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## October 1999: "Smoked Herring, Shotten Herring;" Technical Services

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# Focus

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## Smoked Herring, Shotten Herring

*We're going to have to shout our case from the rooftops*

It's not that I've ever minded the prosonomasias. I've been known to use a nickname every now and again myself. And believe me, with a name like Herring, you hear them all, regularly. I followed an older brother in high school—an older brother, mind you, who was something of a football hero—and I suppose “Litt'l Herring” grated most since I was after all, taller; just not nearly as formidable a player. For most, my Winthrop introduction featured a version of the ever-popular ‘smoked Herring’, a quip by Academic Vice-president Dr. Melford Wilson about his Lake Junaluska retreat home and how I (*inter alia*), managed to turn his great outdoors into a mephitic pother of cigar smoke. The odoriferousness was not, however, my fault alone: if Melford had supplied us with Ghurkas, those fabulous ones marinated in a cognac found in Louis XIV's cellar (rather than the stogies we bought ourselves at the only store we could find), his porch would never have smelled better. Incidentally, one particular brand of these magnificent gems costs a mere \$5,000 for a box of 25. Christmas is just around the corner!

For the rest of you who may have, thankfully, missed that meeting, gift-

giving has been your other introduction to me. By now, you've gotten a letter from me pleading membership in the Friends of Dacus Library. I hope you have joined. My first passion (the occasional cigar merely my third or fourth) is libraries and, of course, Dacus in particular. I won't launch into my impassionata about libraries again (you can see it in the last *Dacus Focus* or in the *Dean's Corner*). Do allow me but one moment to underscore once more how important your support is.

We librarians are an odd lot. I can say that because I am one. While we have watched the cost of materials sky-rocket (over 140% increase in the last decade), we haven't been very good at articulating the problems all libraries face. We have certainly argued the point, generally speaking. We just haven't argued it *well enough* so that *everyone understands*. Most librarians are content to make their case to those who fill their annual budget requests. And while that is the starting point, it's only that, the starting point. Now we in Dacus must finish the race and do the hard work of continuing beyond the annual budget, beyond the boundaries of the library's walls, beyond the campus ivy, to those nearby, and even those faraway.

It is, as I have said other places, not a role we librarians particularly relish. And while stereotypes are dangerous things because they often mislead, we librarians have, on this score anyway, been a bit too taciturn for our own good. Libraries are very costly buildings to run *properly*. Librarians are going to have to “get over” (as the vernacular is these days) our verecund ways about talking out loud. Indeed, if libraries, Dacus especially, are to be successful, we're going to have to shout our case from the rooftops. *Nearly* all libraries are cutting back something these days. The few that aren't are those who have made their voices heard beyond the confines of their own walls. The Dacus staff is up to it, as many of you already know. You'll be hearing more from us from now on. (*Now, while you're thinking about it, join the Friends of Dacus Library right now! Call the Library, at 323-2232 to find out how to join.*)

I mentioned in my first *Dacus Focus* that libraries have been, and still are, about change. My goal in coming to Winthrop is not to change simply for the sake of change. It is, however, to change for the better those things which can be im-

**Continued on Page 4**

## Technical Services: Invisible but vital

**T**echnical Services Department is a part of the library that few people ever see. Yet this department is to the library what the backbone is to the human body. It provides the framework and support in the vital areas of information organization and management.

This issue of *Dacus Focus* is devoted to a behind-the-scenes look at some "invisible" but critical library operations. Technical Services Department encompasses four smaller areas and each of those will be explained in greater detail in the following articles. Overall, the Technical Services Department orders, receives, pays for, catalogs,

repairs, and provides machine-readable data that can be retrieved by users on or off campus.

The difficulty in explaining Technical Services Department to the world lies in the terminology librarians use. The words "technical services," often evoke for nontechnical services librarians a picture of back rooms filled with books where non-interacting people create catalog cards and enter data into computers. For people not trained in librarianship, the image of Technical Services is even less accurate. They often think "technical" refers to fixing

machines and electrical parts of the library.

The three primary goals of the department are to acquire, provide access to and preserve library materials. Such materials can include books, journals, pamphlets, videos, maps, recordings, CDs, electronic journals, and Internet sites. To achieve these goals, Technical Services is divided into four areas: Monographs and Audio-Visuals Acquisitions, Serials Acquisitions and Cataloging, Monographs Cataloging, and Authority Control. Like everybody else in the world, acronyms are a major part of our office culture. Personnel in these areas must keep abreast of

the library technobabble and acronyms that surround them. Such entities as BIP, OCLC, AACR2, NUC, LC and a host of others serve as lifelines for meeting the goals of the department and the mission of the library.

