



# Alumni News

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CSU School of Library & Information Science

San José/Fullerton

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## Letter from the President

by Fred Gertler

First things first, and that is to congratulate the SJSU SLIS graduating class of December 2002 and to welcome you to the profession and to the SJSU SLIS Alumni Association. I encourage you to subscribe to the Alumni electronic mail list ([http://slisweb.sjsu.edu/people/alumni/news\\_events/listserv.shtml](http://slisweb.sjsu.edu/people/alumni/news_events/listserv.shtml)), contribute an article to the newsletter, volunteer to speak at one of our job or career fairs, or even run for an office on the Alumni Board.

Second, to the class of May 2003, now in the throes of the CE, we offer good luck and best wishes. I know that you'll do fine!

This has been an exciting several months for the Alumni Association.

In October 2002, we held our fall Career Fair by videoconference, and by all reports it was a terrific success. Speakers and guests at San Jose, Fresno, Sacramento, and Fullerton engaged in a lively, interactive, face-to-face (sort of) discussion about the many different career paths that are available for librarians. This videoconference is available for viewing over the web—another first for us. The URL is [http://slisweb.sjsu.edu/people/alumni/news\\_events/career.shtml](http://slisweb.sjsu.edu/people/alumni/news_events/career.shtml).

There was a terrific reunion of SJSU SLIS alums, faculty, and current students at the California Library Association Conference held in No-

vember 2002. More than 70 colleagues came together to network and schmooze with one another at the reception generously hosted by Dr. Blanche Woolls.

The Alumni Association has been actively trying to locate “lost” alums. In partnership with the school, we ran a series of ads in major library literature inviting our alums to “phone home.” I am pleased that we received several responses to this campaign, and we are encouraged to try to do something similar later this year.

Of course, our best source of information about alums comes from you. I hope that you will invite fellow SJSU SLIS alums to visit the Alumni Association website, subscribe to the electronic mail list, and join the Association.

One of our proudest accomplishments is that we made a contribution of \$1000 to the Terry Crowley Memorial Scholarship Fund. We look forward to the occasion when a scholarship can be awarded in his name.

In the coming months the Alumni Association will commence our annual membership drive; sponsor a job fair in northern California; offer a slate of candidates to be elected to the next Alumni Board; and continue to find ways to be an active and enthusiastic spokes group for the alums, current students, and faculty of SJSU SLIS.

And now, on to our regularly scheduled newsletter.

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Lazerow Lecture – Thursday, April 10

Speaker: Mr. Frank Colvin, General Motors VP and head of fuel cell research.  
Natural Science Building, Room 258 (next to Martin Luther King, Jr. Library).

Spring Career Fair – Saturday, May 10, 10 am – 12:30 pm

Location: Martin Luther King, Jr. Library (SJPL), downtown San Jose.  
Speakers will focus on searching for a job, resume building, interviewing, etc.  
Watch for further announcements on the website and the alumni mailing list.

## Letter from the Editor

by Anne Callery

Welcome to another edition of AlumNews! This issue, we follow the exciting exploits of several alumni: Judith Downie and Linda Meiss tell us about the process of moving into new library buildings at CSU San Marcos and SJSU. Jan Keiser and Judy Anderson relate their experiences finding interesting new jobs. And Robin Kear tells us about working as a librarian for the UN in Nairobi.

Of course, we also have the usual alumni updates, calendar, publications, school news, faculty updates, and a recap of the last Career Fair.

Consider sending in an article yourself! Your fellow alumni would love to hear about what you do in your job and how you landed it. You can write a full-length article or just a brief personal update. You can also write about almost any library-related issue. If you don't think you have anything to write but you're itching for a byline, you can interview someone. Just think of how great it will be to add "published works" to your resume! The deadline for submissions for the fall issue is September 1, but feel free to contact me anytime. You can bring your own ideas, or together we can work out something for you to write. This is your newsletter! (Email me at minnanne@yahoo.com.)

