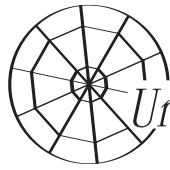


Gatherings

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The following commentary is from a speech prepared by James Dexheimer on the occasion of his retirement from the University Libraries. When the party was in the planning stages, Jim requested that time be given for him to make a “few remarks.” Most of us who listened to Jim deliver the speech were awestruck and inspired when he delivered it at his retirement party on December 8, 2011. The speech summed up his life with books and people and the often interesting intersections of the two. Sadly, Jim passed away at his Kalamazoo home on January 2, 2012. He was born in Buffalo, New York, on September 13, 1951. He graduated from Tonawanda High School (New York) and attended Valparaiso University. Jim earned a bachelor’s degree in English from Western Michigan University and also completed the University of Virginia’s Rare Book School.



James Dexheimer, 1951 – 2012.

I always regarded Jim as a Renaissance man and given his two interesting and disparate careers, it may be true. He worked for the Lauck Pipe Organ Company from 1977 to 1990 as a woodworker, building and installing numerous instruments throughout southwestern Michigan. In 1992, he began working for the Western Michigan University Libraries. He held the positions of secretary at the Archives and Regional History Collections, stacks manager, and assistant director of Operational Services. His position at the time of his retirement was Coordinator of Special Collections Cataloging, where he worked with foreign language materials, rare books and manuscripts, and archival collections. Beyond the many friends and University colleagues, Jim is survived by his mother Marjorie of Lancaster, New York; sister Carol (Rev. Kevin) Walrath of Carlisle, Ontario; his nephews Paul (Sarah), Joel, Mark, and his niece Miriam.

— Sharon Carlson, December 2012

Quid Tum?

By Jim Dexheimer, *Remarks at a Retirement Reception, December 2011.*

Wow! A life becomes a footnote—and 20 years here at the Waldo Library is reduced to a few minutes of sincere “thank you’s,” and a short explanation of what I was up to during the past years.

Life is difficult, complicated, and, for the most part, uncontrollable. Life is what happens when you are planning for the future. But, I think most of us buy into a little intellectual conceit. We have a simple secret or a pithy aphorism that reduces the chaos to a reasonable level: religious faith, personal philosophy, working hypothesis, or a “shit happens” bumper sticker. Mine is *quid tum*.

Like almost all kids, I loved to read. Never stopped.

Early on career choice—none—only job title I can assign now would be “Smarty-Pants.” **I wanted to know it all!**

My dad—German heritage of self-learning, electronics texts to self educate as an electronics engineer, and edification from the Bible. Mom—French, and her reading at that time was slightly more lofty—current fiction, stories, poetry.

Tonawanda, N.Y at the Erie Canal and the junction of the Niagara River, just above Niagara Falls, was about half the size of WMU—people and area—but it had an Easter egg library, a 50x50 square one room, former trolley line waiting shed. It had a children’s corner, which I quickly devoured, and two other important resources— that 1950 version of the *Liber Chronicum* and the Internet, the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, AND in a fancy bookcase next to it—the Harvard Classics!

Languages and Exploring—Latin, French, Spanish, added Greek and German in college; fascinated by Jung’s collective unconscious; Joseph Campbell was a god; did ok academically, a capable but undisciplined scholar, a dreamer.

Off to college—small town boy meets the world . . .

Small liberal arts college, Valparaiso, Indiana, in the heart of the Midwest.

Other students—a junior varsity football captain from Selma, Alabama; Dorothy, first serious girlfriend who knew about the Idaho WW2 Japanese internment camp; Jeffrey, the first African American I had ever met—and we hitchhiked together on the way to Chicago—on a trip to an Operation Push rally with Jesse Jackson; an incredible young woman from Egypt studying civil engineering; Doug, the guy next door, son of a Los Angeles psychiatrist who played the Bach solo cello *Partitas* so beautifully that I started crying . . .

