study, the implementations and manifestations of LibGuides do not share enough in common to allow statistical comparison. Each institution’s librarians have adapted the Guides to their unique situations and contexts despite the software’s template-based format. Conventional wisdom in the library literature has pointed to special collections as the area of libraries that make each valuable and unique (Koda, 2008); the authors would argue, along with others (Waters, 2009), that this view sells other parts of the library short. The variety of LibGuides implementations and the diversity of ways the Guides are being used make the case that library resources beyond special collections are valuable and those resources, while not necessarily unique to an institution (i.e. Citation style guide), may be highly prized and heavily used at that institution.

LibGuides are easy to use and accessible in the broadest sense and the overwhelming majority of ARL libraries have embraced them. Many ARL Libraries are using LibGuides for their intended purpose as course and subject guides, but the diversity of uses was what proved far more interesting in this examination. Using the guides as replacement webpages or to address topics such as citation management or data analysis might indicate a broadening of the library’s traditional bibliographic role. The variation in guide categories across universities exposes the diversity of institutional contexts and confirms what a review of the LibGuides literature revealed: librarians are using the guides in creative and innovative ways such as highlighting current issues, new technology, or new services, reaching out to particular audiences, or as online exhibit showcases. The ease of LibGuides construction and use is also indicated by the ephemeral nature of the guides. Even by collecting data in fall of 2013 for the 2012-2013 academic year, many guides had already disappeared, been re-named,
or changed to be unrecognizable. Since the authors did not actually attempt to look at every guide, it is not possible to say what percentage had been changed, but surprisingly a number of the guides in some of the top twenty lists that were sought were no longer able to be accessed. Unfortunately, it was beyond the scope of this research to investigate this phenomenon, but it does speak to the transitory nature of LibGuides.

While the authors were able to accomplish the original goal of comparing UofL Libraries’s LibGuides usage to that of peer institutions, the results were not as clear as they would have desired; however, it did seem that most of UofL’s guides with the exception of the A-Z list were not getting the usage that they perhaps could get. For example, UofL ranked in the top third of number of guides created but in the middle in terms of views to those guides. In addition, upon closer inspection, the usage numbers for UofL were being skewed by the presence of one very well-used guide. This was an important point, given that the value calculations recommended by Baldwin and McFadden (2013) would have presented an inaccurate picture if the authors had included that standout guide in their calculations.

For the authors, the question still remains, what affects usage of LibGuides? Many conditions could affect the use of guides such as the size of school, promotion of guides, whether guides are readily available via links in a course management software, the presence of a LibGuides top ten list, or linking to a large program or course requirement. Since many libraries spend a considerable amount of time and thus money on their LibGuides, making sure the guides are well-used is imperative. A list of recommendations is offered from this research, as well as the LITA guide and other literature on the topic.

Provide links to your guides on the front page of your library’s website. This seems to be the single most important factor in high hit counts. This could even be done via a rotating program of “Guide of the Week” highlighting a specific guide.

- Integrate the LibGuides into the campus course management software.
- Provide LibGuides for large enrollment classes or specific, large programs.
- Focus on creating high-quality, high-impact guides rather than creating guides for every possible subject.
- Name guides in a way that reflects how users think: thinking about the topic in a way that your students and faculty would search it in a search engine to maximize usage. Many search engines like Google use IP Address in their result ranking algorithm. Consequently, even if the guide is named similarly to another institution, your users would likely see your guide in their localized results.
- LibGuides usage can also reveal to librarians what students are actually doing when they do research. As usage fluctuates over time, librarians can work with faculty to respond to the changing research needs. If librarians are monitoring their LibGuides usage, this analysis can affect how and when they create new guides.
- Ask LibGuides users at your institution what they would like to see or what types of guides would be helpful. In addition, ask non-users of LibGuides, why they avoid them.

Future Research

Among ARL Libraries, there are a wide variety of library sizes and student populations. How does the size of an institution affect the use of their LibGuides? Would there be a way of combining enrollment with usage to create a metric for evaluating the Guides’ effectiveness? Future research on LibGuides could combine this type of usage data collection along with follow-up interviews with administrators asking about policies affecting guide creation and the types of promotional efforts undertaken. Additionally, LibGuides has now had its second release, LibGuides v2, improving on features from v1. Now that many libraries have implemented LibGuides v2, what effect, if any does that have on their usage data?

Conclusion

While LibGuides are clearly not a solution for every library due to their cost and upkeep, LibGuides at ARL Libraries are clearly an important piece of librarians’ work as a tool for connecting users with collections. They are in widespread use, and although the majority of the usage is due to their cost and upkeep, LibGuides at ARL Libraries are clearly an important piece of librarians’ work as a tool for connecting users with collections. They are in widespread use, and although the majority of the usage is as subject guides, a surprising amount are used by librarians as a simplified mechanism for creating webpages to highlight a wide variety of library resources and services. Our study confirmed the finding from our review of the literature: librarians are using LibGuides for far more than just subject and course guides. They often appear, change, and disappear with a rapidity that befits their ease of use. Their use can be captured, but not easily compared because usage is highly influenced by factors outside of the LibGuides platform, including implementation, anticipated audience size as represented by enrollment, and access points across institutional webpages. Nevertheless, it is important for an institution to examine usage more granularly since, as this study found, total usage numbers can be skewed considerably by one particularly high-use guide (such as an A-Z list). Librarians must ask themselves what they want from their LibGuides implementation in their own context and then find their own measures of success.
References


Koda, P. S. (2008). The past is more than prologue: Special collections assume central role in historical research and redefine research library collections. The Library Quarterly, 78(4), 473-482. doi:10.1086/591209


Scull, A. (2014). Fostering student engagement and collaboration with the library: Student creation of LibGuides as a research assignment. Reference Librarian, 55(4), 318-327. doi:10.1080/02763877.2014.929076


