

# LIBRARY HORIZONS

A Newsletter of the University of Alabama Libraries

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## Digital Media Lab Opens in Gorgas

In March 2004, University Libraries at The University of Alabama demonstrated its commitment to innovative services when it opened the doors of the Lillie Florence Jones Sanford Media Resource and Design Center (The R&D). Made possible by a gift from Dr. and Mrs. Arthur R. Taylor, Jr. of Demopolis in memory of her grandmother, The R&D provides students with the latest technology for digital media production.

The R&D was created in response to an ever-increasing interest in and use of digital media technology in the academic environment. Students can reserve time at computer stations equipped with software that allows them to create projects in the media areas of graphic design, web design, page layout, audio recording, video editing, and DVD authoring. The lab is equipped with Apple G5 PowerMac computers, G4 iMac computers, video and audio decks, and a MIDI/Audio workstation, as well as scanners and printers. Students may also check out video and still digital cameras for use with their projects.

For students who are not familiar with the equipment and software available, The R&D staff provides weekly introductory training modules. The staff is also available, by appointment, for one-on-one consultation and instruction.

Dickie Cox, media services coordinator and director of the facility, received his M.F.A. in Design from Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts (Richmond, VA) where he also instructed in electronic media and filmmaking. For seven years, he worked as a sound



*Dr. Louis A. Pitschmann with Sanford Digital Media Lab donors, Dr. and Mrs. Arthur R. Taylor.*

recordist in film production and as an editor/compositing artist in post-production in the Virginia/Washington DC area. He is assisted

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*Dickie Cox helps students work on a group media project in The R&D.*

by Digital Media Specialist Wayne Rau, a graduate of the University of Alabama Department of Telecommunication and Film. Rau worked previously in the media production department of Harrah's Casino in New Orleans. Prior to his position as media specialist, Rau worked as the microforms supervisor for the Libraries.

Students have been very responsive to and complimentary of the facility. Some are self-motivated to produce media as a learning product while others are producing assigned media projects for class. Most see The R&D as an opportunity to develop or enhance a marketable skill.

Two successful independent projects produced at The R&D in the first few months were created by Michael Chambers and Amy LeePard. Chambers created *Rising Tide: Cheron's Comes to the Capstone*, a documentary DVD about the making of *Hair à la Mode*, which was a telecommunication and film class student film project produced by renowned Hollywood director and producer, Tom Cheron's. LeePard, a New College student, created a documentary video about the use of recycled goods in sustainable architecture in the state of Alabama.

Many of the students who are working in the lab are collaborating on projects, and The R&D's environment lends itself to that endeavor.

or. Realizing this, several professors have assigned projects intended to be completed in The R&D. David Taylor of the English Language Institute had one of his classes divide into groups to generate video projects about culture and customs at the University.

Other faculty members have also expressed interest in utilizing The R&D and assigning projects for course work in the future, which Cox says is greatly welcomed. "I believe that the Center will only be as successful as the people who are producing and the projects being produced."

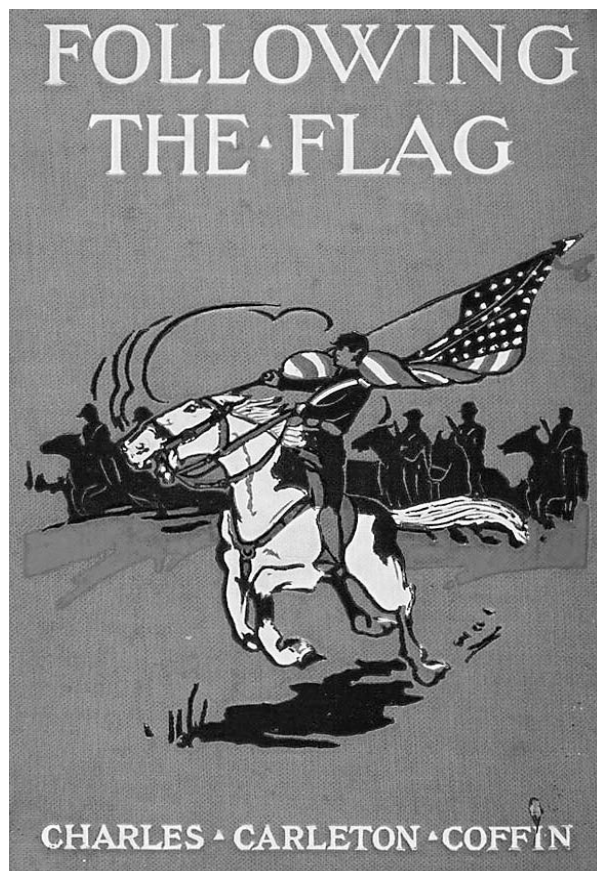
The summer hours for The R&D are Monday to Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sundays 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Due to the demand for more evening hours, the hours beginning in the fall semester will be Monday through Thursday 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., Friday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Saturday 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday 1 p.m. to 9 p.m. Additional information about the lab and its services is available on the website at <http://www.lib.ua.edu/randd/>.