And the faculty, the teachers: Dodds Meddock—Lucretius in a hot air balloon; Victorian lit prof Allen Tuttle’s travelogues of northern Japan; Carol Petersen’s stories of Berlin before WW2; lit theory from an adjunct creative writing prof, a dentist by day; Dr. Walt Rast’s archaeological digs in Iraq, etc.; the Chicago Lyric Opera with my French prof.

Classes turned into—after class and evening discussions, late nights, Saturday at Lake Michigan; chicken dinners on Sunday with the family.

I suddenly had friends of all ages, interesting fascinating people—

the dorm janitor who grew up in a leftist labor commune in Watervliet, Michigan in the 1920s who with his wife, introduced me to Woody Guthrie songs;

an Episcopal priest with a collection of Persian miniatures

Infectious enthusiasms, share your passions!

Eventually, **two eccentric geniuses** emerged, prickly, demanding, complicated and in many ways, difficult, but geniuses nonetheless: Jim (James G.) Lauck, a local engineer and inventor—and pipe organ builder—gave me the opportunity to be a woodworker, craftsman, engineer; and medieval historian and Tom (Thomas R.) Amos, rare book librarian at WMU, who opened up to me the world of direct contact with ancient and Renaissance manuscripts and early hand press books.

During my life, there have been two (now **three special friends**) who have provided the intellectual underpinning and emotional support to keep me from floating away entirely!

They are: someone some of you have met—Tom Buchanan—whose passion is international relief work and non-profit development, from Togo, West Africa, to Chicago, to, presently, his work at the University of Arizona. I have traveled the world with Tom. The other person is someone most of you do know, Sharon Carlson (in the last few years joined with her husband, Tom Dietz)—each with a passion for the discovery, analysis, and preservation of our local cultural heritage. Sharon and Tom—thank you so much!

At WMU, I have had the pleasure of association with two absolutely gracious deans—Lance Query and Joe Reish, along with supportive, beneficent administrators Bettina Meyer and Barbara Cockrell. There was the spectacularly caring and charming Ellen Cha, who rescued me from financial ruin twice by hiring me. I have had the privilege of working on the strategic plan with Miranda Howard when formal meetings dissolved into long talks and laughs with art and travel stories, and I have experienced the scintillating competence and genuine concern of Sheila Bair, whose article on the ethics of cataloging completely changed my attitude toward my job as a cataloger. Be curious; it’s online! And always, the phone calls from Betty

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Hughes, checking up on me. She is truly the most kind, cheerful, loving, and nurturing colleague I have ever worked with!

Conversation, food for body and mind: Years of Bernhard Center lunches with Lois Tolhurst and an assortment of library and University colleagues from English to history provosts and WMU presidents; brown-baqs with the Steuers; evening dinners with Neil and Johanna Chase; Eri Nishiyama's fantastic pottery shows and culinary creations; Ellen Cha's xmas parties and Greg Fitzgerald's Christmas parties; ref brown-baqs; Randle Gedeon introducing me to single malt scotch; Mike Whang arriving at my house, ukulele in one hand, pot of homemade miso soup in the other, to talk about movies; Mike McDonnell stopping by just to chat about book or antique collecting; Saturday lunches with David Isaacson, Elaine Jayne, Maria Perez-Stable—and on and on—the soap box derby project, that lame idea of an afternoon hobby show that turned into a two day long extravaganza! Rare book School at THE University of Virginia. Visits to Gethsemane Abbey, the opportunity to actually meet and talk with manuscript scholar Father Chrysogonus Waddell, art historian Liz Teviotdale, medieval historian Rozanne Elder, working on manuscript descriptions with grad students Micah Erwin and Arthur Russell— **the list goes on and on**, the intellectual meets the social and recreational, the supportive. The seminar or meeting can be as meaningful as the library elevator ride!

AND then suddenly, you realize it—the current age demographic of your life has changed; the people you care most about and find so interesting—are half your age or less!

Instead of symphony with the French prof, I'm now more likely to be hustled off to Ann Arbor for a Wilco concert; lit theory in the coffee shop becomes a lecture on game theory from a 24 year old at Bell's Eccentric Cafe & Biergarten.

