Word from the Director
Maurice Fortin, Library Director

The fall semester is off to a fast start. The Library is experiencing increased usage both in-house and online. The installation of application software on the computers in the Reference Desk area proved to be a hit with students. The Library installed time management software on these computers to insure continued access for library research activities during peak usage periods.

I am in the process of compiling the FY 06 statistical reports for the Library. In the November issue of the Library Newsletter, please watch for a summary report on Library usage and activities during the previous academic year.

Each September, the academic library directors (public universities, private universities, and community colleges) in Texas meet for discussion and programs concerning topics of interest, cooperative ventures to ease the rising cost of acquiring or accessing information, and especially on the best ways to meet users’ needs. One of the reports compiled each year for the group is a survey on library fees at higher education institutions in Texas. Below is a comparison of FY 06 library fees with some of ASU’s peer institutions as well as with other member institutions in the Texas State University System.

Peers
ASU .................................................. $2 per semester credit hour (sch)
Midwestern State University ............. $5 sch
Tarleton State University ................. $3 sch
TA&MU Corpus Christi ....................... $5.50 sch
TA&MU Kingsville ......................... $5 sch
West Texas A&M University .......... $3 sch

Texas State University System
ASU .................................................. $2 sch
Lamar University ............................. $4 sch
Sam Houston State University .......... $30 flat fee fall/spring & $15 summer sessions
Sul Ross State University ............... $4 sch
TSU San Marcos .............................. $8 sch

Of the fifty schools reporting information, only eight did not report a library fee. Even with the $1 increase for FY 07 at ASU, our library fee is less than the other schools within our system and with peer

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institutions. Virtually all of those schools will also be raising their library fees in FY 07.

Following a presentation to the Deans Council, the ASU Library received permission to join the Texas Digital Library project. That paperwork is slowly making its way through the required steps for authorization. See below for additional information on this exciting new project and its resources.

Hopefully, many of you have gone by the University Center and visited the two great displays developed by staff members of the West Texas Collection. One of the displays featured photographs documenting the turbulent period of the Mexican Revolution early in the twentieth century. The other display was prepared in conjunction with the Friends of the Library’s annual membership meeting and its program on Fred Gipson and the fiftieth anniversary of his book, Old Yeller. For the baby boomers among us, who can forget reading the book or watching the movie. [My mother made the mistake of taking myself and about five of my friends (we were all about 6 or 7 years old) to see the movie on a weekday afternoon. Needless to say, she had her hands full trying to dry away all the tears.] For more information on the display and activities of the Friends, please see page 4. Please watch for announcements about future displays and events in the West Texas Collection.

If you have not had a chance, please stop by and see the recently completed mural in the Juvenile and Curriculum Collections area on the Library’s First Floor. Student members of Kappa Pi Zeta Phi International Art Fraternity painted the mural, entitled “An Adventure with Roscoe.” For pictures of and more information on the mural, please see page 5.

Elsewhere in this issue, you will learn about the new databases added to the Library’s online resources, new collections in the WTC, another Voyager upgrade, and Westlaw training. We have also included a selected bibliography related to the topic of the 2006 E. James Holland Symposium on American Values, “Religion & Political Extremism in American Society,” and information from a Constitution Day program in D.C. on classified government information.

The Texas Digital Library

The Texas Digital Library (TDL) project began as a collaborative effort of the five Association of Research Libraries in Texas (UT Austin, Texas A&M University College Station, Texas Tech, Rice, and the University of Houston). The project is intended to provide a digital infrastructure for the scholarly activities of Texas universities. Every day, faculty and students at Texas higher education campuses produce and create new findings, analyze data, and discover new concepts on virtually any topic one can imagine. The libraries, departments, research centers, and museums at those institutions are creating new digital collections of repository items, objects, and findings. The TDL will provide a means of easy access and sharing for scholars and students to collaborate on research or obtain access to data sets and objects previously requiring expensive travel and time consuming delays through previous channels of access. “The TDL will serve as a repository for research output including electronic theses and dissertations, faculty datasets, departmental databases, digital archives, course management and learning materials, digital media, and special collections.” In addition, the TDL will provide another avenue for preservation of this digital information.