Faculty members who are interested in more information about utilizing The R&D for assigning course work should call (205) 348-4651 or email Dickie Cox at [randd@bama.ua.edu](mailto:randd@bama.ua.edu).

*Mary Alice Fields, head, Gorgas Information Services, with Dickie Cox, media services coordinator, the Lillie Florence Jones Sanford Media Resource and Design Center, Amelia Gayle Gorgas Library*

## Publishers' Bindings Digitization Project Funded by IMLS

*Publishers' Bindings Online, 1815-1930: The Art of Books* is an exciting three-year digitization project which will make images and information about 19th-century bookbindings available to the public through a fully searchable online database. The project will



*Following the Flag* by Charles Carleton Coffin, published by M.A. Donobue and Co., Chicago, 1892. Blue book cloth with red, white, and blue stamping.

also provide supplementary online resources including a comprehensive glossary, teaching tools, and information about binding designers and the history of book in 19th-century America.

This under-explored area of scholarship is being developed by University Libraries at The University of Alabama in collaboration with the University of Wisconsin-Madison Libraries. The goals of the project, funded by a generous grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), are to provide an extensive online resource through digitization of approximately 5,000 bindings in the collections of the two host institutions and to serve as an authoritative online reference work to encourage further study of 19th- and early 20th-century bookbindings.

The resource will be of interest to scholars and collectors outside the Libraries, as well as to students and instructors in American studies, history, art history, and other fields. The website for the project can be viewed at <http://bindings.lib.ua.edu/>.

In conjunction with the project, University Libraries mounted two exhibitions in the spring of 2004. An exhibition in Gorgas Library featured publishers' bindings, with examples from the time period 1828 to 1944 and from a variety of countries including the United States, Denmark, Germany, and Hungary. Additionally, an exhibition entitled *Victorian Exotica: Japanese Design Influence in 19th-Century Publishers' Bindings* was mounted at the W.S. Hoole Special Collections Library. This exhibition featured works from the Lafcadio Hearn Collection of writings about Japan as well as bindings designed in the Japanese style by Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Margaret Armstrong.

The exhibit in the Hoole Library also featured a late-19th-century crazy quilt, loaned by Christine Dietsch, and Victorian fans from the clothing and textile collections of the University of Alabama Museums. *Victorian Exotica* was mounted in conjunction with the Sakura Festival, a month-long University and Tuscaloosa community event which celebrates the cherry blossom and the coming of spring.

*Jessica Lacher-Feldman, public and outreach services coordinator, William Stanley Hoole Special Collections Library*

## University Libraries Joins Virtual Reference Consortium

The University Libraries' Ask-A-Librarian virtual reference service, which began as a local initiative in September 2002, has joined a consortium representing research libraries throughout the Southeast to provide expanded

hours of coverage to a growing population of virtual users. The service allows patrons to communicate with librarians in real time on the Internet. With many of the Libraries' resources now available online, virtual reference via both chat and email extends to off-site users the same reference services that have traditionally been offered to walk-in patrons.

The Ask-A-Librarian Consortium, a partnership of eleven members of the Association of Southeastern Research Libraries (ASERL), began offering group coverage for live virtual reference in February 2004. By fielding questions for each other, the consortium libraries can provide more timely and cost-effective information than any one library alone could offer. UA, which initially offered the service only on selected weekday afternoons, can now provide up to 84 hours of consortium-staffed coverage per week, including evening and weekend hours. The expanded program is open to the public as well as to affiliates of the participating universities. At times when the service is not available or for questions not suited to live chat, patrons can contact UA librarians by email or telephone, or by visiting the library.