Table 1: Ranking Institutions by Number of Total Guides *UofL

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Table 2: Ranking of Institutions by Total Number of Hits *UofL

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Table 3: Frequency of Guide Category in Top Twenty Most Used Guides

*One guide was a deleted guide and not able to be categorized

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Figure 1: Guidelines by Category
Table 4: UofL Top Twenty Guides Usage Distribution

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<td>Course Guides &amp; Assignments</td>
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<td>Government Resources: Quick Find</td>
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<td>All Subjects Guide</td>
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<td>University Archives' Finding Aids</td>
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<td>Oral Histories</td>
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<td>Dorothea Lange: Migrants in Steinbeck Country</td>
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<td>Industry and Company Analysis</td>
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Table 5: Number One Guide by Hits with Category

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<td>General</td>
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<tr>
<td>178717</td>
<td>General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>155439</td>
<td>Subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>155392</td>
<td>General</td>
</tr>
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Table 6: Number One Most Used Guide by Category

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Table 7: Usage Disparities: #1 Guide and #2 Guide Total Views Compared

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SELA/GENERAL NEWS:

SELA will be partnering with Georgia COMO for a joint conference October 5-7 in Athens. Details regarding the conference can be found at http://selaonline.org/sela/conferences/2016.html. The conference will feature Jonathan Alter, award-winning author and journalist as our luncheon speaker! Learn more about Jonathan Alter online at his website: JonathanAlter.com.

To submit a proposal for this conference, use the following link: https://classiccenter.formstack.com/forms/gacomo_proposalform2016

SELA has accepted the South Carolina Library Association (SCLA) invitation for a joint conference during the fall of 2018. The dates of the conference will be forthcoming.

New Voices Program
Call for Submissions/Papers

New Voices is an opportunity for new librarians to the profession to present and publish their ideas or perspectives on current library issues.

The University & College Libraries Section of SELA will select one librarian to present a paper at the 2016 SELA/Georgia COMO (Council of Media Organizations) Joint Conference in Athens, Georgia. The winning paper will be published in the peer-reviewed SELA journal, The Southeastern Librarian. The editor asks that papers be written according to the latest edition of the APA style, and that they be 2,000 – 4,000 words.

What: Paper to be presented at the 2016 SELA/Georgia COMO Joint Conference, and published in The Southeastern Librarian

Theme: A current library issue of interest to the academic library community

Who: Professionally employed librarians with less than five years of experience

MUST be able to attend and present paper at the conference

When: October 5-7, 2016

Where: SELA/Georgia COMO 2016 Joint Conference in Athens, Georgia

Deadline: Completed papers must be received by June 30, 2016.

The winning author will receive an honorarium sponsored by EBSCO!

Please submit your paper and/or inquiries to Tammera Race, SELA UCLS Chair, trace@ncf.edu

LIBRARY NEWS

Georgia

Registration for Science Boot Camp for Librarians Southeast is now open! Please go here to register: http://www.georgiacenter.uga.edu/uga-hotel/conferences-events/register/science-boot-camp-librarians-southeast

The Boot Camp is from July 6-8 in Athens, Georgia. Registration is limited to 175 attendees.

This conference provides an affordable and immersive opportunity for librarians to learn and explore current science research with expert presenters. The theme of the conference is global change, and the daily sessions will focus on climate change, public health, marine science, science education, and a panel discussion with librarians who work outside of traditional academic settings. The conference includes eighteen lightning talks presented by conference attendees and a gala at the UGA Special Collections Library. There will be six scholarships available for library students or recent library school graduates. This event will qualify for eight CEUs from the Georgia Public Library Service.

If you would like to learn more about the conference, the lightning talks, or scholarships, please visit the website: http://guides.libs.uga.edu/sbcse2016

Like us on Facebook! We will update here as well. https://www.facebook.com/events/844902242285801/

Cost:

$275 includes:
• All conference sessions
• 2 nights' hotel accommodation
• 2 Breakfasts
• 1 Lunch
• 2 Dinners
• 1 Gala reception
• Free Parking

$115 commuter pricing includes:
• All conference sessions
• 2 Breakfasts
• 1 Lunch
• 2 Dinners
• 1 Gala reception

For more information, you may also contact Diana Hartle dhartle@uga.edu.
Mississippi

The Mississippi State University Libraries Scholarly Communication Summit: The State of Data Services will be held on Friday, July 22, 2016. Micah Vandegrift will join us as our keynote, presenting “Digital, Data, Documentation? We’re not in ScholComm Kansas Anymore.” http://library.msstate.edu/scholcommsummit

We’re looking for your ideas and proposals for concurrent sessions at the Summit. Submissions will be accepted until May 2.

Increasingly, researchers rely on academic libraries for support with the data lifecycle. As responses to these needs emerge within our profession, it is vital to come together to share ideas, struggles, and successes. The MSU Libraries are providing an opportunity to collaborate and strategize at the inaugural Scholarly Communication Registration is free, and lunch will be provided.

We invite proposals for workshops, panels, lightning talks, posters, and presentations and welcome topics that focus on:

- Data Management Services and Tools
- Data Management & Institutional Repositories
- Data Management & Open Access
- Data Storage Solutions
- DMPTool
- Open Data and Open Scholarship
- Data Visualization
- Data Sharing and Scholarly Impact
- Strategies for disciplinary specific data
- Any topics that might further inform our discussion about the role of academic libraries in Open Data and Data Management.

This is not an exhaustive list; we encourage creative and collaborative proposals.

Submit an abstract up to 200 words by May 2, 2016. http://library.msstate.edu/scholcommsummit

North Carolina

NCSU Libraries Wins 2016 IMLS National Medal

The NCSU Libraries has won the 2016 National Medal for Museum and Library Service from the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). This award is the nation’s highest honor for extraordinary public service, recognizing institutions that are valuable community anchors. Congressman David Price, “congratulate[s] the North Carolina State University Library system on this well-deserved award, which recognizes its exceptional service to the university and surrounding community. From the innovative programs at the Hunt Library to the D.H. Hill Makerspace, NC State has built a library system that can support the university’s students and cutting-edge research while serving as an incubator for Triangle businesses. This library of the future is a great asset to North Carolina and a terrific example for other research libraries around the world.”