The TDL is in its second year of a five-year start up plan. Eventually the project plans to provide services supporting scholarly publishing involving open access, peer-reviewed, archival journals, edited manuscripts and refereed conference proceedings, with a goal to “support faculty, students, and staff with the highest quality and most timely information possible.” Other services include creation of institutional repositories, learning objects repositories, and courseware management, collections management, and preservation of information in digital formats.

The ASU Library has a three-year commitment of $25,000 to be a part of this project. The fee is not for access, but to help with the development of the project and to enable ASU students, faculty, and staff be contributors to the project. One of the main purposes of the TDL is the open source access to this information.

On October 16th and 17th, Mark McFarland and John Leggett, co-directors of the project, will be on campus. On the afternoon of the 16th at 4:00pm in MCS 100, they will make a presentation about the TDL to the Faculty Senate, academic deans and department heads, and other University administrators. On the 17th, they will tour the Texas State Data Center in the MCS Building. To learn more about the TDL project see http://www.tdl.org/.
Extra! Extra! Read All About It!  
New Library Databases!

The Library has been able to add a number of new databases with the advent of the new fiscal year. *Westlaw Campus Research, JSTOR Arts & Sciences III,* and *Emerald Fulltext* were mentioned in the regular column, “Word from the Director,” in the last *Newsletter.* Access to the American Chemical Society’s *SciFinder Scholar* has been purchased and will be available on campus in the near future. In addition, the TexShare consortium has purchased access to the following databases that are new to Angelo State University as of the 2007 fiscal year:

- Alt Health Watch
- Bibliography of Native North Americans
- Computer Source
- Consumer Health Complete
- Economia y Negocios
- eLibrary Curriculum
- Encyclopedia of Animals
- Fuente Academica
- Funk & Wagnall’s New Encyclopedia
- Health Source: Consumer Edition
- Health Source: Nursing/Academic
- Information Science & Technology Abstracts
- Internet & Personal Computing Abstracts
- Legal Collection
- MAS Ultra: School Edition
- MedicLatina
- Middle Search Plus
- Natural & Alternative Treatments
- Newspaper Source
- Primary Source
- Professional Development Collection
- Psychology & Behavioral Sciences Collection
- Religion & Philosophy
- Science & Technology Collection
- Texas Reference Center
- Twayne's Authors Series
- Scribner Writers
- Serials Directory
- TOPICsearch
- Vocational & Career Collection
- World History Collection

Some of these databases may sound familiar, having been cut previously from the TexShare program and unavailable due to fiscal constraints. They have now been restored to the program.

**A Gift and a Donation Adds Collections to the WTC**

A donated collection of Mexican Revolutionary money and a purchase of two other collections will augment the research capabilities in the West Texas Collection (WTC) especially in the area of Texas and borderlands studies.

Elmer and Diane Powell of Dallas donated a collection of Mexican Revolutionary money, appraised at over $90,000, to the WTC. The basis of the collection originated from the Amon Carter Collection of Mexican Revolution Paper Money, purchased by Mr. Powell. Since that time, he added to the collection through purchases of three additional collections. The gift consists of 676 pieces of Mexican Revolutionary money. Three main types of money are represented in the collection: military issue, private issue, and state issue.

During the Mexican Revolution, as different generals would capture a town or area, they would print scrip to pay their troops and to purchase supplies. As other troops would retake the town or area, many pieces of scrip were overprinted with a validation stamp showing the currency was legal tender under current authorities. Some pieces in the collection have these marks. One piece was printed on linen used by a manufacturer of lamp shades because the printer ran out of paper. Each piece is unique and has a history of its own.