In the past few years I have hiked in the northern California redwoods, and been blacksmithing and copper forging, toured both London Tates and the Walker in Minneapolis; been part of furniture collaboration with a MFA blacksmith, fly fishing in UP, bluegrass festivals, a lollapalooza weekend in Chicago, two winter closure trips in the Rocky Mountain Hot Springs, an evening at City Lights book store in San Francisco with Philip Glass, and I find myself fielding invites, letters, and emails from Nice to Nuremberg, Manhattan to Mumbai . . .

And the future? Well, in the next few months, if all goes as planned, I'll be in Utah with a special friend—Matt Brodhead.

I met Matt when he was a freshman at WMU. He had just been hired for his first job at Waldo—but it in was in the rare book room—and Tom Amos had just died—and together we bonded. A year later, my first cancer scare—Matt arrived at my house with a six pack of Dead Guy Ale! and a very serious demeanor, "Man, we gotta talk!"

Matt's now at Utah State University pursuing his Ph.D. He has twin passions: the science of behavior analysis and rock and ice climbing. Matt told me last night about the teaching award he just won, and that he will be at a conference in Brazil in January. Matt's current hot new interest is in snow science and avalanche safety—I guess I'll be learning something new pretty soon!

Matt's fantastic partner is Hannah Dulin—creative writer and poet—from Vicksburg; they met at WMU. They are infectiously, mischievous intellectuals—the kind of people who instantly banish sadness and depression without even being aware of doing it. I can't wait, I need that right now!

Today and tomorrow: On my 60th birthday this past September, I woke up to discover that some rather major problems had occurred during the night, and what was diagnosed then as a stroke turned out to be brain cancer, and there I was in the neuro ICU at Bronson Hospital, surrounded by sandbags in case of seizure and connected to more tubes and wires than could be imagined. Now I was aware that certain people were emailing about my status, progress, demise, but

. . . at about 7 pm, the door opened and, completely unannounced, in walked Ed Devries with the plan to spend the night at the hospital. Ed worked at Waldo for four years, just inside the double doors down in tech services sorting serials, tall guy, friendly—but he has a passion too—the minutiae of commercial law as

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it relates to commercial construction bond insurance (even my curiosity starts waning with that one!) We usually talk politics or music!

Ed was getting his thoughts together for a job interview— which he identified as the path to his dream ... and he could do that at Bronson or at his apartment—so he chose the hospital.

After a couple of hours I sent Ed to my house for a drink and a decent night's sleep . . . and he stopped by the next morning on his way back to Lansing.

Well—I'm here now and Ed got the job! He just moved to Detroit, and will be working between there and Toronto!

So what's the point? We are supposed to take care of one other, of course, but usually don't. Shoulda, coulda becomes didn't, or even worse, didn't want to!—and me—I feel more guilty than most.

So are we trapped in a bubble? Sure, but what a wonderful one it is . . .

The idea of the library—the collection of all the facts, data, science, stories, ideas, natural wonder, travel, philosophy, anthropology, psych, history, art, music, lit, the stories, the poetry, dreams, the Magic, the accumulated information from the profound to the trivial, truly **the world of wonders**; sure there's some crap and flotsam in there, but—at least look around. And, the college, **the community of colleagues** for whom this collection is important, those who know something, those who want to share, those who want to learn something! Again, don't be naive, Sure there are a few toxic charlatans, or evil people—but most aren't—and the offenders are easily ignored, quickly forgotten.

At the end, there are the aphorisms – pretty simple really:

pay attention,

stay curious,

be friendly.

I have a new Kindle fire and have discovered ebooks and audible dot com. I'm still reading. And I have a phone and email. Would you like to come over for dinner?

And I have a pithy new little motto, Latin this time, quid tum – what next! But if you're curious – you might check it out. I seem to remember a New York review article [see David Marsh, "So What?" New York Review of Books, January 12, 1995] that might be worth reading for a footnote to history.

