UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES LAUNCH THE NEVADA TEST SITE ORAL HISTORY DIGITAL LIBRARY

The chronicle of Southern Nevada’s role in the Cold War is now available online in the form of firsthand stories and observations of the men and women affiliated with and affected by the Nevada Test Site. This digital library presents the oral histories in a way that helps us better understand Nevada’s Cold War history — its local, national, and international significance.

“Our librarians used this significant collection of oral histories to create a one-of-kind digital library, making the full range of perspectives on this critical aspect of our history available for the first time worldwide,” Patricia Iannuzzi, dean, University Libraries, says. “The full searchability of these valuable records will benefit researchers and historians long into the future.”

Southern Nevada gained national attention in the 1950s when the U.S. government needed an isolated area in which to conduct nuclear testing. The
FROM THE DEAN

This issue of Connections celebrates the Libraries’ contributions to teaching and learning and to inquiry and discovery. The cover story about the Nevada Test Site Oral History Digital Library project is a wonderful example of how library staff expanded and enriched a research project about an important time period in Nevada history. We created a web-based digital library to be discovered and used by anyone around the world — from schoolchildren to scholars.

Librarians with 21st-century expertise in digital library creation partner with library professionals in web design and usability to create digital projects. These library digital “publications” enhance our capacity to share the unique and specialized collections that document this region’s history. The announcement about the $95,000 grant to chronicle the early “boom years” of Las Vegas with materials from our Union Pacific Railroad collection is further evidence of our commitment to educate and provide access to resources otherwise available only on site. And the article about our commitment to educating future librarians underscores the importance of nurturing library faculty with the 21st-century skills needed to meet the demands of the next 50 to 100 years.

In keeping with the Libraries’ mission to be at the center of student learning, the article about Communications 101 shows how library and classroom faculty work together to integrate key information competencies into a core course. And the relaunch of the Nevada Watercolor Society paintings in the Flo Mlynarczyk Gallery demonstrates how the Libraries can be a laboratory for student learning through creativity and collaboration.

And, finally, much of what we do would not be possible without the generous support of the friends and supporters of the UNLV Libraries. Your gifts provide that margin of excellence that allows us to explore opportunities for unique purchases, initiate new services, and pursue special projects. Thank you!

CAN’T FIND THE BOOK YOU NEED? LINK+ IT!

The University Libraries added more than 8 million volumes to its print collections last year by joining the LINK+ consortium of more than 40 academic and public libraries in California and Nevada. This consortium uses a shared online catalog and an efficient lending system to transfer requested items among member libraries. The arrangement allows UNLV faculty, students, and staff to borrow books that the University Libraries do not own or items we own but that are unavailable.

What does LINK+ (pronounced “link plus”) mean for faculty and students? It means quick access to books we do not own and ones we do have that are unavailable. It means no more waiting weeks for a needed book to be returned or recalled. The traditional method used to borrow a book from another library takes two to four weeks. That just won’t meet an immediate need. By contrast, LINK+ delivers the book in an average of just two to four days.

LINK+ is fast and easy to use, and it won’t cost you anything. And you can keep the book for three weeks with a two-week renewal. Just click the LINK+ icon displayed in the library catalog, make your selection, and the book will be on its way to the branch library you choose.

LINK+ handles only books; to get journal articles not available in the Libraries, use Document Delivery Services. Most are delivered electronically within two to four days. For more information about LINK+, visit http://www.library.unlv.edu/services/linkplusfaq.html#time.

LIBRARIES LEAD THE WAY IN EDUCATING AND TRAINING LIBRARIANS

The University Libraries are at the forefront of a national effort to educate and train future librarians. A five-year collaboration with the Nevada State Libraries and Archives, the Las Vegas-Clark County Library District, and the University of North Texas School of Library and Information Sciences (UNT-SLIS) was made possible by a $696,378 grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to support the recruitment and education of a new and diverse generation of librarians in Nevada and other western states.

Six University Libraries staff members — Jason Aubin, Oscar Giurcovich, Michelle Hawkins Thiel, Patrick Hinrichs, Debra McCracken, and Carrie Stewart — are currently studying in the Library and Information Science Program through the UNT-SLIS. They are part of the fourth UNT-SLIS Nevada Program cohort. Three of these students — Giurcovich, Hinrichs, and McCracken — are also recipients of IMLS scholarships.

University Libraries positions filled by past graduates from this program include the current business librarian, government information librarian, and web content manager/usability specialist.
INTRODUCING THE LIBRARIES’ 2007-2008 PEER RESEARCH COACHES

Peer research coaches serve both as role models for other students and as ambassadors of the Libraries.

“Peer coaching is WAY better than any other part-time job,” says University Libraries peer coach Shawnee Corey.