For twenty-two years, the award has celebrated institutions that demonstrate extraordinary and innovative approaches to public service and are making a difference for individuals, families, and communities. The NCSU Libraries is among ten recipients of the National Medal this year and is the only academic research library on the list. In fact, the NCSU Libraries is the first academic research library in ten years to win the award, which has in the past honored public and university libraries, children’s and science museums, and many other types of institutions. A complete list of this year’s winners can be found on the IMLS website at www.imls.gov/2016-medals.

Vice Provost & Director of Libraries Susan K. Nutter will receive the medal at a ceremony in Washington, D.C. on June 1. In addition to the medal, the Libraries receives $5,000, national recognition, and a visit from StoryCorps, a nonprofit that will capture stories from the NC State community and preserve them at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress.

“All of us at the NCSU Libraries are honored to win this year’s IMLS National Medal. This recognition means that we are not only serving as a competitive advantage for our campus users, but for the surrounding communities as well,” Nutter said. “Virtually all of our programs are free and open to the public and are of equal interest to students, instructors, researchers, and community members,” Nutter added. “Winning the National Medal speaks to the quality of our staff, many of whom volunteer in the community on their own time. The kinds of services and programming we provide are simply an extension, and a reflection, of them.”

As a representative community member, NC State Film Studies Professor Marsha Gordon will travel with Nutter to the nation’s capital to accept the award. Gordon is a valuable Libraries partner and has leveraged the spaces, technologies, and staff to innovate her teaching. She is integral to the Libraries’ film programming and has contributed to a variety of screenings and panel
discussions, such as “Science in the Movies” and “Separate or Equal? Three Films About Black Youth in the 60s and 70s.” Gordon also collaborated with Libraries staff on “Shooting Wars,” an interactive visualization of the history of war coverage for her War Documentaries class.

NCSU Libraries Exhibit Celebrates the Life and Work of Horticulturist J. C. Raulston


The exhibit celebrates the life and work of innovative horticulturist and teacher J. C. Raulston and his unique contributions to NC State, his students, and the many colleagues, nursery owners, landscape designers, and gardeners who learned and benefited from his passionate work. Based on the biography, Chlorophyll in His Veins, by garden writer Bobby J. Ward, the exhibit tells Raulston’s story, from his Oklahoma childhood through two decades at the university during which he developed what would become the JC Raulston Arboretum.

An indefatigable mentor, Raulston had an enormous impact on the nursery industry in the U.S., from the late 1970s until his tragic death in an automobile accident in 1996 at the age of 56. The visually dynamic exhibit draws upon Raulston’s rich archive of travel notebooks, lecture notes, ephemera, and correspondence, as well as a collection of over 88,000 color slides. The NCSU Libraries, which houses Raulston’s letters in its Special Collections Research Center, has produced an 80-page, full-color catalog to accompany the exhibit.

Funding for “Plan–and Plant for a Better World” J. C. Raulston and The North Carolina State University Arboretum is generously supported by the Goodnight Educational Foundation Library Endowment for Special Collections and the Francis E. and Julie G. McVay Library Endowment for Archives and Manuscript Collections.

About the JC Raulston Arboretum

The 10.5-acre JC Raulston Arboretum is one of the Southeast’s top teaching gardens, with one of the largest and most diverse collections of landscape plants adapted for use in the Piedmont North Carolina region. Best Colleges Online recently named the Arboretum as one of the fifty best university public gardens in the country.

NCSU Libraries Exhibits Winning Artworks on Hunt Library Video Walls

Santhosh Radhakrishnan’s data visualization artwork “Code_Climate” took first prize in the second annual NCSU Libraries Code+Art Student Visualization Contest, sponsored by Christie Digital Systems. Student artists were honored at a ceremony at the James B. Hunt Jr. Library, where their work was displayed on four video walls and added to the library’s permanent collection of media for the walls.

Focusing an aesthetic lens on the increasing amount of data we encounter, the contest was open to submissions in data art, animations, procedural environments, interactive visualizations, and algorithmic generative art. Students created visualizations for a variety of large video walls at Hunt Library, including the 20-foot-wide Art Wall and the large curved screen in the iPearl Immersion Theater.

Radhakrishnan, a graduate student in Aerospace Engineering, took the top prize of $1000. Ryan West and Augustus Vieweg, both juniors studying Electrical Engineering, claimed second prize ($500) for their “NCSUTwitteRed.” Computer Engineering junior Lucas Rumney’s “Spiral's Edge” claimed third ($250). An honorable mention went to W. Conor Lenhardt, Ben Webber, Parker Yingling, Peter Rozakis, and Nick Hyde, - a team of undergraduates studying Industrial, Environmental, and Graphic Design.

Dr. Richard T. Olsen--a student of J. C. Raulston and the current director of the U.S. National Arboretum in Washington D.C.--gave an opening lecture on Friday, March 18.
Radhakrishnan’s winning “Code_Climate” uses shape and color to display global temperature change data from 1880 to 2016. The anomaly in temperature for a particular year in comparison to the 1951-1980 average determines the direction of strokes onscreen. Additionally, blue indicates a cooler global climate and red a hotter global climate. Judges were impressed with Radhakrishnan's elegant usage of color and design, as well as his integration of climate data.

“It’s a reminder about changes in global climate,” Radhakrishnan says. “It’s something we need to keep in our minds, but it’s taken for granted sometimes. I am conveying a means of people taking the message more seriously. So I made something bright with beautiful colors so it would stand out. But it conveys a grim message.”