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## New Library for CSU San Marcos

by Judith Downie

California State University San Marcos, the CSU without a library building, will be moving into its new five-story building beginning late this summer. This has been described as the "heart of the campus," with lots of natural light, new technologies, and elbow room. We are extremely excited to be able to move after 12 years of being squeezed into space not meant to hold a library and to bring all of our hard copy collection together, provide more computer access, and have instructional space. Several years ago, the collection outgrew our existing space in Craven Hall (the campus administration building), and we have more than half our collection either in an off-campus annex or in storage as well as staff nearly stacked on top of each other.

The hoped-for move date, during the summer, did not materialize. As we will completely

close the library for seven to eight weeks to complete the move and merge the three parts of our collection, a late summer move of the entire operation would conflict with providing service at the beginning of the fall semester to our ever-growing numbers of student and faculty. It was decided to wait until winter break to begin the move, which will allow time for our computer systems to be installed and fully functional before the staff move.

To start, we will be providing space to some faculty offices and non-library instruction, the Faculty Center, and our campus computing department. As more buildings are finished on the campus and our collection grows, we will claim more of the building. We are going to have a coffee shop at the library entrance, a beautiful reading room, and so much more!

We look forward to showing off our new building in 2004!

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## Published

Congratulations to alumna Irene Berry! Her book, *Images of America: Santa Cruz, California*, was published last fall.

Congratulations are also due to SLIS Director Blanche Woolls and faculty members Ken Dowlin and David Loertscher for their article in *The Electronic Library*. "Distance education: changing formats" is available in issue 20(2002)5, pp. 420-424.

And, finally, we congratulate Dr. Linda Main on the publication this year of her book, *Building Websites for a Multinational Audience*.

If we missed your recent publication, or you have an upcoming publication, please let us know!

# What's New at School

by Dr. Blanche Woolls

SLIS began the fall semester with the largest enrollment in recent memory: 1074 students. The continued increase in number of students meant that we were allowed to search for two faculty members in 2001-2002. We were able to add a new faculty member, Dr. Deb Karpuk, who holds the MLIS degree from San Jose and her doctorate from North Texas. She is heading the organization of metadata, cataloging and classification, and descriptive cataloging areas of our curriculum. Dr. Dan Fuller, who joined the faculty in a one-year position to teach two core courses, has been appointed to a full-time tenure stream position in Fall 2003. His master's and doctorate are from the University of Pittsburgh. Many alumni met Dr. Fuller at our booths during the CLA and CSLA conferences in Sacramento.

We were pleased to host a very successful alumni reception during CLA, where more than 80 attended, far exceeding our expectations.

When you visit our website, the great improvements are thanks to Debbie Faires, SJSU alumna and our web guru.

We are working with Keith Lance, researcher, whose research throughout the US shows that school librarians make a difference in academic achievement. He is helping us to analyze data from a California School Library survey.

We have recently learned that we will be moving into the Clark Building (formerly Clark Library) after it has been renovated. The contract with CSUF for another five years has been approved, thus assuring us a presence in southern California. The new contract allows us to have most of our classes adjacent to our office rather than spread throughout campus.

Both the Terry Crowley (for a student interested in reference) and the Les Janke (leadership) scholarships are being awarded this spring. Alumni who wish to donate to either should send checks (made out to the SJSU Foundation—Crowley or Janke funds) and send them to the office c/o Brenda Lamb.

Scharlee Phillips has been appointed as full-time coordinator of student admissions.

## Faculty news:

**Ken Dowlin**, presently on the CLA Assembly, will serve on the CLA Organization and By-laws Committee.

**Debbie Hansen** has been co-chairing our faculty search committee. She was able to encourage students to launch a student SAA organization on both campuses.

**Bill Fisher** has recently been named Faculty Athletic Representative for SJSU Athletics. He will be teaching one course per term for the future.

**Deb Karpuk** has been coordinating the review of the LIBR 248 and 249 curricula and making sure adequate resources are available in-house and online for faculty and students.

**Geoffrey Liu** just completed a proposal for funding.

**Ziming Liu** has another article published. "Trends in transforming scholarly communications and its implications" will appear in *Information Processing and Management* soon.

**David Loertscher** held a summit for graduates of the school library media teacher program. This program is having its five-year-visit from NCATE and the California Teacher Credential in March.