Corey, a biology preprofessional studies major, and Ronald Adlaon, a prenursing major, joined the Peer Research Program after learning about it at the Clark County Summer Business Institute program last year. With the help of second-year coaches Gina Cassaro and Alyssa Ventura and librarian mentors Darcy Del Bosque and Dr. Stephen Fitt, Adlaon and Corey are working on team projects, making presentations, writing articles, and continuing to refine the program.

“I would have never known about all the services and databases the library has if I wasn’t a peer coach,” Adlaon says. “Being a peer coach has exposed me to the vast resources the library and the university have to offer to aid in my studies. I am also learning efficient methods for researching for my projects and papers.”

Although they both attended high school in Clark County, Corey is a Southern California native and Adlaon was born and raised in the Philippines.

The Peer Research Program is funded by Libraries supporters Flora and Stuart Mason. For more information on the Peer Research Coaches Program, visit http://www.library.unlv.edu/employment/peer_coach/.

Gina Cassaro and Alyssa Ventura and librarian mentors Darcy Del Bosque and Dr. Stephen Fitt, Adlaon and Corey are working on team projects, making presentations, writing articles, and continuing to refine the program.

COLLABORATION AND CREATIVITY GIVES MYLNARCYZK GALLERY A NEW LOOK

The Flo Mlynarczyk Gallery in Lied Library has a new look, thanks to a fortunate meeting and a new partnership. Libraries’ user services director Wendy Starkweather was looking for new ways to engage students, and Special Collections director Peter Michel wanted to improve the display of paintings in the Nevada Watercolor Society’s collection in the gallery.

The stage was set when Flo Mlynarczyk, the Watercolor Society’s liaison and long-time Libraries supporter, and Jerry Schefcik, director of UNLV’s Donna Beam Fine Art Gallery, met at UNLV President David B. Ashley’s inauguration. Mlynarczyk asked Schefcik for ideas for the Watercolor Society’s collection in Lied Library, and that prompted a meeting with Starkweather and Michel.

Schefcik offered to make the Watercolor Society collection the practicum for his Gallery Practices I class in which students complete a hands-on gallery project. Under his direction, undergraduate students Anthony Urango and Elyssia Wells chose the theme of “Landscape” and identified 15 works for exhibition. They rehung them, creating labels identifying each work and artist. A catalog of the exhibition will be produced.

“Such theme-based exhibits provide more focused exhibitions while allowing for rotation of the collection in the gallery,” says Michel.

The Nevada Watercolor Society’s collection is housed in Special Collections along with the society’s records. Paintings showcase Nevada artists and educate about water media. This collaboration with Professor Schefcik provides a unique opportunity for art students to create exhibits in the Libraries and for the Libraries to exhibit collections in ways that interest students.
LANCE AND ELENA CALVERT TO ENDOw THE LIBRARIES’ AWARD FOR UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

What do “Conglobation in the Pill Bug as a Terrestrial Adaptation,” “Student Attitudes Toward Renewable Energy at UNLV,” and “Hyperandrogenemia, Obesity, and PCOS” have in common? They are all research projects completed by UNLV students who have been awarded the Libraries’ Award for Undergraduate Research.

When Dean Patricia Iannuzzi announced her intention of rewarding students for their excellence in research, advisory board member Lance Calvert was quick to share Iannuzzi’s enthusiasm for the project. Now, two years later, Calvert and his wife, Elena, have generously offered to endow the Libraries’ Award for Undergraduate Research, ensuring the award will continue in perpetuity.

The Calverts recognize that to succeed, college students must master the art of targeted and fruitful research. They believe the most successful college students are those who are self-sufficient, lifelong learners who use their critical thinking and technological skills to navigate the world of information.

The Calvert and Elena Calvert Award for Undergraduate Research will annually award up to four students a prize of $1,000 each for their sophistication and originality in completing research projects using library resources.

“We’re delighted to have the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of UNLV students,” says Lance Calvert. “We hope this incentive for students to showcase their expertise in the research processes will encourage more — and increasingly talented — students to apply for the award each year.”

ANNUAL GIVING PROGRAM TO LAUNCH

Rhiannon Reynolds joined the University Libraries’ external relations team in January as development specialist. Reynolds’ primary goal is to establish an annual giving program, the Investors Circle, for the University Libraries. The Investors Circle will be launched this fall and will focus on engaging members of the UNLV and greater Las Vegas communities in library-related endeavors.
oral history site

Nevada Test Site, as the area 65 miles north of Las Vegas came to be known, was the site of 40 years of atmospheric and underground nuclear testing.