A self-admitted coding novice, Radhakrishnan had to teach himself the openFrameworks coding language to make “Code_Climate.” The process has piqued his interest in interactive media, particularly its applications in the classroom.

West and Vieweg created the “NCSUTwitteRed” application to measure school spirit through images on five different NC State Twitter accounts. It analyzes the amount of Wolfpack red in images posted to those Twitter accounts, rendering all other colors in grayscale to highlight the red.

Rumney’s “Spiral’s Edge” animates different 3D models and structures based on composite sine waves— a simple pattern that appears in almost every discipline in mathematics or engineering. Visually beautiful, complex images emerge when constructive and destructive interference is introduced into a simple sine wave function.

“Skybox,” by the team of Lenhardt, Webber, Yingling, Rozakis, and Hyde, is a procedural environment generator. This simulation uses a perlin noise algorithm to generate a series of biomes, or graphical environments. The algorithm alters the terrain and placement of the environmental objects, conveying unique possibilities with implications for game design.

For more information about Code+Art, contact Alison Blaine, ablaine@ncsu.edu.

Tennessee

Sue Knoche reports that the James H. Quillen College of Medicine Library, Johnson City, TN hosted a “Library Pi(e) Day” in honor of National Pi Day (3/14/16) with a huge selection of various pies, from fruit, cream pies, buttermilk, sugar free orange delights or Mississippi Mud Pie and also included a lot of large pizza pies. All students, staff, patrons were invited from our campus and indulged in our downstairs lobby. The photo below shows a few from the library helping out from l to r: Rick Wallace, Asst. Dir.; Kelly Loyd, ILL services; Sylvester Renner, IT; Director Rachel Walden. There was a contest as our first ever Pi(e) Day PubMed Challenge to identify pie related citations with the winner receiving large Kentucky Derby type pie to take home. A good time had by all and a fun day for the students who use the facility.

PERSONNEL NEWS:

Alabama

The Auburn University at Montgomery Library is saddened to report the passing of library family member Jason Kneip, on February 24, 2016. Jason first worked at AUM in the Library’s Archives & Special Collections department and most recently served as a Web Services and Emerging Technologies Librarian. He graduated from Wayne State University in 2002 with his M.L.I.S. and began working at AUM in February 2003. He served on many library and campus committees and was a member of the Society of Alabama Archivists and the Alabama Library Association. He is greatly missed by his friends and colleagues.

Kentucky

University of Louisville Libraries

After 40 years of librarianship, Margo Smith, Associate Professor and Head of User and Access Services in Ekstrom Library at the University of Louisville is retiring a few months shy of her 30th year with the University of Louisville Libraries.

When first hired as Head of the Bibliographic Control Unit, Margo’s first job was to dismantle the library’s card catalog, whose conversion to an electronic system began in 1987. But perhaps her most memorable task in 30 years was helping to implement Ekstrom’s Robotic Retrieval System (RRS), a unique, large-scale storage and retrieval system. Though initially skeptical, she became an ardent supporter of the RRS, which uses warehouse technology to stack books in three-story-high “arms” that can hold up to 1.2 million volumes. The UofL Libraries were the seventh academic institution in North American to use such a system. Currently, the RRS houses approximately 500,000 volumes.

“Initially, I thought it would be like a vending machine,” she said. “But when I saw how much it was able to store and how it operated, I was converted.”
Daily work and life in an academic library can prove memorable for other reasons, she said, recalling students entering Ekstrom carrying a pillow and blanket, ready to catch up on study and sleep. The odd food item left on a shelf, including a petrified hamburger wedged between two books, and a full beer in a drawer of the old card catalog, seemed worth mentioning.

In retirement, she is looking forward to catching up on her rest, doing more yoga, water aerobics and walking, and having more time to volunteer. A major focus will be helping at the Scholar House, a local nonprofit that offers childcare and other support for single parents who attend UofL.

“I’d like to make a Libraries connection at Scholar House,” she said. “They might need help with the Libraries’ website, making appointments with a research librarian, and other services. I know it’d be good for me and probably would be helpful for them.”

Margo’s last day in the office will be in mid-May.  “I have had a wonderful experience here,” she said. “I’ve worked with some wonderful, bright, sometimes funny colleagues. And it’s been a truly rewarding career.”

Allen Ashman has resigned his position with the Libraries. Allen had been a member of the Libraries Faculty since 1997, beginning as the Head of the Kentucky Union List of Serials until the KULS grant funding ended in 2002. Since then he has served as a member of the University Libraries Technical Services Department, where he had been closely involved in the development and management of the electronic theses and dissertations collections.

Chad Owen has resigned his position as Archivist for Records Management with Archives and Special Collections at the University of Louisville Libraries. He will be leaving April 29, 2016 after fourteen years of service at UofL. Chad has accepted a position at the Library of Virginia in Richmond.

Belinda Yff has resigned from her position effective April 30, 2016 as Hospital Librarian at University Hospital. She has worked at the Hospital Library since 2013 and previously worked at the Sullivan College Library.

NEW HIRES

Cecelia Railey has accepted the position of Hospital Librarian at St. Joseph Hospital (Lexington) which is managed by UofL’s Kornhauser Health Sciences Library through a contract with KentuckyOne. In this position, she will be providing library/information services to the entire eastern KentuckyOne service area. Her start date was March 14. Cecelia was previously Medical Librarian at the Children’s Medical Center of Dallas and had previously worked as a Librarian at Hardin Memorial Hospital in Elizabethtown, Kentucky (2012-2014), as a Grad Student Intern at Kornhauser (2011) and as a Librarian Intern in the Ekstrom RAI Dept (1999-2000).

Jessica Petrey accepted the position of Clinical Librarian at the Kornhauser Health Sciences Library effective January 11. Jessica received her MLS from UK in 2014 and previously worked as a Library Technician in Acquisitions at the University of Pikeville College of Osteopathic Medicine in Pikeville, Kentucky.