*One final note – cancer – don't be cruel to yourself and others, there is good reason for hope. There are many incredibly competent and caring physicians out there (luckily I found one) and the magnificence of the WMCC is overwhelming. Know that much of the source of hope and cure will be coming from the accumulating knowledge, the libraries, and the caring community of curious people, the college of colleagues. **Hey, isn't that our bubble?***

P.S. Pay attention, be curious, and be friendly!

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Shedding Light on Hidden Collections

By Marianne Swierenga, Coordinator,
Metadata and Digital Resources & Sheila
Bair, Metadata and Cataloging Librarian

S. R. Ranganathan's fifth rule of library science, first noted in 1931, stated that "the library is a growing organism." No one then or now will dispute that collections of information, including libraries, continue to grow and change as opportunities to add to the retrieval of records appear through discovery and use of the materials by researchers. Tools to "find" resources have also been evolving from traditional catalogs, indexes of all types, keyword searching, and other organizational strategies—each augmented and strengthened by the powers of the electronic age and especially through the marvels of digitization.

In the 21st century, searching and retrieval have reached new heights, and yet **hidden collections that are undescribed, under described, and/or undiscoverable lurk in almost every library or information center in the world.** Creating, or repurposing detailed description, then pushing those data out on the Web where people are searching, increases the possibility that they will find and use our valuable and unique items, opening our collections to an increasingly global community of researchers. The Archives & Regional History Collections and the Special Collections departments of the University Libraries have been working hard to do just that: shining a light on previously "hidden" collections.

The concept of a finding aid is nothing new to archives and special collections departments. A finding aid is a document that describes a collection, lays out its physical and intellectual organization, and assists users in the discovery and access of materials. With the help of trained and tireless staff and student workers, Archives & Regional History Collections and Special Collections have been bringing their finding aids to the Web. **Word documents of box lists, folder titles, and unique items are being transferred into spreadsheets, ready to upload into a new content management system called Archon where they'll be displayed as collapsible, completely searchable, online finding aids.** Many collections, like the WMU World War II Propaganda and Print Collection, have extensive, hundred-plus-page finding aids, often with materials in multiple

languages, so the added benefits of the digital environment are not just a boon to potential researchers, but also to the University Libraries, as the site is a way to both track and organize their collections. "This is not just an issue of increasing visibility, but also of security and inventory control," said Susan Steuer, Head of Special Collections. New collections, like a recent acquisition of comic books, and older collections without detailed finding aids, are also being loaded into Archon with newly added description and box listings.

A descriptive finding aid can be an invaluable guide to a researcher. **Since the advent of the Internet, librarians and archivists have tried various methods to put their finding aids on the Web.** The most important advancement to date has been the creation of EAD (Encoded Archival Description), which is an XML (Extensible Markup Language) standard that allows for the encoding of finding aids for use in a digital environment. Many libraries are now loading their EAD files to the Web, including the Library of Congress. Other organizations are posting their finding aids as HTML on websites or as EAD files within content management systems such as CONTENTdm. The University of Illinois created their own platform for finding aids called Archon, originally developed as a research project in 2005 with the Sousa Archives as their prototype. Archon continued to develop and is currently in version 3.21 with hundreds of users. The developers of Archon are already working with the creators of Archivist's Toolkit (AT) to combine the best features of each program into a next generation archives management tool called ArchivesSpace, which will include a user-friendly public and staff interface. Much like archives, the programs used to describe them are also always changing.

Archon organizes and displays archival description, generating discovery and access through a linked environment

for subjects, creators, and description. **Researchers can search across multiple collections, down to folder-level descriptions, using keywords, or browse by record group, title, subject or creator.** Controlled headings for subjects and creators create quick links between collections sharing similar subjects of persons of interest. Complete finding aids can be found, searched and printed easily by researchers. The administrative side of Archon allows for multiple users. Multipage finding aids can be loaded quickly by uploading a spreadsheet, and are easily edited or added to by administrators. Changes are immediately reflected in the display. This flexibility allows archivists to easily update descriptions and add boxes and folders to the finding aid, as new materials are acquired. Archon has the ability to import and export EAD files, as well as XML and MARC, making the data easy to extract and transfer from the Archon platform.