**Linda Main** has a new book, *Building Websites for a Multinational Audience*, published.

**Jim Schmidt** has been conducting preliminary interviews for the ultimate outcome of a joint doctoral program.

**Dr. Feili Tu** has presented at two recent conferences.

# Elections

by Fred Gertler

If nominated, I shall run; if elected, I shall serve!

With that paraphrase of a famous quote by William Tecumseh Sherman, I'd like to invite you to run for the SJSU SLIS Alumni Association Board of Directors. We will be electing a full slate of ten officers this year: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and six Directors-at-Large. This is a great opportunity to get involved in helping the Alumni Association become an even more effective advocate and champion for the school,

the alums, and, of course, current and prospective students.

I would especially like to encourage newly graduated students to run for office. The Alumni Association is a professional organization and holding an office in the Alumni Association demonstrates a commitment to professional growth and development that will always stand you in good stead.

The formal election process will begin in a very few weeks. More information will be posted to the SJSU SLIS Alumni website (<http://slisweb.sjsu.edu/people/alumni/alumni.html>) and the Alumni Association listproc ([alumni@listproc.sjsu.edu](mailto:alumni@listproc.sjsu.edu)).

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# Joint Library News

by Linda Meiss

Opening Day for the new Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library is August 1. The activity on all fronts is at a feverish pace. The building contractor expects to be finished in mid-April, and the moving will then begin.

Material will begin to converge on the grand building at the corner of San Fernando and 4th Streets from five locations starting at the end of April. The Clark Library will close when the semester ends in May, and then in July the Main Branch of the public library will be closed.

So exactly what does it take to accomplish this? The consultant distributed a "Move Facts" sheet to the library staff acting as liaisons for the move. Highlights from that sheet include:

- Total linear feet of items is 192,086
- Number of book carts to move the above is 8000
- Number of truckloads to move the 8000 carts is 500

The largest collections are the University's, with over 72,000 linear feet being relocated from the Senter Road warehouse that served as temporary storage for the materials that were in Wahlquist. Over 74,000 linear feet will come from the Clark Library.

Here at the Main Library, we are preparing to reclassify the Reference Collection and will be closing it to public access on May 1. A small group of reference librarians will be doing the actual "reclassification" that will involve mostly the re-labeling of the books. We are using a computer-generated list of our collection by bar code that matches the title to the correct LC number and produces the new label for us to attach to the book. While clerical in nature, it will give us a chance to get familiar with the new arrangement.

The Grand Opening Party is currently being planned for Saturday, August 23. Specifics about the time and events are still being worked out. You can visit the website for a virtual tour at <http://www.newkinglibrary.org/home.html>. Better yet, if you will be in the downtown San Jose area after August 1, you should plan to stop by.



# Recap of Fall Career Fair (North)

by *Monika Landenhamer and Hella Bluhm-Stieber*

On October 28, 2002, approximately 55 students and alumni met for a live videoconference between the CSU campuses of Sacramento, Fresno, Fullerton, and San Jose. Dr. Blanche Woolls welcomed everybody, and Elyse Eisner introduced the speakers and moderated the event. A recording of the program is available on the SLIS website.

Paula Jabloner – Archivist at History San Jose (<http://www.historysanjose.org/>)

Paula has an MLIS from Michigan and an undergraduate degree in history. She has worked as an archivist for ten years. While in library school, she worked in three different archives on campus. Paula said that it is very difficult to get a permanent job in an archive straight out of school. She worked in temporary, grant-funded jobs for six years until she found her present permanent job in San Jose.

On a typical day she answers reference questions, accessions new items, talks with donors about new items for the archive, guides tours, writes a grant for an image digitization project, and works with volunteers. She also works with curators on exhibits.

Wendy Eisenberg – Talking Books Library for the Blind, Fresno (<http://www.fresnolibrary.org/tblb/>)

Wendy became an occupational therapist because she wanted to work with disabled people. After four years she decided to attend SJSU SLIS while working part-time at the Alameda Library. When she finished in 1993, it was very difficult for librarians to find jobs, so she went back to work as an OT. In 1995 she was finally hired as reference librarian in Fresno County, where she worked for three years. When the current position at the Talking Book Library for the Blind opened, she saw this as an opportunity to combine her library skills and her goal to work with disabled people.