A generous gift made through the Friends of the ASU Library enabled the WTC to purchase two collections from Russ Todd of Arizona. One collection consists of approximately 8,000 picture postcards depicting all phases of Mexican life and culture from the late 1800s through about 1940. The second collection is concerned primarily with, but not limited to, the efforts of Mexico to attract American tourists during the late 1800s through the 1940s. These pieces include railroad brochures, maps, periodicals, photograph albums, books, and posters.

For more information about these materials, please contact Suzanne Campbell at 942-2164 or Suzanne.Campbell@angelo.edu.
Scholarships and *Old Yeller*: The Friends of the Porter Henderson Library and West Texas Collection Annual Meeting

The Friends of the Porter Henderson Library and West Texas Collection held their annual meeting on September 19. Two scholarships were awarded to ASU students: Courtney Ray, student assistant in the Reference/ILL department, received the Joe Bill Lee Scholarship. Amanda Ponka received the Dr. Henry Ricci Scholarship for Applied Science in Nursing.

Three new board members were also elected: Anita Monk, Dr. Ray Dawson, and Dr. Warren Griffin. The group heard reports on the Porter Henderson Library from Angela Skaggs and from Suzanne Campbell, head of the West Texas Collection.

The program centered around the 50th anniversary of the book *Old Yeller*, by Fred Gipson. Gipson had close ties to San Angelo, having worked for the *Standard-Times* and married San Angelo native, Tommie Wynn. Mike Cox, author of the biography of Fred Gipson, gave a program on the life of the author. Gipson’s son, Beck Gipson of Kerrville, gave personal thoughts and answered questions about his parents and the writing of the book.

Staff at the West Texas Collection (WTC) prepared a display on the life of Fred Gipson and Tommie Gipson North, including materials donated to the WTC by Mike Cox and the Collection’s most recent acquisition, the Tommie Gipson North Papers. The display can be viewed 10 a.m.-5 p.m. weekdays and until 8 p.m. Thursdays through December 15.
Mural Brings Children’s Literature to Life in ASU Library

A mural conceived and painted by Angelo State University art students to capture the unlimited journeys children can take when reading was unveiled in the Juvenile and Curriculum Collections area of ASU's Porter Henderson Library on Monday, September 18.

The ceremony, on the first floor of the Library, featured ASU President James Hindman, Ram mascot Roscoe, Library Director Maurice Fortin, and the student artists who painted the 9-by-21-foot mural.

The colorful mural, “An Adventure with Roscoe,” depicts Roscoe reading to a boy and girl whose imaginations take them to another world of princes and princesses while a myriad of bunnies, butterflies, birds and turtles listen in.

Painted in vibrant colors to catch the imagination of children and the attention of adults, the mural resides on the south wall of the Library’s juvenile/children's literature area that is used extensively by elementary education students for classroom assignments and student teaching. The artists used eleven base colors to create more than 250 hues in the mural.

"I wanted to create an atmosphere of a juvenile/children's literature area in a public library," Fortin said, "and our art students did an absolutely wonderful job of making the joy of reading come alive."

Members of Kappa Pi Zeta Phi International Honorary Art Fraternity worked on the project, spearheaded by Nick Schwartz. Schwartz, Ruben Arispe and Heather Pokrant were the primary artists on the project. Other ASU art students involved in the conception and production of the mural were Juanita Exiga, Rita Riggs, Crystal Conner, Alicia Weber and D.J. Sutterfield.

"The mural itself," said Schwartz, "is a combination of two distinct artistic styles to help convey two separate worlds the real world of the children and the dream world they are imagining. The animation style was chosen for the real world portion of the mural instead of the dream bubble portion to emphasize the ability of the imagination to see a better world through literature."