ASERL is a group of state and research libraries committed to furthering resource sharing and collaborative efforts. The group's Ask-A-Librarian service is the first virtual reference service cooperatively staffed by research libraries across a region. In addition to the University of Alabama, participating institutions include the College of William and Mary, Florida State University, University of Central Florida, University of Kentucky, University of Louisville, University of Memphis, University of Miami, University of North Carolina-Charlotte, Virginia Commonwealth University, and Wake Forest University.

For more information about the program, contact Jennifer McClure at 205/348-2806 or visit the project's website at <http://www.ask-a-librarian.org/>. To access the service, click

on the Ask-A-Librarian link on the University Libraries' website at <http://www.lib.ua.edu>.

*Jennifer McClure, reference librarian,  
Amelia Gayle Gorgas Library*

## Libraries Benefit from Generous Donations

### Taylor Gift

Dr. and Mrs. Arthur R. Taylor, Jr. of Demopolis, Alabama, have provided the funding for a sleek digital media production center for University of Alabama students. Named in honor of Mrs. Taylor's grandmother, the Lillie Florence Jones Sanford Media Resource and Design Center opened in March 2004 on the second floor of Gorgas Library.

The Sanford R&D Center offers students the opportunity to become authors and producers of multimedia content using cutting-edge computer hardware and software in combination with the library's print collections. Staff in the center provide group instruction and one-on-one consultation with students about their digital media projects.

### Anonymous Gift of Books

An anonymous donor has given University



*Dean Louis A. Pitschmann and Mrs. Arthur R. Taylor at the opening of the Lillie Florence Jones Sanford Media Resource and Design Center.*

Libraries two gifts totaling more than one hundred works of 19th- and 20th-century American literature. Included among these books are a number of rare first editions by authors such as Mark Twain, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Henry James.

The first gift consists of 58 works by and about African Americans. Included are works authored by Zora Neale Hurston and Langston Hughes as well as a slave narrative published in 1859. This narrative is exceedingly rare because it has a handwritten inscription by the author, a free black man, who was an associate of Frederick Douglass.

Also donated were about forty works by major 19th-century American writers. Among these were books published before the Civil War by authors such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Nathaniel Hawthorne. The benefactor hopes that this gift will compensate for the loss of similar books when the University's original library, the Rotunda, and its collection were burned during the Civil War.

#### Russell Gift

Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Russell of Alexander City, Alabama, made a generous gift to the University Libraries earlier this year. The Russells' gift will allow the refurbishing of the first and second floor of Gorgas Library to be completed, which among other improvements will include enhancements to student study areas.

*Kate Ragsdale, planning officer; and  
Cheryl Altemara, development officer*

## Members of the Rotunda Society and Donors to the Libraries January 2003 - June 2004

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*Cheryl Altemara, development officer*

## **Libraries Participate in Cuba Week Conference and Alabama-Cuba Initiative**

**O**n November 17-20, 2003, the University sponsored an Alabama Cuba Week Conference at the Bryant Conference Center on the University of Alabama campus. Its purpose was to further educational connections and cultural exchanges between Alabama and Cuba as a part of the Alabama-Cuba Initiative, a state-wide project to promote partnerships with scholars at the University of Havana and across the

spectrum of Cuban life.

University Libraries at The University of Alabama became involved in the Alabama-Cuba Initiative in January 2003, when Dean Louis Pitschmann was invited to travel to Cuba with a group of 17 other deans and faculty members under an academic license granted to the University by the U.S. Department of the Treasury. Travel to Cuba for this educational purpose was supported financially by a gift from University of Alabama trustee Angus Cooper and his brother, David Cooper.

During this visit, which was designed to enable these faculty members to meet with their academic counterparts, Dean Pitschmann met with the director of the University of Havana Library, Barbara Susana Sanchez, to discuss ways in which the University of Havana Library and University Libraries could cooperate. Such options as book and periodical exchange, computer software and hardware gifts to Cuba, and reference and information exchange were discussed.

In April 2003, Betty Bryce, distance education librarian, represented the Libraries during a visit to Havana and continued discussion of library cooperation with Director Sanchez. During this visit Ms. Bryce also toured the library and observed their computer network, which includes an online catalog and periodicals published by the University of Havana. The popular periodical database EBSCOhost is also available.