This branch of the Fresno County Library

actually serves four counties and is part of a Library of Congress program. The library has books on tape and in Braille. Every day 200 to 500 books are sent out by mail, comprising 99% of the service. Special cassette players are loaned out as well, since the books are recorded at a lower speed with copyright protection.

Wendy calls new patrons who apply for service. She talks to patrons, does reader advisory, fills orders, does outreach to community groups, works in public relations, participates in disability awareness days, writes reports, and collects statistics.

Annemarie Welteke – Saybrook Graduate School and Research Center Library, San Francisco (<http://www.saybrook.edu>)

Annemarie earned her MLS from UC Berkeley in 1969/70 and worked for over 30 years as a traditional librarian, mainly in academic libraries. Her journeys took her to libraries in India, Ethiopia, and Japan, and she speaks several languages fluently. She worked in technical services at Golden Gate University, where she helped clean up the library after the 1989 earthquake. In 2002 she was the ALA delegate to the International Conference of Information in Cuba. Her previous job was adult learner's librarian at St. Mary's College. Two years ago a friend encouraged her to move to Saybrook.

The Saybrook School is an institution of higher education in humanistic psychology. Annemarie is the library director at this distance education institution. Her guiding principle is that you have to work with what you have and develop it. She creates and administers the digital collections, does video streaming, and solves copyright issues. She is also an instructor and works with the faculty, providing curriculum support and teaching new technologies. Annemarie maintains a website for humanistic psychology and adds new content. She also teaches the mandatory course in Library Research and Information Competency. She is looking for an intern and researcher to help her move the remaining print collection online.

She believes that librarianship has an exciting future and that we should learn from every experience, participate in professional associations, and network. She recommends teaching to keep up to date.

Susan Barb – Reference supervisor and trainer at 24/7 Reference, Fullerton (<http://www.247ref.org/>)

Susan is a 1981 UCLA graduate. She worked at a law firm, did reference for adults and children, worked in library technology, and taught Internet classes. Three years ago she moved to the 24/7 project. She presently works 20 hours, substitutes at the public library, and teaches for Infopeople. She does online training and manages staff online.

24/7 is an online reference service that uses push technology to enable librarians to show websites to patrons as they answer ready-reference questions. The service gives patrons access to ProQuest, OCLC FirstSearch, and Galenet, in addition to databases the patron's library belongs to.

Susan is responsible for recruiting, hiring, and scheduling the after-hours staff of 20 to 25 librarians who work from their homes across the country. She updates the online reference manual and does quality control of 8000 questions per month. She writes up competencies for staff and identifies training needs.

At this time it is not easy to find a telecommuting job. Working for 24/7 requires technical skills, a high comfort level with computers, the ability to deal with people one cannot meet, reference skills, and some reference experience.

Leana Goodwater – Humanities Liaison at Santa Clara University Library (<http://www.scu.edu/library/>)

Leana earned her MLS from SJSU in 1974. She has an undergraduate English degree with Latin and music minors. She speaks Greek, French, and German. She is a semi-professional musician and plays the French horn. She started working as a library page at San Jose Public Library during her undergraduate studies.

Leana enjoys working with college students. As the humanities liaison, she is responsible for seven departments including art, theater, and modern languages. She is one in a team of four librarians. She develops the collections, offers library instruction, and provides both general and specialized (by appointment) reference.

Leana says that the basics from library school are still valid, but that it is important to be a life-long learner. Her advice is: "Never be too sure which direction your career will take."

Coral Henning – Law Library, Sacramento (<http://www.saclaw.lib.ca.us/>)

Coral is currently a student at SJSU SLIS. During her legal studies at Golden Gate University, Coral worked at San Francisco County Law Library. She updated the loose-leaf collection and worked in circulation, interlibrary loan, and reference. When she graduated from law school, she wanted to become a civil rights attorney. Instead, she worked as library director for a large law firm. She was at the county law library for 12 years, then moved to the Fresno County Law Library, and later to Sacramento Law Library, where she worked in reference and computer services. She is now the training coordinator. The law library has a computer learning center with 12 computers for attorneys and other clients, offers legal instruction classes, does CE classes for attorneys, and provides other in-house training.