ASU mascot "Roscoe" (left) and ASU President, Dr. James Hindman (right), flank art students, Ruben Arispe, Heather Pokrant, and Nick Schwartz, the primary artists on the Library mural project.
Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction.¹

The twenty-first century will almost certainly be regarded by future historians as a century in which religion replaced ideology as the prime animating and destructive force in human affairs.²

Religion is seen by some as essential to America’s political identity and survival, by others as a threat. Is religiously motivated politics a danger, or the means to purification and renaissance? Does fanaticism inherently produce conflict and violence? How can varying perceptions of religion’s role in public policy be reconciled or clarified? As globalization impinges on American values, what role does and should religion play? … What do religious extremists want? How do they propose to get it? Who should worry about such extremism and why? How might policymakers respond to the expansion and threats posed by religious extremism? … Is there a profile of the religious extremist? Are extremists invariably violent? How has the internet spread religious extremism and fostered the growth of violent subcultures? How do public policies contribute to the growth of such groups? Can bridges be built between mainstream society and religious extremists?³

The 2006 E. James Holland University Symposium, “Religion & Political Extremism in American Society,” brings two renowned speakers—Dr. Scott Appleby and Dr. Jeffrey Kaplan—to the ASU campus to address these and other questions. (For more information, visit the Symposium web site at http://www.angelo.edu/events/university_symposium/symposium2006.htm.)

On October 30, in his address, “Extremism: A Modern Mode of Religious Survival?,” Dr. Appleby will offer definitions of religious extremism and consider aspects of modernity that “ignite” it. The following day Dr. Kaplan will focus on the religious subcultures of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam and address a range of issues related to the religious motivations of political violence in his presentation, “Religious Extremists and Oppositional Subcultures in the Age of Globalization.”

This bibliography offers a small selection of material relating to the overall theme of this year’s Holland Symposium. Publications by the two speakers are included in the first section, followed by sections on other books and documents, and articles. A special section on the United States Institute of Peace concludes the bibliography.

Call numbers of books in the Library’s collection are included, although a number of them will be in the display cases; these will only be available for a 2-hour checkout this month. Links are provided for articles available in full text. Other articles may be included because of their relevance to the topic, but may not be available in the Library’s collection or in full text. If you wish to read any of these, you will need to request copies via interlibrary loan (ILL).

¹ Pascal, Blaise. (1670). Pensées. no. 894.
If religion is "an American value" then how did our Founding Fathers view faith? Jon Meacham, in his 2006 book, *American Gospel: God, the Founding Fathers, and the Making of a Nation* (New York: Random House (BL2525 .M423 2006)), tells that human story, and how they ultimately created a nation in which belief in God is a matter of choice. "At a time when our country seems divided by extremism, this book draws on the past to offer a new perspective ... At the heart of the American experiment lies what Benjamin Franklin called ‘public religion,’ a God who invests all human beings with inalienable rights while protecting private religion from government interference. It is a great American balancing act, and it has served us well." (from the publisher’s description)

Symposium speaker, Scott Appleby, draws on more than a decade’s study of religious extremism and analyzes the patterns of violence and its legitimization by religious figures in his book, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000 (BL65 .S62 A66 2000)). He seeks to balance the overall picture by focusing on the success stories and peacebuilding initiatives. In the foreword to the book, Rev. Theodore Hesburgh calls this work “a compensatory history, urgently needed in the contemporary debate,” writing "it carries enormous implications for the way we think about religion’s complex role and undeniable potential in preventing deadly conflict and rebuilding communities shattered by violence.” (For other “peacebuilding” publications, see the “United States Institute of Peace” section at the end of the bibliography.)


Kaplan also served as editor of the book *Millennial Violence: Past, Present and Future* (London, Portland, OR.: Frank Cass, 2002 (BL65 .V55 M55 2002)). This work examines the fears that were reflected in the popular press, in the academic literature, and in state security agencies in North America, Europe, and Israel that the turn of the year 2000 would occasion an onslaught of religious violence and religious terrorism throughout the world. It contains the first study of three contemporaneous reports on this possibility: *Project Megiddo* (FBI, U.S.), *Doomsday Religious Movements* (Canadian Security Intelligence Service), and *Events at the End of the Millennium: Possible Implications for the Public Order in Jerusalem* (Israeli intelligence services). The essays discuss the apocalypticism, violence and terrorism—or the dearth of same—in the U.S., Europe, Israel, and Japan. The dominant theme is what lessons can be learned from the experience of the year 2000, and what are the implications of these lessons for both international security and religious freedom.