There also seemed to be open access to the World Wide Web in the library. For instance, it was possible to connect easily from the University of Havana Library website to the University of Alabama Libraries homepage. There were no obvious restrictions to access that the casual observer could detect. However, it was revealed during the subsequent Cuba Week conference that all email entering and leaving Cuba is examined and all website searches are monitored.

During her visit to the library, Ms. Bryce

issued a formal invitation from Dean Pitschmann for Director Sanchez to attend the Alabama Cuba Week Conference and speak on possible areas of cooperation between the University of Alabama Libraries and the University of Havana Library. Director Sanchez also planned to speak about programs in her library and plans for the future.

The College of Arts and Sciences, which sponsored the conference, began planning the Cuba Week conference in earnest during the early summer of 2003. The Libraries were included in the program along with our speaker, Ms. Sanchez. Many other colleges and units on campus also planned programs, including Cuban art exhibits and poetry readings, Cuban food, Cuban music, and Cuban films. Lecture or panel topics included baseball, book arts, economics, politics, poetry, photography, the mambo, archaeology, knowledge management, health professions, religion, science fiction, women's issues, environmental engineering, aquatic biodiversity, and film.

Because there was a question whether Cuban visitors would be granted visas for the conference, many programs featured dual speakers, pairing Cuban and U.S. scholars in the similar fields. Dean Pitschmann recommended the well-known Latin American bibliographer Peter Johnson, formerly of Princeton University Libraries. This turned out to be a fortuitous choice, because, just before the conference was to begin, Director Sanchez e-mailed that she would not be able to attend due to lack of a visa. This was also the case with all but three of the invited Cuban experts.

Peter Johnson proved to be an engaging and knowledgeable speaker and an apt ad hoc translator for sessions where the Cuban visitor was not comfortable speaking English. Johnson's session on "Researching Cuba: Materials and Strategies for Specific Realities" was informative and practical. He discussed, for example, ways of getting information beyond the party line and provided in-depth informa-

tion on websites, periodicals and how to obtain them, and the best U.S. collections on Cuba. His excellent materials are now available on the Libraries' Web page at [www.lib.ua.edu/resources/subjguides/](http://www.lib.ua.edu/resources/subjguides/) and from the Alabama-Cuba Initiative Web page at [www.cuba.ua.edu](http://www.cuba.ua.edu).

University Libraries' participation in the events of the Cuba Week conference provided a rewarding experience for those who attended the sessions and contributed to the overall great success of the conference.

*Betty Bryce, reference and distance education librarian, Amelia Gayle Gorgas Library, with contributions from Barbara Hedges, reference librarian, Eric and Sarah Rodgers Library for Science and Engineering*

## Deason and Ragsdale Receive Library Leadership Awards

On May 19, 2004, surrounded by family, friends, and colleagues, Harriet Deason and Kate Ragsdale were presented with the 2004 Library Leadership Awards for staff and faculty, respectively. The occasion was the annual Library Leadership Board luncheon.

It was fitting that Harriet and Kate were selected in the same year. It is rare to hear one name without hearing the other in the same sentence, as their work is intertwined in so many ways. Both have worked for the Libraries for many years and have sterling reputations for their practical, pleasant, and cooperative approach to library and university projects and programs.

Harriet Deason, business officer for the Libraries, began work at the University in 1989. An alumna of Judson College, she brought valuable business experience to her position. She assists the dean with the development of the Libraries' budget, monitors all financial affairs



*Library Leadership Award winners (from left) Kate Ragsdale and Harriet Deason.*

for the Libraries, coordinates building maintenance, renovation, estimates, copy services, mail service, security, and takes on a multitude of "other duties as assigned." Ms. Deason possesses a host of creative abilities, especially the flair for interior design, and the library furnishings and floor tile designs frequently reflect her personal touch.

The duties of a business officer require that the incumbent possess exceptional interpersonal skills, as there are daily interactions with individuals and offices both on- and off-campus. Ms. Deason is admired by her colleagues at the University, and she is known for her flexibility, fairness, and friendly cooperation. She has served on numerous University committees and has chaired the University Health and Safety Committee. It was not surprising, therefore, to learn that she had been chosen for this award, and the honor was justly deserved.