North Carolina

UNC Chapel Hill

The University Library is pleased to announce the appointment of Jacqueline Solis as Director of Research and Instructional Services who began work on March 1, 2016.

In this position, Jacqueline will provide vision and strategic direction for research and instructional services in the humanities, social sciences, global and area studies, and the arts. She will lead the Research and Instructional Services department in engaging with faculty and students in designing and implementing pedagogically appropriate instruction for library users, and providing in-depth, specialized research consultation, reference, and collection development.

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Most recently, Jacqueline served as Coordinator of Liaison Services and Subject Librarian, and she previously served as Humanities Reference and Graduate Instruction Librarian, both at the UNC Library. She has also held positions as Senior Assistant Librarian and Hispanic-Serving Institutions Program Librarian at the Oviatt Library at California State University, Northridge.

Jacqueline holds a B.A. in Romance languages from the University of Oregon in Eugene, Oregon, and an M.L.S. from Emporia State University in Emporia, Kansas.
Congratulations to Brown Biggers of the University of North Carolina, Greensboro (UNCG) who has been named as The 2016 Library Journal Paralibrarian of the Year. Library Journal began this award in 1999 and all previous recipients have been women from various parts of the country, Mr. Biggers is the first male to be given this prestigious award. An outstanding individual who not only serves patrons in the library with his expertise, teaching abilities and knowledge of new technologies or equipment, he also serves the community in many other ways.

NCSU Libraries

Library Journal has named NCSU Libraries User Experience Librarian for Digital Media Jason Evans Groth a 2016 “Mover & Shaker.” Cited as one of the library world’s “tech leaders,” Evans Groth is lauded for his innovative practices in bridging the gap between traditional scholarship and multimedia experiences.

While some involved with digital media might concentrate on the technology aspect of the work, Evans Groth balances tech with pedagogy to enhance teaching and learning. For “Shooting Wars: Documentary Images of American Military Conflicts,” a project about the relationship between war and media, Evans Groth worked with professor Marsha Gordon to develop media creation workshops for her graduate students and showcased content from the Libraries’ collection on the Hunt Library Game Lab’s 20-foot-wide interactive visualization wall. The class project was so successful that it has fundamentally changed Gordon’s approach to how she teaches film studies. The semester-long experience caused her to “think about how to use these spaces to create and disseminate knowledge in new ways and to talk to each other in ways that are maybe more open and more performative than I certainly have in my classes in the past...[j]ust think about the potential for this as the kind of project that can really give meaning to a 21st-century library and to a 21st-century classroom.”

With a background as a professional musician, Evans Groth brings a unique understanding of audience engagement into academic and research settings. He is recognized for his ability to bolster scholarship by deploying digital media, making information more interactive and impactful. Evans Groth hopes to promote the audio production services at the Libraries and to feature some of the musical talent on campus at NC State.

Annually since 2002, the trade publication Library Journal has chosen a class of innovative librarians and library staff members from an international pool of nearly 300 nominees. Evans Groth is NCSU Libraries’ ninth “Mover & Shaker” in eleven years.

This year’s “Movers & Shakers” class will be acknowledged at the American Library Association annual conference in Orlando, Florida on June 24.

BOOK REVIEWS


The fascinating dainty full instruction book on the Manhattan cocktail and the Manhattan mix’s intriguing legend includes Fifty-seven recipes of an assortment of delicious Manhattan blends on forty-one pages. A Manhattan mixture is composed of whiskey, vermouth, bitters, and a garnish. The work has some connection to the south in that the Manhattan drink was fashioned when the Triple Crown: the Kentucky Derby, the Preakness, and the Belmont horse races were created. W. A. Schmid is the manager of the Hotel-Restaurant Management and Hospitality Management Departments at Sullivan University’s in Kentucky. The attention-grabbing book’s content is excellent for individuals interested in creating various mouthwatering Manhattan cocktails and knowing their sagas. The perceived interest to the readership of the
journal is superb due to the monumental research on Manhattan cocktails along with alluring recipes for such an outstanding variety of tempting cocktails.

Chapter Three: Recipes is divided into five sections: Historical Manhattan Cocktails includes twenty-four Manhattan cocktail recipes, The Dry Manhattan reveals four Manhattan cocktail recipes, The Perfect Manhattan displays two recipes, Modern Manhattan shares seventeen Manhattan cocktail recipes, and Woodford Reserve Manhattans discloses three Manhattan drink recipes. Short facts on the unique Manhattan cocktails are mentioned right above the recipes. The last page “Your Own Manhattan Cocktail” offers a list of blanks for the reader to write a Manhattan cocktail recipe comprising how many ounces of which spirit, how many ounces of which modifier, how many ounces of another modifier, the number of dashes of bitters, other ingredients, and the reader’s directions to create a reader’s unique Manhattan cocktail.

The ten page index is accurate. The bibliography is five pages unveiling fifty-eight great sources. The six page Notes is divided into three sections by the three chapter titles. This handbook includes three tables. Table 1 shows types and combinations of whiskies and vermouths to make particular Manhattan mixes. An example from Table 1 is Vya sweet vermouth coupled with twelve-fifteen year old high proof bourbon. Table 2 titled “Drink Name and Preparation” brings to light twenty-two Manhattan cocktails telling the methods, bitters, vermouth, whiskey, and other ingredients. Case in point from Table 2, the method is highland (stir), bitters are dash orange, the vermouth is Italian (1/2 measure), the whiskey is Scotch (1/2 measure), and other ingredients are none. Table 3 uncovers six more Manhattan cocktails disclosing name, type of whiskey, kind of modifier, bitters if any, and selection of garnish. An illustration from Table 3 is the Apple Manhattan making use of Maker’s Mark Bourbon whiskey, Berentzen’s apple liqueur modifier, no bitters, and garnish with a slice of a Granny Smith apple.