[The *Project Megiddo* report (FBI, 1999), reprinted in *Millennial Violence*, covers Biblical interpretations of the book of Revelation, Christian Identity, white supremacy groups, apocalyptic cults, Black Hebrew Israelites, and militias. This report is also available online, via PURL, from the Government Printing Office’s permanent access site: http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS3578. (Project Megiddo has been cataloged and can be accessed via a link in RamCat.)]

Other Works by Dr. Appleby and Dr. Kaplan:


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4 *The Ambivalence of the Sacred*, p. x.
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Includes an essay by Kaplan, "Religiosity and the radical right: toward the creation of a new ethnic identity."


**Additional Books and Documents on the Symposium Topic:**


Articles on the Symposium Topic:

The Winter 2003 issue of *Totalitarian Movements & Political Religions* (v. 4, issue 3) contains a series of articles on the relationships between political religions, totalitarian movements, fundamentalism and political extremism. The articles are available in PDF full text in the Academic Search Premier database and include:

- Weinberg, Leonard & Pedahzur, Ami. Introduction. (p. 1-10);
- Beit-Hallahmi, Benjamin. The return of martyrdom: honour, death and immortality. (p. 11-34);
- Canetti-Nisim, Daphna. Two religious meaning systems, one political belief system: religiosity, alternative religiosity and political extremism. (p. 35-54);
- Barkun, Michael. Religious violence and the myth of fundamentalism. (p. 55-70);
- Ben-Dor, Gabriel, & Pedahzur, Ami. The uniqueness of Islamic fundamentalism and the fourth wave of international terrorism. (p. 71-90);
- Perliger, Arie, & Weinberg, Leonard. Jewish self-defence and terrorist groups prior to the establishment of the state of Israel: roots and traditions. (p. 91-118);
- Fox, Jonathan. Counting the causes and dynamics of ethnoreligious violence. (p. 119-144);
- Eatwell, Roger. Reflections on fascism and religion. (p. 145-166); and
- Abstracts. (p. 167-170) [presents abstracts on martyrdom, political extremism, fundamentalism and terrorism].

The June 2004 special issue of *Patterns of Prejudice* (v. 38, issue 2) explored the influence both of mainstream institutional religions on violent conflicts, and marginal religious groups who, while not engaged in acts of violence, are guilty of propagating hatred of "the other". The articles, available in PDF full text in PsycINFO and in Academic Search Premier, include:

- Rock, Stella. Introduction: religion, prejudice and conflict in the modern world. (p. 101-108);
- Ruotsila, Markku. Mrs. Webster's religion: conspiracist extremism on the Christian far right. (p. 109-126);
- Verkhovsky, Alexander. Who is the enemy now? Islamophobia and antisemitism among Russian Orthodox nationalists before and after September 11. (p. 127-143);
- Durham, Martin. Evangelical Protestantism and foreign policy in the United States after September 11. (p. 145-158);
- Bermanis, Shai, Canetti-Nisim, Daphna, & Pedahzur, Ami. Religious fundamentalism and the extreme right-wing camp in Israel. (p. 159-176); and
- Obadare, Ebenezer. In search of a public sphere: the fundamentalist challenge to civil society in Nigeria. (p. 177-198).

*Psychoanalytic Review* also produced a special issue (v. 93, issue 2, April 2006), on "Fundamentalism and terrorism". The issue editor wrote, “fundamentalism once had a good meaning, having to do with the roots, the basis of something. One of the things we fear most in violent fundamentalism and terrorism is a lethal, ruthless persecutory spirit that kills without conscience, which does not care for the other's life. The essays in this issue explore processes that help make up our violent psyche and violent world. They are especially helpful in that they include moving and stimulating portrayals of subjective states while exploring more general principles. There is an emphasis on groups, society, and infrastructures of cultures and individuals.” (This journal is not held by the Library and the articles are not available in full text in any of the Library’s databases. If you wish to read any of these, you may search PsycINFO or Academic Search Premier and request copies via ILL from a link in the records.)