Kate Ragsdale, planning officer for the Libraries, has been a part of the organization since 1983. Beginning as a staff member in the Angelo Bruno Business Library, she quickly rose to the position of planning officer in 1986. She graduated from library school while working and holds tenure as an associate professor. Kate is the key individual for library statistics, planning, new buildings, renovations, and refurbishing programs, and is frequently called on to coordinate special projects. Kate brings a



thoroughly professional tone to her work; she is totally committed to the Libraries and to the University and always brings honesty, selflessness, and humor to the task at hand. She is equally committed to her responsibilities in the professional associations to which she belongs. Kate very much enjoys working with others inside and outside the Libraries, bringing people together who have different experiences and viewpoints, and she especially likes working on building projects.

Kate and Harriet have played major roles together in the planning, design, budgeting, purchasing, negotiating, and implementation of such projects as the building of the Rodgers Library for Science and Engineering, the W.S. Hoole Special Collections building, the Libraries' Annex, and renovations in the Gorgas Library. They are as knowledgeable about the mechanics and aesthetics of elevators as they are with the construction requirements for large library buildings.

The Library Leadership awards were introduced in 2000 by the Library Leadership Board to recognize superior performance within the Libraries. Individuals are nominated by their colleagues, and the Board selects the winners. Each winner receives a framed certificate and a check for \$1,000. Congratulations to Harriet Deason and Kate Ragsdale, the 2004 Library Leadership Award winners!

*Anne Edwards, grants coordinator*

## New Faculty Welcomed

### New to the Libraries

Douglas Anderson was appointed as systems officer for the University Libraries in July 2003. Doug holds a Ph.D. in music theory from Ohio State University, an M.L.S. from Kent State University, an M.A. in music theory from The University of Texas at Austin, and a B.A. in applied music (voice) from Ouachita Baptist University. He was previously the director of

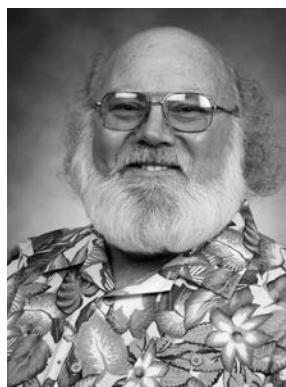
the library at Presbyterian College in Clinton, South Carolina and head of automated systems at Furman University in Greenville, South Carolina. He has also taught music on the college level at both Furman and Presbyterian College.



*Douglas Anderson*

James Blansett was

appointed as a reference librarian in the McLure Education Library in June 2003. Jim has an M.L.S. from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, an M.A. in education and human studies from Colorado State University, and a B.A. in social sciences from Colorado State University. Jim brings to the Libraries over ten years of experience as a student coordinator at the Colorado State University Library, in addition to a wealth of experience garnered from positions in the manufacturing arena.



*James Blansett*

Nancy Dupree is a familiar face in the McLure Education Library. She was appointed as a reference librarian in May 2003. Nancy holds both a Ph.D. and an M.A. in English from Auburn University. She has a B.A. in history from Furman



*Nancy Dupree*

University, and she attained the M.L.S. from the University of Alabama's SLIS program. Nancy has worked in the McLure Library for many years as a staff member, assisting patrons with research and performing collection management duties. Because of this, she brings an invaluable depth of knowledge of the McLure collection to her new role as library faculty.

Richard Cox was appointed as the media services librarian in January 2004. Dickie holds



*Richard Cox*

an M.F.A., a B.S.G. (General Studies), and a post-baccalaureate certificate, Preparing Future Faculty in the Professions (PFFP), from Virginia Commonwealth University. Dickie heads the Lillie Florence Jones Sanford Media Resource and Design Center (The R&D) in Gorgas Library. His fine arts background and experience in digital production have helped to create an exciting atmosphere in The R&D that has drawn scholars from disciplines across campus. He has experience as a producer, with a client list that includes HBO, K-Mart, Columbia Records, Bob Dylan, Obsidian Productions, and DaimlerChrysler. He has produced feature films and short films and worked as a production assistant. He brings a fresh perspective to serving the University's students.