The handbook divulges alluring details for example: Six illustrious individuals in connection with the Manhattan combination are discussed including J.P. Morgan, Henry Hudson, Samuel J. Tilden, Lady Randolph Churchill (Jennie Jerome), Lord Randolph Churchill, and Benjamin Helm Bristow. Other prior to supper drinks mentioned are Jack Rose, the Side Car, The Daiquiri, the Old Fashioned, and the Martini. The Manhattan is similar to the mint julep and the Old-Fashioned due to the whiskey content. The Martini and the Manhattan are equally popular. The Martini contains gin and vermouth. The Manhattan contains vermouth, whiskey, and bitters. Bitters are alcohol with roots, barks, fruit peels, seeds, flowers, and herbs. Vermouth is wine mixed with brandy. Red grapes for sweet vermouth are Italian. White grapes for dry vermouth are French. Three legends around the Manhattan cocktail’s invention. One is Lady Churchill at her son Winston Churchill’s party at the Manhattan Club celebrating his birth requested a drink be invented which was the Manhattan Cocktail in reverence to New York’s twenty fifth Governor Samuel Jones Tilden’s new governorship. The recommended audience is individuals interested in cocktails especially the Manhattan cocktail.

Melinda F. Matthews
University of Louisiana at Monroe Library


This little book brought me much joy these days after Pat Conroy passed this life. May he rest in peace.

When this book came to me to review, I was thrilled as I have a very passionate interest in Pat’s life, his literary attachment to South Carolina and the coastal areas. I revisited the old movie, “The Great Santini” and remembered so vividly past readings of Pat’s recording of his family dynamics—its challenges and mental dysfunctions. Yet, throughout any readings or interviews or other exposures to him in person and in the media, shining through were Pat’s words, “I want to be a writer”. Also poignantly his comments, repeated often, concerned his belief that being born into a dysfunctional family with all its abuse, fears and angers, was fertile ground for the mind of a writer.

This particular book contains a collection of conversations to which Walter Edgar played the important role of host in February 14, 2014, in Columbia’s Township Auditorium, and an in depth interview, “Pat Conroy and Family”, with Pat and some family members (4) who wished to participate. Additionally included is a “Conroy Family Roundtable”, interview by Alda Rogers, “The Conroys Chat in Charleston”, an Interview by Catherine Seltzer and
“The Rememberer”, an interview by Katherine Clark. The conversational style is intriguing and deeply moving as family members interact with each other—one saying “It was worse than Pat says it was”. Nikky Finney closed the book with her synopsis, “Translating Love”.

A wonderful selection of black and white original photographs, featuring scenes across the years from Pat’s baby photos to full family depictions. They bring the conversations to life. A book well worth collecting for a personal library and having in a public and academic library collection.

Carol Walker Jordan, Ph.D.
University of North Carolina Greensboro


Catherine Seltzer introduces us to young Pat Conroy: As a high school student Conroy accompanies his teacher, Eugene Norris, to Thomas Wolfe’s home in Asheville, North Carolina. Seltzer recounts the story that Norris took an apple from one of the trees on the grounds and said, “Eat it boy.” (p.1) Reflecting on taking the first bite, Conroy said, “I was given the keys to go out and try to write.” Conroy’s explanation of Norris’ comment goes on to show how “from the very beginning I wrote to explain my own life to myself”. From uncovering Conroy’s tree of knowledge and his tree of life, Seltzer recounts the many ways in which Conroy has brought sensitive and intellectual inspirations to his writings.

Through five novels and five books, Seltzer says Conroy returns to his life experiences and says “Only rarely have I drifted far from the bed where I was conceived.” (p.2) His comments on his family life that appear in his writings includes this comment, “One of the greatest gifts you can get as a writer is to be born into an unhappy family I could not have been born into a better one.” (p.2)

Reading Seltzer’s book, I am reminded of the one bit of advice any student hears from a mentor or teacher, “write what you know about, write what you have experienced.” I don’t think many English teachers are so clever as to give an apple to a talented student but I thank Catherine Seltzer for recounting the tale.

For students and faculty who might want to recommend Seltzer’s book for a reference or for supplemental reading, the author provides Chapters 2-8 as an individual commentary on “The Water is Wide”, “The Great Santini”, “The Lords of Discipline”, “The Prince of Tides”, “Beach Music”, “My Losing Season”, and “South of Broad”. Notes, Bibliography and Index cover pages 119 to 135. Recommended for school and college libraries.

Carol Walker Jordan, Ph.D.
University of North Carolina Greensboro


My search for understanding Ron Rash began a few months ago when someone said, “You know Ron’s first writings were funny, not so filled with “depressed and depressing characters living depressing lives and rarely inspiring laughter” (my colleague’s description). My colleague went on to say, “You should read those first stories, “The Night the New Jesus Fell to Earth” or “Badeye”.

Going from reading and having heard Ron read from “Saints at the River”, “Serena” and “The Cove”, I was eager to take the journey into those short stories that might provide laughter and clever twists in the characters—away from “evil Serena” (Serena) and into “hustler Larry (The
Night the New Jesus Fell to Earth”). I did not believe I was being disloyal but I was eager to see writings Ron created that my colleague described as filled with humor.

While looking for a resource that might give a comparative analysis of Ron’s writings from poetry to short stories to novels, John Lang’s “Understanding Ron Rash” appeared on my Must Read Amazon Book List. Yes, I was hooked.

Lang’s introductory chapter provides an inside look at Ron and the history of his family with particular attention to the love he developed for the Appalachian foothills and “the mountains of North Carolina” (p.2 URR). Rash is quoted as saying “home was always the mountains of North Carolina” (p.2 URR). Lang acknowledges that Rash may be known to those of us who think of him as a southern writer but explains that Ron’s appeal as a writer (author) is strong in the south but flowed to the world stage with his writings appearing in more than a dozen languages (p.2 URR).

