

Paula Smith and Alan Delozier

Global lens

An inside perspective of Bermuda College's Visiting Librarian Program

In March 2009, Bermuda College welcomed Alan Delozier, archivist from Seton Hall University, and Paula Smith, reference and instruction librarian from Penn State University, to inaugurate their Visiting Librarian Program. Each librarian had responded to a request publicized on various library electronic lists, to propose a project that could be implemented at Bermuda College through a visiting librarian arrangement.

The college's goals were two-fold, supplement their reduced resources and provide an international and intercultural opportunity that was project based and mutually agreeable to them and the participants. With this in mind, the visiting librarians were afforded the chance to engage with library personnel across the island as well as experience the welcoming Bermudian cultural environment.

In 2009 Bermuda College was celebrating its 35th anniversary as a unified institution that arose from the consolidation of three vocational schools. It is the only tertiary institution on the island and is a well-developed two-year college that offers various liberal arts and specialized degree options.

In consultation with James Agee, Bermuda College's library director, each visiting librarian identified a project to pursue his or her stay. Delozier devoted his time to the study and exploration of primary source documentation and local history, providing a foundation for establishing a future institutional archival collection plan. Smith focused her attention on assessing the large back file of periodicals housed in the Bermuda College Library. Her project would provide input for a serials collection development policy and

recommendations for the future retention of periodical materials.

The following recounts this educational experience from each visiting librarian's perspective and highlights the importance of professional development through international collaborations.

Assessing the Bermudiana Collection: Delozier's project

Both the initial and perpetual focus of my attention discussed in length with Agee centered upon the study and exploration of primary source documentation and local history. Advocacy for a college-sponsored and regularly maintained archival program for Bermuda College was one of the goals to be achieved during my visit. Therefore, anything and everything that fell into the category of "Bermudiana" automatically became an area of heightened interest to support this objective.

The study of archival science and rare book librarianship are somewhat outside of the mainstream, but the beauty of visiting places such as the Bermuda College Library is that there is still more to learn and an interest still exists in many quarters.

What I found from the first is that this repository has a solid infrastructure featuring a well-organized collection of hundreds of books devoted to the historical development

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of Bermuda and thousands of documents in vertical file arrangements on specific areas of culture, government, history, and multiple other subject areas that celebrate the diversity of national life. The functionality of these Bermudiana resources not only provides the student body, faculty, and visiting researchers with the opportunity to learn more about the island proper, but a valuable sense of context is gleaned, especially when it comes to the place of Bermuda College history within this evolving story.

This is where the ability to show true uniqueness in the form of a more formal institutional archival and records management program can bring further distinction and user options across the board. The awareness factor continues to rise as each semester brings with it further examples of accomplishment to be preserved for the ages.

Assessing the periodical back file: Smith's project

Bermuda College Library has a large back file of periodicals in its collection, but minimal resources available to dedicate time to review its collection for archival, maintenance, curricular alignment, and potential digitization. In conjunction with Delozier's project and in consultation with Annette Gilbert, cataloging and user services librarian from Bermuda College, my project was to evaluate the periodical back file for accessibility and usefulness to the campus community.

One of the main concerns was that the periodicals consumed a lot of space on the lower level of the library that could be used for alternative means.

I began with a walkthrough of the area where the materials were housed. Library personnel responsible for its maintenance provided a historical background on the maintenance and preservation of the periodicals. Much of the collection appeared way past its prime, although in some instances important to preserve for academic purposes. However, the greatest drawback was that the periodical back file was not readily accessible to the campus or community because it was

not included in the library catalog. Although awareness of the back file was communicated through library instruction classes and at the reference desk, the average patron did not know of its existence.

Throughout the project, I met with various stakeholders about the present condition of the back file and requested their feedback about its future use and retention. Their opinions were extremely useful to developing recommendations relevant to the campus community and the library's available resources. In the end, much of the back file could be weeded because either the information was dated or already included as part of the existing electronic resource subscriptions.