Alan May was appointed as a catalog librarian in May 2003. He holds an M.F.A. and M.L.S. from the



*Alan May*

University of Alabama and a B.A. in English from the University of North Alabama. In addition to working in the Catalog Department of the University Libraries, Alan has also been a part-time instructor in the Department of English. Alan is also a published poet; his works have appeared in several publications.

Michelle Sears was appointed as the electronics resources acquisitions librarian in



*Michelle Sears*

August 2003. She holds an M.L.S. from the University of Alabama and a B.A. in Liberal Arts from Evergreen College of Olympia, Washington. Michelle brings with her experience working in the Tuscaloosa Public Library as a reference library associate and juvenile services library associate. She worked as an intern in the Acquisitions Department of the University Libraries, obtaining practical knowledge about and experience in the processes involved in acquiring materials for an academic research library.

Amy Fordham was appointed as a reference librarian in Gorgas Information Services in March 2004. She holds the M.L.S., an M.A. in art history, and a B.A. in psychology from the University of South Carolina. Amy worked for five years as the user services librarian and webmaster at Columbia College's J. Drake Edens Library. She has experience in reference, circulation, reserves, and



*Amy Fordham*

systems. One of the highlights of her previous experience was evaluating art auction price guides.

#### New appointments

Patricia Henderson was appointed associate dean for collections services in July 2003.

Patricia earned the M.L.S. and M.A. in higher education administration at the University of Alabama; she also holds a B.A. in American studies from the University. Acquisitions and collection management have been the focus of Patricia's library career,



*Patricia Henderson*

and she is presently responsible for collection management as well as for the departments of acquisitions, circulation, and cataloging. Patricia brings many years of experience to the position of associate dean, beginning her professional life with the University Libraries in 1994 as assistant acquisitions librarian. She subsequently held the positions of collection management coordinator and interim associate dean for collections and technical services before being named as associate dean. She has published articles on collection management, presented at professional conferences, and held committee positions at both the state and national levels.

*Angela Jenkins Wright, human resources officer*

## Libraries Add A High School Digital Resources Web Page

In his introduction to a series of essays published under the title *Student Pathways Through High School to College*

(<http://www.ecs.org/clearing-house/26/71/2671.htm>) , David R. Pierce affirms what many have observed, that "it is increasingly clear that the last two years of high school - and their connectivity with the first year of college - are in serious need of fresh thinking." He goes on to say, "Clearly, it is time for the K-12 and postsecondary education systems to begin to work together more effectively to create smoother transitions for students."

University Libraries has a long history of working with local area high schools to provide introductions to the Libraries and their resources and to make those resources available to students who can come to the Libraries to use them. However, this year a new electronic resource, the High School Digital Resources Web page, has been added to the Libraries' homepage. The hope is that this will provide a helpful resource link for high school students inside and outside the immediate geographical area and at the same time encourage them to consider The University of Alabama as their university of choice.

Created and maintained by Libraries faculty members Jim Blansett, Barbara Dahlbach, Nancy Dupree, Benita Strnad, and Helga Visscher, the website provides links to free Web resources selected for excellence and appropriateness for high school students and their curricula. There are over 600 links to websites that provide access to books, dictionaries, encyclopedias, atlases, newspapers, other websites, and virtual collections intended to assist high school students in producing quality assignments. Additional links are included to help students prepare for high school exit exams and prepare college applications.

The slide-out menu on the left of the screen includes subject links as well as format types such as atlases, dictionaries, or newspapers. Each menu topic has a link at the top of its page to a relevant campus department so the interested student can get more information

about UA programs and services. The Libraries and the Office of Undergraduate Admissions have plans for promoting this website to new and prospective students.

View the website at <http://highschool.lib.ua.edu/resource.html> or click on the link on the Libraries' homepage at <http://www.lib.ua.edu>. For comments or suggestions, contact the webmaster at [hsweb@ua.edu](mailto:hsweb@ua.edu).

*Mary Alice Fields, head, Gorgas  
Information Services*

*Library Horizons: A Newsletter of the University of Alabama Libraries* is an official newsletter of the University community. Comments and suggestions are invited. Direct comments to Marcia Barrett, editor, *Library Horizons*, The University of Alabama, University Libraries, Box 870266, Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35487-0266 or [mbarrett@bama.ua.edu](mailto:mbarrett@bama.ua.edu).

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 Editor-in-Chief  
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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA  
 University Libraries  
 Box 870266  
 Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35487-0266