The highest compliment I believe John Lang gave Ron Rash was his acknowledgement, “my principle indebtedness is to the subject of this study, Ron Rash, whose fiction and poetry have earned my respect and admiration for nearly two decades”. My thanks to John Lang comes after I read the book and highly recommend it as a must collect book for any public and academic library. The notes section is fascinating as it relates terms and individuals to each of the reviewed writings and the bibliography and index are well organized around the writings and significant places and reviews of Rash’s writings.

Yes, I later thanked my colleague for introducing me to Ron’s short stories, particularly the collection, “The Night The New Jesus Fell to Earth and Other Stories From Cliffside, North Carolina”; Ron Rash, 1994, The University of South Carolina Press. Yes, I laughed and smiled with the characters, their adventures, and with Ron who created them.

Carol Walker Jordan, Ph.D
University of North Carolina Greensboro


James Robert Hester’s edited edition of “A Yankee Scholar in Coastal South Carolina, William Francis Allen’s Civil War Journals” appealed to me as I am fascinated by the idea of Northeastern educators, ministers, military men, teachers and abolitionists joining together and arriving on St. Helena Island in the 1860s with the intent of providing the former slaves living there with tutoring in reading and writing.

William Francis Allen, a talented and exceptionally well education historian, arrived in South Carolina in 1863 with his wife and her niece to join the group hoping to go to St. Helena’s Island. Allen was a respected historian and talented musician and his immediate attraction upon arriving on St. Helena was to the former slaves and to their music and songs.

As an elementary school student in Kings Mountain, North Carolina, I eagerly awaited Thursdays since that was the day we had a visit from our music teacher. I loved to sing and most especially loved to sing the songs she described as “rounds”. When the class of fifteen was divided into three groups, we were given a quick lesson in the lyrics and then the first group began singing the lyrics with the second and the third group joining in sequence... she called this type of singing a “round”. One round we sang each Thursday was the “Boat Song”. Many times we repeated the lyrics five, six or eight times, we didn’t know who wrote it or where it began. Looking over Allen’s collection of “Slave Songs, 1867”, I saw that spiritual we sang each week in third grade:

Michael row the boat ashore, Hallelujah
Jordan bank de bank I stan’; Hallelujah (p. 106)
As a librarian and teacher now, I am aware the Negro spirituals which we sang as little children and the play, “The Life of Stephen Foster”, with its beautiful songs written by Stephen Foster in the 1800s, emerged from the days when slaves sang and performed their spirituals in churches and on plantations. The strong impact of the slave spirituals upon America’s musical heritage spread to art, theatre and opera in the following years.

William Francis Allen contributed through his journals and his work a priceless gem of songs and historical descriptions. His painstaking recording of lyrics and of scores and his journal writings of day to day experiences, all recorded in the edited manuscript by James Robert Hester, provide a precious look at St. Helena Island and the Charleston region during the 1860s and 70s.

This book is recommend as a valuable acquisition for public and college/university libraries..... Pages 216 to 323 pages of research notations.

Carol Walker Jordan, PhD
University of North Carolina, Greensboro


The monumental text referring to Brown versus Board of Education of Topeka (1954) and desegregation tells in all-encompassing details the improvements in human rights and advances in education in the south as well as all of the United States. Ben Keppel is on the faculty at the University of Oklahoma as an associate professor in the department of history. The monograph has some connection to the south because slavery and Reconstruction as well as Brown versus Board of Education and desegregation of public schools are specifically discussed. Other places pointed out where incidents of human rights in Southern USA also occurred are Alabama, Arkansas, North Carolina, South Carolina, Mississippi, and Kansas. The writing style is easy to read. The content reveals how the United States accomplished the magnificent United States public school system. The perceived interest to the readership of the journal is perfect in that the book exposes human rights and education in southern and northern United States has greatly increased.

Examples from this work of progress in human rights and education in the United States are as follows. The Reconstruction of the South after the Civil War is referred to as the First Reconstruction. Desegregation is referred to as the Second Reconstruction in the South. Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, 347 U.S. 483 (1954) made unconstitutional the laws of the states separating black and white pupils with different schools. Robert Coles and his publication *Children of Crisis*, a study of Mississippi desegregation, are revealed. Education empowers choices for occupations.

Educational television started in 1953. A television program to aid children prior to public school with alphabet and socializing is *Sesame Street* created by Joan Ganz Cooney. Other educational television programs alluded to are *Electric Company*, *Mister Roger’s Neighborhood*, *Romper Room*, *Captain Kangaroo*, *Rowan Martin’s Laugh In*, *Antiques Road Show*, and *Batman*. Parents brought into play *Sesame Street* to make their children more productive. Bill Cosby’s *Cosby Show*, *Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids*, and *Good Times* portrayed successful humans to inspire all in the United States to do well. National Education Television (NET) furnished folk music, science, and classical music programs. Young people also learn tunes from commercials. Bill Cosby starred in JELL-O and Cola commercials. *Superman* on the radio was hoped to motivate children especially poorer children.

In 1916, South Carolina instructors conveyed tales to instruct pupils in reading. Having other books for pupils to read such as *Robin Hood*, *George Washington Carver*, and *Richard E. Byrd* enhanced student scores. Montessori schooling was initialized in the 1950’s for pupils to learn alone. In 1961, Miami, Florida did not have enough instructors for the large amount of pupils, so educational television on history, sciences, automobile driving, reading, spelling, composition, and literature was employed to instruct the pupils instead. In the seventies in the United States, food stamps and school lunches were created. The idea of a shorter workday for Americans brought desires for maintaining a cleaner home. A cafeteria female employee indicated she would clean her residence. A business person said he would advertise in amplified amounts. The United States wants all types of people in public school together for all people to have opportunities and education to strive for expansion and improve the United States. This work is invaluable for public and academic libraries and vital for researchers of the history of
public education in southern United States as well as all of the United States.