According to Carol, 85% of law librarians have an MLIS, 30% have a JD, and less than 10% have both. Currently, the starting salary is \$40,000.

She recommends joining professional organizations (e.g., NOCALL) and networking. Even without previous experience in a legal environment, there are opportunities for recent graduates in this field. Willingness to learn, excitement about the field, and a strong customer focus are the main ingredients for success.

Elyse Eisner – Taylor & Associates (<http://www.taylorlib.com/>)

Elyse, a SLIS alumna, addressed the question, "What should you expect from an agency?"

There are four job agencies in the Bay Area specializing in fields related to libraries and information: Taylor & Associates (Bay Area only), AIM (California), Library Associates (southern California, expanding nationwide), and Certified Personnel (national). All of them employ librarians as recruiters.

Working with an agency expands your networking opportunities, as agencies already have relationships with employers. The agencies prescreen you for a job and try to find the best match. They provide resume review and development of job interviewing skills to help you get “a foot in the door.” Elyse finds this aspect of the job very satisfying. She worked in customer service before joining a job agency. Approach the relationship with an agency as you would a direct hire. Dress professionally, learn about the company, and understand what they can do for you.

When looking for a job agency, one should ask certain questions: What is your client base? Which industries do you work with? Do you place only managers? What are your placement policies? Will you tell me when you send a resume to an employer?

It is the aim of any agency to place you at market rate. If you accept a job, you become an employee of the agency. Sometimes it is possible to arrange for a “buyout” when the work turns out to be satisfactory for all. Agencies are not required to pay benefits. Temping is hourly work and overtime has to be approved because it needs to be billed. The job agency takes care of salary nego-

tiations with your employer, but you have to take care of the salary negotiations with the agency. Let them know what your rate is and what the minimum rate is for certain jobs. Let them know in what areas and what types of jobs you want to work and when you are available. It becomes harder for them to match you if you begin rejecting every offer; being clear from the beginning increases your chances of finding a job that’s rewarding to you.

Some employers work only through agencies and do not post their jobs. By working with agencies you increase your reach, especially in a tight job market.

Tips for interviewing: research the organization before the interview and dress up.

When asked about the current job market, Elyse said that it is slow. There is more temp work and less permanent work. She recommended becoming a substitute librarian at public libraries and being willing to do everything. Stress every project you have done, including internships and practicums, to demonstrate your flexibility and broad range of interests. Job ads tend to ask for the highest qualification possible. Don't be discouraged—if you meet three out of five requirements, go for it, but make a strong presentation. Be willing to learn!

*This career fair was organized by Elyse Eisner and Hella Bluhm-Stieber with support from many other people. The Board of the Alumni Association wants to especially thank Linda Main and SLIS for setting up and supporting the videoconference.*

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## Alumni Updates

**Anne Aas** ('00) is keeping busy by working as a school librarian and by teaching web classes for the Library Certification Program at the University of Nevada, Reno. She teaches Book Selection for Children and Cataloging.

**Melanie Chu** ('02) joined CSU San Marcos in February as the Outreach and Multicultural Librarian.

**Judith Downie** ('98) recently moved up from vice-president to president of California State University Librarians-South (CSUL-S), an interest group of the California Academic and Research Libraries (CARL) group.

**Rory Litwin** ('98) is working as an independent contractor on an LSTA-funded project, the California Labor History Map. The poster map and accompanying website will show significant and interesting events in California labor history. Rory's work on the project has so far included historical research, building a database, and project management. In other news, Rory is also the Coordinator of ALA's Social Responsibilities Round Table and the Chair of the ALA Web Site Advisory Committee.