Articles in this special issue include:

- Jones, James W. Why does religion turn violent? A psychoanalytic exploration of religious terrorism. (p. 167-190);
- Charles, Marilyn. Terror and truth. (p. 191-200);
- Stein, Ruth. Fundamentalism, father and son, and vertical desire. (p. 201-229);
- Piven, J. S. Narcissism, sexuality, and psyche in terrorist theology. (p. 231-265);
- Davis, Walter A. Bible says: the psychology of Christian fundamentalism. (p. 267-300);
• Beier, Matthias. On the psychology of violent Christian fundamentalism: fighting to matter ultimately. (p. 301-327); and
• Summers, Frank. Fundamentalism, psychoanalysis, and psychoanalytic theories. (p. 329-352).


**The United States Institute of Peace**

The United States Institute of Peace (USIP) is an independent, nonpartisan, national institution established and funded by Congress. Its mission is to help prevent and resolve violent international conflicts; promote post-conflict stability and democratic transformations; and increase peacebuilding capacity, tools, and intellectual capital worldwide. One USIP program, Religion and Peacemaking, helps build the capacity of faith-based and interfaith organizations to be peacemakers in zones of conflict where religion contributes to the conflict.

While most USIP publications concern conflicts and peacebuilding activities in an international context, in other countries, they also can provide background information that is helpful in understanding domestic extremist groups. They could be considered companions to Appleby’s book, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred*, and its theme of reconciliation and peacebuilding. Some examples of these USIP publications follow. Search RamCat for others in series such as “Peaceworks,” “Perspectives series,” “Special report (United States Institute of Peace),” and “Series on religion, nationalism, and intolerance.” If you would prefer to browse the shelves, the U.S. documents call number for this agency begins with “Y 3.P 31:..” The Library has publications in paper and in microfiche; many others are available online via links in RamCat.


http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr76.pdf (PDF) or http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS16784 (HTML)


http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS27086

http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS53339

http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS67565

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**Westlaw Campus Research Training**

A Westlaw representative will be on campus Tuesday, October 24, to provide training sessions for anyone who is interested in using the new *Westlaw Campus Research* service. Two sessions are scheduled for 11:00-12:00 and 1:00-2:00 in the "Library Computer Lab" (Room C302) in the computer lab on the third floor of the Library building. Training will cover the basic research techniques in this service. Space is limited to 25 users per session.

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**Change in NetLibrary eBooks Access**

There is no longer a “checkout” feature associated with NetLibrary eBooks. The new policy is as follows:

"Texas State Library Patrons can now only exclusively use the ‘view’ option for online reading of eBooks. While ‘viewing’ a copy of an ebook no other patron can access the ebook but, if an ebook is inactive for 15 minutes it will become available again for use."
The “Voyagers” Are Coming!
South Central Voyager Users Group Meeting at ASU

On Thursday, October 12, through Saturday, October 14, you may notice groups of non-ASU library personnel moving around the University Center, the Porter Henderson Library, and elsewhere on campus. The annual meeting of the South Central Voyager Users Group is being held on those three days at the C.J. Davidson Conference Center.

The Porter Henderson Library staff will play host for guests from Arkansas, Georgia, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. A session presenter from Wyoming, two guest speakers from Illinois, and two representatives from Endeavor, round out the guest list. (Endeavor is the Chicago-based company that is responsible for the Library’s integrated system, Voyager.)

Voyager Upgrade Planned

Voyager, the Library’s integrated system, will be upgraded the week after the South Central Voyager Users Group meeting—on Monday and Tuesday, October 16-17.

For those two days RamCat will be unavailable, as will all online functions pertaining to the Media and Circulation Desks. Online databases and full-text articles, however, should continue to be available throughout this period.