Expanding our worldview

The opportunity to collaborate with Bermuda College Library on these projects was a chance of a lifetime. Each of us was given free rein to interact and exchange information with a wide variety of library personnel, campus administration and faculty, while learning about an area of the world that neither was familiar with. These personal interactions were fascinating and led to a heightened awareness of how information experts of Bermuda viewed their respective involvement in the perpetuation of historical heritage initiatives.

Prior to our arrival, Agee had made arrangements for us to meet with several local librarians and explore Bermuda. These meetings helped provide structure to our projects and an understanding of Bermuda's library resources. With sunny days and blue skies as our backdrop, we visited the National Library, the National Archive, data storage facilities, school libraries, and a public youth library. Additionally the Friends of Bermuda College Library held a reception in our honor that provided other introductions to library personnel and supporters of libraries.

We visited historical sites, such as St. George and the Maritime Museum, and were treated to the Bermuda College Art and Design Student Exhibition at the National Gallery. Throughout our visit Agee was the

consummate host and revealed Bermuda to us in its best light, although it must be said that beginning with the descent to the airport a visitor is hard pressed to uncover the downside of Bermuda.

This experience was a cultural and global opportunity to partner with other library professionals while presenting an occasion to observe how another country prepares its citizens to participate in the 21st-century global environment. Not only did we have the chance to work with and meet library person-

nel from across Bermuda, but to also actively participate in an exchange of ideas about how information is preserved. Although we sensed the difficulty of maintaining libraries and data storage facilities with reduced resources, we also witnessed the commitment of Bermuda's information professionals to sustain their environments. Overall, our time spent in Bermuda was both inspirational and educational and underscored the importance of working across boundaries to share information and resources. ♪

("Promotions . . ." continues from page 236)

Acknowledgments

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Notes

1. "Core Purpose," National Collegiate Athletic Association, ncaa.org/wps/ncaa?key=/ncaa/NCAA/About%20The%20NCAA/Overview/mission.html.

2. "NCAA Rules and Bylaws," National Collegiate Athletic Association, ncaa.org/wps/ncaa?key=/ncaa/ncaa/legislation+and+governance/rules+and+bylaws.

3. "Worlds Connect @ Your Library," *American Libraries*, June/July 2009, 24–25.

4. "Butler University Compliance," www.butlersports.com/information/compliance/compliance_info.

5. "NCAA Virtual Library," National Collegiate Athletic Association, www.ncaa.org/wps/ncaa?key=/ncaa/NCAA/Library/. ♪

("Disability Studies" continues from page 256)

of Mark Mostert, professor at Regent University in Virginia, shows the often-neglected and almost hidden history of the Nazi Aktion T-4 program. Techniques and methods for exterminating asylum inmates and others considered defective or degenerate served as a blueprint for the concentration camps. Although there is nothing graphic about the historical photos, their presence alongside the text and narration makes this video profoundly disturbing. Access: <http://www.regent.edu/acad/schedu/uselesseaters/>.

Radio broadcasts

• **BBC's Ouch!** This Web site from the British Broadcasting Company (BBC) features news, blogs, podcasts, and interviews by and for all those interested in contemporary issues facing those with disabilities. Access: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ouch/>.

• **Beyond Affliction: The Disability History Project.** A radio program by producer Laurie Block was the result of her interest in media portrayals of people with disabilities. The site and program are sponsored by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Portions of the shows may be viewed on the site, and tapes and transcripts of the shows may be ordered. The site also contains photos and other primary source material connected to the project. Access: <http://www.npr.org/programs/disability/>.

Conclusion

As with any newly established discipline, Disability Studies has its share of internal, academic disputes and controversies. As scholars work to make disability more visible in our society and history, brand new lines of inquiry can be investigated, and classic texts can be re-examined to effect paradigm shifts in our understanding of our cultures. ♪