# Going Solo

by Jan R. Keiser

## The Search

I was unemployed nearly all of 2002. I was a “non-credentialed” librarian for many years, working in the business world. I have worked in small business libraries and huge corporate libraries and run my own information brokerage, and I really felt I was well qualified. So imagine my surprise—then horror—when I did not receive a single reply to the resumes I sent out. I did everything right. I carefully composed cover letters, each tailored to the open position. I had developed five different resumes, each with a different focus: academic, medium-sized business, nonprofit, corporate, general. I was on the Internet nearly all day long searching all the listservs, industry websites, corporate websites, and university libraries, all to no avail. I finally realized that I might have to relocate to another state. Well, I didn’t find waiting arms outside of California either!

One morning there was a job posting on the SLA website. It was for a company here in San Francisco. I dutifully emailed a resume and cover letter. It’s all in the timing, as they say, because the company responded back—via email—that day to request an interview. After four interviews, I was called back in for an interview with the company’s General Counsel (to whom I report); in the middle of our conversation, he offered me the position. I provide medical, legal, and general business research. There are a hundred different directions for me to grow in this position.

## What, No Staff?

This position is a *solo* librarian position, something I never even considered, let alone prepared for. With the exception of the years I ran my own business, I have always worked with a staff. In my last corporate position I directed a staff of nine librarians all over the country. I literally directed the team and presented results to senior management (and traveled way too much). I did no cataloging, no acquisition (except the electronic research ac-

quisitions), and little research. I had no experience with the routine librarian duties—like shelving!

As a solo, I am left entirely alone to make my own decisions, but I often don’t know how to decide. I have never done copy cataloging, let alone original cataloging (the company writes many of its own publications for their customers). I am thankful for Melodie Frances and her cataloging class—at least I know where to look for instruction. This is a very small library that will rely heavily on electronic publications in the future. However, many of the volumes presently shelved have not been cataloged in two years, and I don’t even recognize the classification system used on the shelves, if there is one. Before I arrived, the company had purchased cataloging software, so the IT group worked with the developer to learn how to install and teach me the system. The system is from EOS, very comprehensive but very large for this library. Once I have organized the shelves—I used a combination of LC and Moys classification schemes—I will begin cataloging. I performed a massive weeding, so the catalog will need serious updating.

As a solo librarian, I find that each task is equally important to the life of this library. However, solidifying my position here is more important to the life of this librarian. Establishing visible signs of change, such as organizing the library, are among the first projects because it makes an immediate difference. Placing signage, labeling shelves, making research-related announcements, issuing current awareness bulletins, updating the website; I used all of my marketing skills in my first efforts. The board room is directly across from the library and I wanted the board members to see a difference—and they did. (In a non-publicly-owned company the board has a great deal of influence!) I consider this library a product, something that is tangible, and I apply all the skills needed for a product launch. This includes the marketing already mentioned and, eventually, presentations to different departments, tailored with specific examples of this library’s capabilities. It means that I need to track “sales,” or the results: how many visitors, what books or

information they requested, explanation of my collection policy, how many ILLs, how many research requests, and so on.

I rely on listservs—the SOLO Librarians (SOLO-L@listserv.silverplatter.com), Business Librarians (BUSLIB-L@listserv.boisestate.edu), and Medical Librarians (MEDLIB-L@listserv.buffalo.edu). I am grateful for the responsiveness of these members—the vast amount of knowledge that these librarians contribute is mind-boggling. I keep a database in which I enter some of the ideas (contacts, websites, publications, search strategies) I find, so I will have a lead the next time something “foreign” comes my way. I have joined the Medical Librarians Association, and I will take a couple of paralegal classes next year, since I actually work for attorneys. I study Lexis and PubMed in a way that I didn’t in school, and I rely on texts I used in school—Taylor’s *Or-*

*ganization of Information*, for example. Clearly, my education will never end. This is one of the reasons I became a credentialed librarian; I knew it would allow me to legitimately pursue lifelong learning because that is what librarians must do.

Final thought: This company is the only company that responded to my query. I see more openings now than there were last fall. Besides believing that there must have been some cosmic intervention, the lesson here is an old one. Don't give up. Take advantage of every opportunity—I never thought I would be interested in this position. I showed up because the rent was due and so that I could tell myself I had done everything possible. And, surprise, surprise, I am extremely content with this position. I achieved my 90-day probationary benchmark and was told they were “delirious” about having hired me. Of course, “delirious” could mean a number of things...