*Melinda F. Matthews*
University of Louisiana at Monroe


This is both an inspiring and a disturbing book. It is inspiring in terms of the heroic efforts and sacrifices made by James Jackson (1914-2007) and Esther Cooper Jackson (1917–) on behalf of the black freedom movement; it is disturbing in terms of the severe harassment they endured from the federal government due to their leftwing activism and, in Jack’s case, lifelong affiliation with the Communist Party (CPUSA). The book is also inspiring as a story of two people who, over the course of a 66-year marriage, succeeded in working both together and separately to combine their love of family with their activism, to advance the cause of African American civil rights. The story of “Jack” Jackson and Esther Cooper Jackson is also important in that they were a part of the civil rights movement that has largely remained hidden: the leftwing African American activists who got their start in the 1930s and 1940s and who were, in many ways, eclipsed by the better known liberal civil rights leaders of the 1950s and 1960s and the more militant black nationalists active in the 1960s and 1970s.

Jack and Esther both came from well-to-do African American families in Virginia and were college educated. Their passion for civil rights and for leftwing politics was instilled early as they observed the poverty and harsh conditions suffered by African Americans living under southern segregation. Both came of age during the Great Depression when the certainties of capitalism were in doubt and leftwing organizations including the Communist Party were seen as offering viable alternative approaches. The Popular Front was a Communist-affiliated coalition of leftist and some centrist groups and during the 1930s and 1940s appealed to a number of mostly younger activists such as Jack and Esther. A major appeal of the Popular Front and the actual Communist Party itself was a truly progressive approach to civil rights for African Americans. Jack and Esther saw more mainstream liberal groups such as the NAACP as too tame and also as lacking a class-based approach to the advancement of civil rights. The Popular Front also appealed to Jack and Esther as an interracial coalition for advancing the cause of civil rights.

Sara Rzeszutek Haviland (Assistant Professor of History at St. Francis College) does a convincing job of linking the various avenues of activism engaged in by the couple from the 1930s onward to their approach to family life. Both were heavily involved in working for the Southern Negro Youth Congress in the early years of their marriage. The Cooper Jacksons took a completely egalitarian approach to gender roles as well. They made connections between racism and anticommunism with the destruction of family life and the black freedom movement. Their marriage was at times put under serious stress such as when Jack served three years in Burma during World War II and when Jack went underground during the years 1951-1955 during the height of Cold War anticommunist hysteria. This is where the book becomes particularly disturbing.

No matter where one’s political sympathies lie, the truly nasty harassment suffered by Esther Cooper Jackson and her and Jack’s two young daughters at the hands of the F.B.I. is simply appalling. As the Cold War grew in intensity in the immediate postwar years, southern racists successfully linked communism to civil rights activism in the minds of much of the American public. True communists such as Jack faced possible prison sentences under provisions of the Smith Act even if they had no intentions of violently overthrowing the federal government. The Smith Act (otherwise known as the Alien Registration Act) passed in 1940 also required all adult non-U.S. citizen residents to register with the government. Jack was (inaccurately) indicted for “conspiracy to teach or advocate the violent overthrow of the government” in 1951 (p. 124). Not wanting to risk a trial and likely conviction and lengthy prison sentence, he went into hiding. In an attempt to break Esther’s will and get her to reveal Jack’s whereabouts (of which she had no knowledge during this time), the F.B.I. engaged in truly mean spirited tactics such as destroying one’s ability to get or keep a job and, in Esther’s case, also by inaccurately alleging that she had an extra source of income thus forcing her to temporarily withdraw her four-year old daughter, Kathy, from nursery school. Fortunately, Esther was able to work with the Families Committee of Smith Act Victims to put pressure on the New York Welfare Department and was, ultimately, able to reinstate Kathy in nursery school so that she, Esther, could get a job to support herself and her two daughters. Haviland relates other heavy handed techniques of harassment employed against family members of other accused Communists including one where a woman was unable to either register or sell her car which also,
suspiciously, had its tires flattened by spikes driven into them. Ultimately, Jack turned himself in and then he and his family endured nearly two years of trials before he was acquitted of conspiracy to violently overthrow the government.

Haviland also devotes some chapters to describing how Jack and Esther continued with their activism as the Civil Rights Movement gained steam over the next couple of decades even as their earlier work through the Southern Negro Youth Congress, the Popular Front, etc. was largely forgotten and overshadowed. Jack ultimately was able to make a living and remain active as editor of the Communist Party newspaper, The Worker, while Esther found greater success as editor of the influential magazine, Freedomways. Haviland points out that while influential, Esther’s work with Freedomways brought her a lot of controversy and some headaches in addition to providing an important forum for discussing the burgeoning black arts movement and the cause of civil rights.

James and Esther Cooper Jackson: Love and Courage in the Black Freedom Movement is not an easy read but it makes a valuable contribution to the literature on the history of the civil rights movement. It illuminates a rarely discussed aspect of civil rights history: the involvement of and contributions of African American leftists who helped lay much of the groundwork and provided some of the theoretical framework of the civil rights movement in the two decades prior to the mid-1950s emergence of civil rights as a truly national concern. As befits a scholarly work, the book provides numerous endnotes for each chapter as well as a helpful selected bibliography of primary and secondary sources. This title is recommended for academic libraries and large public libraries collecting in the history of the civil rights movement, African American history, modern American history, and in American politics.

Tim Dodge
Auburn University
Guidelines for Submissions and Author Instructions

The Southeastern Librarian (SELn) is the official publication of the Southeastern Library Association (SELA). The quarterly publication seeks to publish articles, announcements, and news of professional interest to the library community in the southeast. The publication also represents a significant means for addressing the Association's research objective. Two newsletter-style issues serve as a vehicle for conducting Association business, and two issues include juried articles.

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