In 2003, the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, College of Liberal Arts launched a project to collect the oral histories of a broad spectrum of people affected by the test site’s operations. The University Libraries’ Special Collections now makes accessible the more than 335 hours of digitally recorded interviews with annotated and indexed transcripts in the Nevada Test Site Oral History Archive. Cory Lampert, digitization projects librarian, and a team of library staff (see sidebar) turned the 178 raw interviews into a comprehensive digital library, marking the first time these voices are available to the public.

Project director Mary Palevsky, with principal investigators Andrew Kirk (history) and Robert Futrell (sociology), and their graduate students, included test site administrators and support personnel, scientists and engineers, the military, Native American leaders, faith-based activists, and those living in surrounding and downwind communities in their research. In conjunction with their interviews, several participants donated significant photograph and manuscript collections to the University Libraries.

Oral History Research to Digital Archive: Creating the Digital Library

Why a digital library?
Digitization makes materials universally accessible that otherwise would be limited to physical access in a specific location.

Why the Nevada Test Site Oral History Project?
This collection of firsthand interviews brings to life the stories behind one of Nevada’s most intriguing and controversial places.

Who created this digital library?
Digitization projects librarian Cory Lampert managed an interdisciplinary project team with library and technology expertise. This team transitioned the multiyear research project into the online environment.

Who is on the Digitization Project Team?
Cory Lampert, Digitization Projects Librarian
Alex Dobski, Web and Digitization Application Developer
John Fox, Information Systems Specialist
Kathy Rankin, Special Collections Cataloger
Annie Sattler, Digitization Technician/Indexer
Michael Rankin, Web Content/Usability Specialist

Did you know?
Libraries are known for expertise in organizing information, but the specialized technical expertise of library staff was also essential to the success of the project. Components included: Digital audio editing and conversion of multimedia formats, PDF and full-text data manipulation; classification using specialized thesauri (U.S. Nuclear Tests List, Getty Thesaurus of Geographic Names, and Library of Congress Authorities); custom programming; and web development for online presentation.

“I have felt strongly for years, ever since I really got first involved with nuclear testing, particularly after I went to the laboratory ... that the activities out here, the things that we did out on the test site, kept us out of a war.”
— Elmer Sowder, World War II veteran and Purple Heart recipient, Los Alamos laboratory test group director at the Nevada Test Site

“Right from the beginning of it, when the government said, ‘We’re going to use a part of your land for a military base to protect the United States from an enemy.’ ... Of course, we don’t own the land to begin with. We talk about that. We don’t own it, because we’re put here to use it and live on it, to take care of it.”
— Corbin Harney, Western Shoshone spiritual leader, on the ownership and use of Nevada Test Site Lands
LIED LIBRARY AFTER HOURS: DEAN’S ASSOCIATES EVENT

It was windy and cold outside but warm and welcoming inside December 1 when the Dean’s Associates and their guests experienced Lied Library in a way few users are able. For the first time, Lied was the site of the annual celebration. The fun began after library closing. Guests had the library to themselves, enjoying refreshments while exploring the building. The three-tiered dining and learning experience proved a great way for guests to visit many areas of the library while connecting with friends and colleagues.

Guests started the evening on the fifth floor with a breathtaking view and a few words of welcome from UNLV’s executive vice president and provost Dr. Neal Smatresk. Everyone moved to the third floor for the buffet, a fascinating look at Special Collections, and a tour of the preservation lab.

The evening concluded with dessert and coffee on the first floor, an up-close viewing of the LASR (Lied Automated Storage Retrieval) system at work, and some parting words of thanks from Dean Patricia Iannuzzi and Vice President for Advancement William Boldt.
The Libraries was awarded $95,000 from the Library Services and Technology Act through the federally funded Institute of Museum and Library Services administered by the Nevada State Library and Archives. The grant will be used to create a digital library project about “Southern Nevada: The Boom Years 1900–1925.” This digital project will provide, for the first time, an extensive and easily searchable digital collection of primary historical material documenting the early years of Southern Nevada. Many of the materials will be drawn from the Libraries’ manuscript collection of the Union Pacific Railroad.

The Libraries will host the LOEX of the West Conference 2008: “Hit the Jackpot: Successful Experimentation and Innovation in Instruction” June 4–6 at UNLV. LOEX (Library Orientation Exchange) serves instruction librarians and educators nationwide. Sessions will showcase genuinely innovative approaches to helping students develop core information-gathering and management skills. For more information: http://www.library.unlv.edu/conferences/loexw/.

Librarians Susie Skarl and Diane VanderPol launched a project with the Communication Studies Department to provide undergraduate majors with important opportunities to develop information literacy skills. Phase One of this project included administering an assignment during the COM101 library instruction workshops to more than 30 sections. Phase Two, developed during the semester break, included a redesigned assignment, a grading rubric, and an instructor outline. The librarians are assessing this semester’s assignment and will make recommendations following its completion.