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## Success Story

by Judy Anderson

When I started library school, I had planned to get a job in a public library in a small town in the Pacific Northwest.

School took longer than I planned, and the road was rougher in terms of family, but I did it. Just after I found I passed the CE in December, I applied for a job at a community college in a small coastal town in Oregon.

I interviewed for the job and loved the community and the work site. They offered me the position; of course I accepted.

The position is Director of the Learning Resource Center. Surprising that a fresh graduate got such a job? I will be their first librarian, setting up a tiny library (850 square feet, 800 books) in a tiny college (470 FTE students) in a small town (4400 people). Not quite the public library, but very exciting. (I'll have only myself to blame for poor policies and procedures, and someone can write complaining emails about me.) The pay is about

what I make now as a library assistant, but heck, you can rent a three-bedroom house for around \$600 a month and walk almost everywhere, so the cost of living is a lot less.

I've heard some people say they don't feel prepared when they graduate. I'm not sure why because the classes I've taken have focused on real life situations. I feel not just ready to work as a librarian, but ready to set up and run a library. I'm glad I took a broad range of classes covering a bit of everything.

Another message for students here is don't just look at job titles. Normally I would think that I wouldn't qualify as a library director. On the other hand, I applied for one job as a technical services manager that was nothing more than a low level (in terms of responsibility) library assistant with some supervision duties. So read the job description.

It's nice that the program has set me on the path to the rest of my life in such a fine way. My thanks to all the instructors I've had, especially those who gave me references. I'll do you proud.

# A Librarian in Nairobi

by Robin Kear

As I was finishing my library and information studies at SJSU, I realized that I wanted to do something a bit different with my skills. I started looking for jobs around the United States and the world, and I saw a very interesting opportunity on the job listserv of the International Federation of Library Associations. I applied for and received a three-month information services internship with the United Nations (UN) Habitat program in Nairobi, Kenya. Habitat's goal is to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of 100 million slum dwellers by the year 2020. My work in the information services section helps to support that mission.

Last December, I graduated from SJSU, quit my paraprofessional job in Monterey, moved out of my house, drove across the country to my hometown of Pittsburgh, PA, and left for Africa. After arriving in Nairobi on January 20, my first two weeks consisted of acclimating to the culture, climate, altitude (5500 feet), and work environment. My internship is unpaid, but as part of the contract I live in my supervisor's house free of charge. The UN has four headquarters and major libraries in New York (the Dag Hammarskjold Library), Geneva, Vienna, and Nairobi. The Hammarskjold Library arranges for UN publication distribution to 405 depository libraries in 146 countries. Here in Nairobi, the main library supports the work of two UN agencies headquartered here, UN Environmental Programme and UN-HABITAT, and many field offices, like UNICEF and UN Development Programme. (Notice the British spelling; British English is one of the official languages of the UN.)

My first project strictly benefited the UN-Habitat program. I summarized, categorized, and created web pages for the content of a CD-ROM to be released at the World Water Forum in Japan on March 16. While I will not receive a production credit on the cover (as with most companies, work completed for the UN remains anonymous), two of the photos I took in the Mathare slum of Nairobi

were used and I will receive a photography credit. CD-ROMs are still popular in the UN because most of the clients who need the information are in developing countries with spotty or nonexistent access to the Internet. On the other hand, not developing with technology means that some countries can easily jump ahead. For example, in Sudan, the Internet links are satellite and probably the fastest in Africa. Tanzania has skipped landlines altogether and gone right to cell phones.

My second major project will be to instruct librarians and staff of the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON) library in the use of databases like Lexis-Nexis, ProQuest, and Dialog. Here's where LIBR 244 with Nancy Burns and LIBR 210 with Feili Tu will prove very useful. Although I am fresh out of library school, I will be teaching librarians twice my age technology that is part of an assumed skill set in the States. There are many reasons why I am teaching database searching, some specific to this library and some general to Africa. The training for library school students in eastern Africa is woefully inadequate, due to lack of support and funding. Most universities cannot afford many basic services, let alone expensive databases for the library students. Internet and computer hardware access is also a big problem.