Technical Services' major task is to create a database that is useable and understandable by the general public. Every online record visible in Dacus Online Catalog (DOC) is made possible by the work performed in the units described in the following articles.

**Gloria Kelley**  
Head of Technical Services

## Acquisitions: Where it all starts

**I**t all starts at Monographs and Audio-Visuals Acquisitions. You may not see us, but our hands are on your scholarly work. In a nutshell, we purchase books, CDs, and videos. We also receive gift materials, purchase in accordance with guidelines of special monetary gifts, buy books as guided by the Friends of Dacus Library and Adopt-a-Book gift programs, and organize the library's biennial book sale.

Our main goal is acquiring library materials that support the instructional and research activities of Winthrop's academic community. We also maintain the library's small recreational paperback collection.

Since curricular support by the library is so crucial to high-quality teaching and meaningful learning, we approach materials selection from several angles: receiving requests from departmental liaisons and library-inhouse selectors, systematically analyzing the university-wide curriculum, and working with vendors who inform us of curriculum-relevant publications hot off the presses.

In addition to selections made by librarians and departmental liaisons, patrons may also make requests. This takes place in several ways: patrons see a publisher's announcement or book review in a professional publication or web

site and make requests based on this information. Requests can be made by phone or in person or by filling out an online request at <http://www.winthrop.edu/dacus/About/requests3.htm>.

Acquisitions then orders the item. If it is needed quickly, we are glad to rush order. When the material arrives, we note its receipt in the online catalog. Next, we process it with barcodes and security strips, and forward the item to Cataloging. Keep reading to find out what happens there.

**Antje Mays**  
Head of Monographs & A-V Acquisitions

**1999 BOOK SALE!!!**  
**Thurs, Oct. 21-Sat, Oct. 23**  
**9AM-7PM, Thurs and Fri**  
**9AM-Noon, Sat**  
**Special sneak preview for**  
**Friends of Dacus Library**  
**Wed, Oct. 20**  
**4PM-7PM**  
**Good Building, across**  
**Myrtle Drive from Dacus**  
**Library**

**Cookbooks, Novels, Rare**  
**and Antique Books, More.**

**Dacus**  
**Focus**

*is published by the faculty*  
*and staff of Dacus Library,*  
*Winthrop University.*

## Cataloging: Books by the truckload

**B**ooks come to Monographs Cataloging by the truckload, literally. Book trucks, that is. As soon as they arrive, one of four catalogers looks for a bibliographic record for the book. If there is no record, a cataloger will do original cataloging. If there is a record, it is individualized for DOC; for instance, adding a note to let patrons know if a book won an important award, such as a Pulitzer Prize or a Caldecott Award, or noting the contribution of a Winthrop faculty member to the book, and adding an item record so that the book can be checked out. (Actually, much more intellectual work goes into the cataloging of each book, but you get the general idea.)

The next step is ironing. No, not clothes. The call number labels are actually ironed onto the book. Paperback books get their spines taped for reinforcement so they don't come apart when you read them at the beach.

Up to this point, the DOC record has noted that the item is in Cataloging. Once the book is ready to go to the shelves, the record is changed to

indicate "Available," and the book is now ready for you, the patron.

What if you need something in a hurry and it's still in cataloging? Ask us to rush it through. At the Circulation Desk, the library has – you guessed it – a form to fill out if you need something rushed. If you just need a book after it has gone through the normal workflow in Monographs Cataloging, you can place a hold on it and you'll be notified as soon as it is ready.

The catalogers also do recon. No, they're not spies doing reconnaissance work. They do retrospective conversion – putting bibliographic data into machine-readable form. If we told you more, we'd have to arrest you.

It's not just new materials that need cataloging in DOC. Old materials sometimes don't have records in the system. They may have come from another collection on campus, such as the Music Library, or they may have "fallen through the cracks" when all books were barcoded back in the early 1980s. Monographs Cataloging has

ongoing projects to get those old items into DOC.

Another partner in recon is the Instructional Technology Center. While most people think of it as a place to go for the latest in technology, it also has a collection of state-adopted textbooks for elementary and high schools in South Carolina. Education students, teachers in the region and parents of school-age children need to use these textbooks, and Monographs Cataloging is working to provide access to them through DOC.

Most materials cataloged are curriculum- or course-based, including the non-book materials. DOC also includes records for some of the art works belonging to the Winthrop Galleries, and for many Internet sites. Recently we received a globe to catalog for the Reference Department.

Without the work we do in cataloging and classifying all library materials, no one would ever be able to find what they need.