Although RamCat will be unavailable during the upgrade, there is another way to discover what books, documents, and journals the Library’s has in its collections: the WorldCat database. Go to the Library tab in RamPort, choose “alphabetical listing of databases” in the Online Resources channel. Click on the “W-X-Y-Z” link and then choose “WorldCat” from the list of databases. You can restrict your search to items owned by this library by checking the “Items in my library (ANG, ANGELO STATE UNIV LIBR)” box on the Search screen (see figure below). You may also type ANG in the “Library Code” box to limit the search to items in this library.

"Limit availability to:" section of the WorldCat search box.

The March 2006 issue of the Library Newsletter included an extensive discussion of how to read the holdings information for journals in WorldCat. To refresh your memory about how to use this information resource, see “Looking into the Future ... What Did We See? Holdings Information Enhancements in FirstSearch Databases” at http://www.angelo.edu/services/library/news/mar2006.htm#looking.

We appreciate your patience during this upgrade process, and apologize for any inconvenience.
"Checks and Balances: Classified Information versus the Public's Right to Know" – Constitution Day Activities in D.C.

Peggy Garvin’s “The Government Domain” column, from the September 27, 2006, issue of LLRX.com (http://www.llrx.com/columns/govdomain20.htm) discussed some of the points made by panelists at the American University (D.C.) Library’s “Constitution Day” program on classified government information, “Checks and Balances: Classified Information versus the Public’s Right to Know.” Panelists included Tom Blanton, Director of the National Security Archive; Professor Phil Brenner of AU’s School of International Service; and Associate Professor Mark Feldstein, from George Washington University’s School of Media and Public Affairs.

Blanton is a font of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) history, facts, and anecdotes. His organization maintains an extensive library of declassified documents related to U.S. foreign and military policy, none of which would have been available to the public “had the organization not systematically researched, filed, and litigated FOIA requests to push the information out of storage.” Brenner emphasized that disclosure of documents can be vital to understanding history and identifying the real mistakes that should not be repeated. He talked about his efforts to gain access to documents related to the Cuban Missile Crisis. Feldman, a former news reporter, became the target of a Federal Bureau of Investigation fishing expedition because he was researching a biography of deceased columnist Jack Anderson.

The panelists’ key messages were:

- “The United States Constitution implies public access to government information as the default, but presidential administrations and executive agencies often want to make it the exception.
- “Incomplete disclosure of important historical documents leads to an inaccurate reading of history, from which bad policy is formed.
- “Small groups operating in secrecy tend to make bad decisions. (We have learned this by later gaining access to the records of such groups.)
- “The current administration believes in active restriction of information in order to restore power to the presidency; decisions to classify information may be made on this general principle, regardless of the facts of the specific case.
- “Restriction and classification of information is necessary and proper for national security; however, extensive experience in reviewing declassified documents—some vigorously protected through years of expensive litigation—has shown that too often national security had no bearing on why secrets were kept.
- “It is challenging to promote an intangible such as ‘liberty’ over a tangible such as ‘order,’ but historically there are rarely any true trade-offs between the two.”

During the question-and-answer portion of the program, the moderator and panelists made an effort to note that, “despite their remarks about the current administration, secrecy is not the policy of one political party or another. Various presidential administrations and executive agencies throughout the history of the nation have wanted to err on the side of secrecy. Before they get into power, those same players are often strong advocates for disclosure.”

Related web sites:

- National Security Archive – http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/
- The Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962: the 40th Anniversary (from the National Security Archive) – http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/nsa/cuba_mis_cri/index.htm

And in the academic environment, Government information is a primary research source that continues to grow in importance. This importance is not limited to the social science field, but extends to the physical sciences, the humanities, and even the arts. No one will dispute the fact that Government information is crucial to informed public decisionmaking and the achievement of our national goals.

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Bruce James, Public Printer of the United States,

From the Founding Fathers to the Digital Age: A Look at the Latest American Revolution. p. 2.