This specific library in the United Nations system has been backsliding for the last 15 to 20 years and slowly cutting itself off from the user. Instead of using the UN document classification that the larger libraries in New York and Geneva use (called UNBIS, or UN Bibliographic Information System), they created one locally and cannot keep up with the backlog of UN publications. The yearly budget has consistently been \$12,000 for a library that supports over 2000 users. All of these users need correct and up-to-date information to plan projects, perform research, formulate strategies, and stay informed. Information is critical to properly perform their duties to the UN and the people it serves. Most key reference books in the UNON library are ten years old. Reference is barely provided and UN publications are stacked in corners without shelf tags. A library web portal is nonexistent. Some library employees are entrenched and approaching retirement age. On the bright side,

there is a brand-new director already making changes, like recruiting me to train staff on the databases. He is being proactive and providing information support in new ways and to new people. He has brought eight computers into the main library lobby where there were none a month ago. The UN main office in New York has committed money and staff to improve the library services. I believe that it will improve slowly and steadily, but it certainly is a challenge.

I am not only improving my job skills and my chances for a job within information management at the UN, I am exploring a new continent. I have been on several safaris, to the coast, and will take a three-week camping trip from Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, to Nairobi when I am finished with my internship. I believe that I made the right decision for me and will continue to pursue international librarianship as a career. The UN employs hun-

dreds of librarians around the globe and, as with most libraries in the US, many librarians are near retirement age. Opportunity also exists because the United States and information managers are underrepresented as employees within the larger system. This underrepresentation means that finding a professional position in the UN is more likely. The UN is truly a diverse and unique place to work. I love living in Africa and am really enjoying all aspects of my time here, including my work as a librarian.

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*Related links:*

*Dag Hammarskjold Library:*

<http://www.un.org/Depts/dhl/index.html>

*My journal of Africa:*

<http://www.robinkear.com>

*Jobs within the UN secretariat:*

<https://jobs.un.org/release1/vacancy/vacancy.asp>

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## Introducing a New Faculty Member

*by Dan Fuller*

My name is Dan Fuller and I am happy to introduce myself as the newest faculty member at SLIS. It is exciting to be part of the largest master's-only program for library and information science in the United States. It is a pleasure to be working with a talented and productive faculty. The current group of students in our program is gifted and diverse. They are going to be excellent professionals and SJSU SLIS alumni.

My background is a sad but true story. Libraries are almost the family business. My mother worked on one of the first bookmobiles in the United States in 1944 for the state of New Hampshire. She also worked at the Albion, PA, public library for many years and still volunteers several times a week. I earned my Master's and PhD at the University of Pittsburgh. I have worked as a school librarian for 14 years and most recently I worked for Follett Software Company, where I was the Executive Director of Sales and Marketing. This background gives me a unique blend of library, technology, and management experience that

I am anxious to share with the library and information science community of San Jose State.

My teaching responsibilities and interests are on the online side of the program. I teach several of the core classes and I am looking forward to teaching some technology courses. My research interests are varied. One of my current projects involves the evaluation of the online program and the census of our graduates. A second project is an analysis of statewide database offerings throughout the United States. I am also interested in library technology in a digital world. On my to-do list is some research into organizational decision-making and its impact on funding for libraries and information organizations.

My wife, Sandra, and my daughter, Michiko, are excited about relocating to California this summer. Professionally I am excited about the challenge. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to have an impact on the next generation of the profession and to help them become proactive leaders and advocates for libraries and information organizations.

## Alumni Listserv

alumni@listproc.sjsu.edu

The Alumni Association has a mailing list for alumni to keep in touch. All alumni events are announced on the list. To subscribe, send the following email to [listproc@listproc.sjsu.edu](mailto:listproc@listproc.sjsu.edu): subscribe  
alumni firstname lastname (substituting your first and last names, of course!)

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## Alumni Survey

**Attention: alumni who graduated 1992 to present.**

A survey has been posted on the school's website (<http://slisweb.sjsu.edu/gradsurvey/survey.htm>). Please respond; it should take only a few minutes. If you're not able to access the website, please contact the school's office at 408-924-2490.

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