Advancement has already been made in populating WMU's Archon site: Twenty-nine descriptive finding aids for collections in Special Collections and over sixty from the Regional History Collections have been loaded into Archon. Eventually, all WMU finding aids will be linked to a collection-level catalog record, both in the WMU Libraries' catalog and WorldCat.org, a Google-crawled Web discovery environment. By pushing the data to the Web, Archon opens our collections to additional methods of discovery, bringing new researchers to materials that may have been hidden from them before.

The well-used Regional History Collections paper finding aids will be moved along with everything else when the WMU Archives & Regional History Collections move to the new Legacy Collections Center. **When looking at the legacy finding aid to one of the larger collections, it is easy to see how archival collections are often described as being alive.** Notations in different handwriting

mark changes to the original typed text, as box numbers are crossed off and changed, then crossed out again. New folders are added in neatly penciled rows. Accruals are added in new sheets at the back. One can see the growth and change of the collection from the way the finding aid had been updated throughout the years, although the final result might not be so easy to read. And while those documents will always serve an historical purpose, the digital finding aids are much easier to edit and add to, as well as share online with



Sheila Bair and Marianne Swierenga: Advocates of Archon

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Shedding Light ...

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researchers wanting to do off-site research. Sharon Carlson, Director of the University Archives and Regional History Collections, reported on the streamlining effect of having digital finding aids: **"We have been working with finding aids for many years and have made those available electronically when requested. Now researchers should be able to discover them without making special requests. This is great!"**

Carlson understands the challenges facing researchers. "Researching archival collections is always a different proposition than traditional library research." But the archivists and staff are always up for a challenge. "The WMU Archives and Regional History Collections has always worked with on-site and off-site researchers to facilitate access. In the last three decades, dozens of books, articles, exhibits, and other scholarly output is a testament to the efforts of the staff to make these collections accessible. Newer discovery techniques will greatly facilitate researcher access in the years to come."

These significant efforts in Archon add to a growing WMU Libraries presence on the Web. Digitization projects

carried out the last few years have also brought more attention to the treasures in Special Collections and the Archives & Regional History Collections. CONTENTdm hosts the *Cistercian Liturgy Series* and the *Liturgy O.C.S.O. Journal of Gethsemane Abbey*; both series gather together and present rare Cistercian publications in full text. Also in CONTENTdm are eight diaries and twenty-nine letters digitized from originals in the Archives, which together form the U.S. Civil War Collection. The digital platform called LUNA holds images of historic costume, WWII propaganda, and medieval manuscripts, all scanned from materials housed in Special Collections. Steuer attests to the digitization projects' success: "We have a significant amount of traffic to our CONTENTdm collections, which saves a tremendous amount of time in answering reference questions and providing materials through Resource Sharing." **Through our digitization projects, these materials, once hidden, are now openly available online, adding to the scholarly discussion by presenting rare publications and unique primary sources.** Plans are in the works to scan and provide metadata access for more of Rare Books' priceless medieval manuscripts and to add to the WWII Propaganda Collections.

As the WMU Libraries, with Special

Collections and Archives leading the way, continues to evolve as a growing organism in both the real and virtual worlds, so also evolves the associated metadata. Metadata, simply defined as "those data that describe other data" is never really finished, but, in fact, is continually being revised and reused in exciting ways. Organizing and placing our collective data and information on the Web, where many researchers start their search, increases the possibility that every user will find and use our valuable and unique items in new ways. In addition, getting the records and finding aids out on the Web allows for the possibility of linking the data with other information sources, including images, biographical and geographical information, and scholarly articles, increasing the educational value and visibility of our collections.

In the end, we return to S.R. Ranganathan and two contemporary library organizers, Michael Gorman and Walt Crawford, who in 1995 postulated a new "law" precisely applicable to the world of information that surrounds us in the 21st century: **"Use technology intelligently to enhance service"** (Future Libraries: Dreams, Madness, and Realities [American Library Association, 1995], p. 8.) And so we in the WMU Libraries have done, are doing, and will continue to do!