**Pat Ballard**  
Head of Monographs Cataloging

## Serials: Magazines, newspapers and more

**H**ave you ever wondered how magazines, journals, and newspapers get from the publisher to the Dacus Library shelves? Okay, you didn't ask, but let me explain because the process is not as easy as ordering a subscription for your home.

Dacus Library receives over 3,000 magazines and newspapers. Orders for all publications must be maintained and tracked. Once orders are placed and issues received, they must be checked in, organized, and housed. All of this takes time, skill, and individuals who are detail-oriented. If the library did not track that the August 16, 1999, issue of *Time* had been received, how would

you find the movie review for *The Blair Witch Project*?

Each individual subscription or gift is scrutinized before it is selected for the collection. Is the publication useful to one of Winthrop's areas of study? Is it indexed in one of the library's indexing services? If not, the likelihood of finding the article you need is poor.

Then the library must consider whether the publication is available in a library's online database, such as *InfoTrac* or *Academic Universe*. These electronic databases are wonderful sources for text but not always good for graphics or currency. Would *The New York Times* be useful two weeks late?

After publications are received, what becomes of older issues? Is the title worth retaining after the current year? If so, should the paper copies be bound or kept on microfilm? *Biology Digest*, with its color photographs of animals, would lose much in the transition from colorful paper to black-and-white microfilm so it is bound. That *Time* issue that included *The Blair Witch Project* review? *Time* is so heavily used it becomes too tattered to bind so it is retained on microfilm.

There you have it—all your questions about serials answered, and you didn't have to ask.

**Gale Teaster**  
Head of Serials

# Focus

From Page 1

## Herring...

proved. I inherited an excellent library faculty and staff. As you know, they're a hard-working bunch who embrace change whenever it improves. As we struggle to find new avenues of funding, new and better ways of doing things, we'll be adjusting and fine-tuning the budget to make it cover more ground. There's not a lot of room for improvement here, but few things are ever perfect. We have to become stronger, extend our resources, offer more opportunities for information access (whether in print or in electronic format, it doesn't matter), and all the while maintain traditional services. It's a tall order.

I left a library that served an academic community roughly half the size of Winthrop's, yet the book budget there rivaled Winthrop's book budget. We've got to find a way to improve this. Already we've made a step in the right direction, but a lot more can be done. Our Table of Contents Service and our E-reserves (electronic access to reserve items) are ways that we can make improvements without sacrificing service elsewhere, and without incurring additional expenses. Contrary to popular belief, not every improvement requires new dollars. Sometimes innovation demands a new approach. Some approaches will succeed while some others will fail. Patience will be required throughout. As Johnson so aptly put it,

change isn't without inconvenience, even when for the better. Eventually, of course, we'll have to find ways to increase the library's annual budget. Throughout it all, please know that this is *your* library. It isn't mine, it isn't that of the other fine librarians and staff who work here. It's yours and we are eager to work with you to make it better: better for you!

Coming to South Carolina is much like coming home again, with apologies to Tom Wolfe. For 14 years my wife and I made our home in the mountains of East Tennessee. After a three-year stint securing academe's union card, Carol and I moved to Oklahoma for seven years. Seven is a biblical number, so I suppose it's only apposite that I served at a parochial

institution. When the opportunity at Winthrop presented itself, Melford's siren song proved irresistible. We are delighted to be here. I would be greatly remiss if I did not extend to all the Winthrop community my heart-felt thanks at so warm a welcome to me and my family. We Southerners are known for our hospitality. What Carol and I did not know, however, was that South Carolinians wrote the book on it! Thanks to you all, and please, if you're in Dacus, stop in and say hello.

Although I've been here only a short while, I have discovered that Winthrop folks are cooperative and eager to improve. I, for one, am glad to have the opportunity—the privilege, as I see it—to work with you now, and in the days to come.  
**Dr. Mark Y. Herring**  
 Director of Library Services

## Authority control: DOC doctor

To make sure you find what you need in the library, an authority control librarian standardizes and organizes authors, titles and subjects. After all, the purpose of a library is not to hack through a jungle of information. The purpose is, or should be, to find materials easily.

The authority control librarian, using Library of Congress subject headings as his Grail, makes sure that names, subject headings and standard titles are all consistent in DOC. There also must be appropriate links to point users to the correct location.

Sometimes that can be tricky. Malcolm X is officially entered as X, Malcolm. Since few patrons search for the famous civil rights leader that way, the authority control librarian made it possible to locate materials on him by listing him as Malcolm X, by his

birth name, and by three versions of his Muslim name.

So the next time you find what you want in DOC, thank an authority control librarian.

**Kevin Furniss**  
 Authority Control Librarian

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