AFTER HURRICANE SANDY, THE LIBRARY BOUNCES BACK

Professor Lane Glisson, Evening / Weekend Librarian

BMCC, situated in Zone A, in proximity to the Hudson River, experienced unprecedented flooding and loss of power due to Hurricane Sandy. However, BMCC and the Library were able to re-open on Monday, November 5th, just one week after the storm shut down Lower Manhattan. A crew of essential college staff remained onsite during the storm. Although Lower Manhattan lost power, BMCC was able to set up online updates from an offsite location. When the water receded, the Buildings and Grounds staff and electricians began the work of pumping out the water and fixing the damage to the first floor of the 199 Chambers Street building. Technicians from the College Computer Center worked speedily to restore online services. During the recovery, the College kept students and staff updated using the CUNY alert system, frequent emails from college administrators, the BMCC homepage, Twitter, and Facebook. Thanks to the College Computer Center, it was not long before the BMCC and Randolph Library’s websites, email, and telephone services were up and running again. The last challenge was the restoration of the heating system, which was up and running again on Saturday, November 10th, bringing warmth and joy to students, faculty and staff. The Library thanks all its faculty and staff members who worked stoically, even during a snow storm, in coats and hats while the system was being repaired. We especially wish to express our support and sympathy for BMCC faculty, staff, and students who were impacted by the storm’s devastation. We also wish to thank the BMCC administration and BMCC staff for their excellent work in restoring our college infrastructure.

Information Literacy in the Curriculum

Professor Robin Brown, Information Literacy Librarian

A group of six teaching faculty met with Professor Rob-in Brown (Information Literacy Librarian) and Professor Zhanna Yablokova (English) for three Friday mornings in March. We discussed how to integrate information literacy into the curriculum. Professor Brown did an overview of the literature on Information Literacy. Professor Yablokova presented resources to help the group construct assignments and add appropriate student learning outcomes to their syllabi. The concluding session included a review of a whole variety of available research techniques. The group then set to work creating new assignments and updating syllabi for the Fall 2012 semester.

Information literacy is made up of a whole series of skills, which makes it much more complicated than simply getting an orientation to the library systems, as is usually done in the traditional form of library instruction. Ideally, information literacy needs to become a theme within selected classes, following the model of “Writing across the curriculum.” This semester’s group is a pilot group for what we hope will eventually become a much larger program.
Inside Higher Ed conducted a national survey of over a thousand college and university presidents in January 2012. This is the second year in a row that the question was asked about the “effectiveness of institutional investments in information technology.” Libraries were rated the highest among all the other segments on campus. The provosts in the survey had even higher opinions of the library as a matter of investment of technology dollars. (My guess is that the provosts had even more direct experience with running the library, therefore more informed views.)

Although these rankings were the strongest among four-year colleges/universities and doctoral degree granting institutions, among two-year public institutions, ROI of the library drops to third place, behind distance learning and on-campus instruction. Nevertheless, such accolades should not be dismissed too handily, and as a librarian, I am gratified for the collective efforts of our colleagues.

But technology is not the be all and end all. Library innovation can be achieved with very little to do with technology per se. A case comes to mind of the very attractive signs, or way finders, a staff member put up in the stacks area a few years back. In the “PR” section students see a graphic of Shakespeare’s bust or an icon of a Rodinesque thinker where you find the philosophy section; it’s both visual and visible, and I think it is highly effective. If a picture is better than a thousand words, it is worth its weight even more when compared to letters and numerals, such as a call number. Library literature is replete with findings about how the simple placement of light sources significantly affects learning behavior in the library. That’s why we opened up the floor plan in few years back during our renovation. I believe our library patrons do welcome the convenience the library seeks to offer.

This brings me to a point I wish to make. Our mission statement has been revised to include the following:

“To create positive, meaningful and enduring user experiences and memories that form a foundation for lifelong learning.”

From the standpoint of word counts, the change involves less than 10% of the entire mission document. But I hope the effect will be palpable. A mission document is like a road map. Before planning the correct routes for the journey, you must first decide on the destination. Another way of looking at the idea is that unless you ask the right questions (or set the right goals) you will not get the right results. Our library is committed to create positive, meaningful and enduring user experiences and memories that form a foundation for lifelong learning. But what do students need in their daily visit to the library? We have some ideas. Some of them are real simple and basic. There is no point to give you a list which you would mostly agree. What I would like to do is to conduct a survey of students’ awareness of what services the library already offers, and see how we may make those work better, more available and more convenient. It makes sense to put energy on some proven winners.
Access Services Conference 2012

Professor Joy Dunkley, Access Services Librarian

Professor Joy Dunkley, Access Service Librarian, attended the fourth annual Access Services Conference held at the Georgia Tech Hotel and Conference Center in Atlanta, Georgia, November 8th - 10th. According to the Conference website, “the Access Services Conference is an opportunity for individuals working in all areas of Access Services in academic Libraries to gather information and communicate with other professionals about Circulation, Reserves, Interlibrary Loan, Student Worker Management, Security, and other topics of interest.” She was one of the three recipients of the Fall 2012 LACUNY travel grant.

This year’s theme was “Unlocking the 21st Century Library.” This was the second year that I attended and took the opportunity to present on the topic “Reserve (R) Evolution: The Hows and Whys.” The presentation was based on my years of experience as the Head of Reserves at BMCC which has a very unusual textbook program. I was able to share my expertise on the topic with other professionals in the field. In response to the economic crises currently facing students, more and more academic institutions are attempting to launch textbook programs to better serve their student body. The session was used to describe in detail the textbook program at the Borough of Manhattan Community College which has been in existence for over thirty five years. As a presenter, I further highlighted the advantages and disadvantages of such a program with a student body in excess of 24,000, where the library purchases at least one copy of each required text as well as suggested readings; and shows how it has evolved over the years. Emphasis was given to the significance of the lessons learned and provided tips for maximizing the potential of the available resources. A review of these and other issues relevant to Access Services staff was done, while discussing tips and providing guidelines for those who are considering starting a textbook program or who are seeking to improve their current program.

The Library Association of the City University of New York Professional Development Travel Grant was instrumental in providing financial support to offset the cost of attending this conference.

International Conference on Ubiquitous Learning 2012

Dr. Kanu Nagra, Electronic Resources Librarian

Dr. Kanu Nagra presented a paper in the Fifth International Conference on Ubiquitous Learning at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign. The co-investigators’ and co-authors’ team consisted of Prof. Sidney Eng, Library Chairperson, Prof. Kanu Nagra, Electronic Resources Librarian, and Prof. Margaret Karrass from the Math Department. The topic of the paper presentation was ‘The Use of Ubiquitous Learning Methods for Mathematics Courses in Borough of Manhattan Community College: A Case Study’. Dr. Nagra presented the results of a collaborative grant funded study between the BMCC Library and the Mathematics Department at the conference. She shared the students’ learning experience and emphasized the findings of using Math E-textbooks integrated with an electronic learning support system (ELSS), substantiated as an effective Ubiquitous Learning method to deliver enhanced learning.
News from Media Librarian
Professor Dorothea Coiffe

Professor Lane Glisson,  
Evening / Weekend Librarian

BMCC Moving Image / Media Hub in Helsinki

In August 2012, Professor Dorothea Coiffe, BMCC Library’s Media Librarian, presented a poster at the World Library and Information Congress, 78th IFLA General Conference and Assembly in Helsinki, Finland. Her presentation focused on the BMCC Moving Image / Media Hub that she created using LibGuides. This pilot project was funded by a 2011 PSC CUNY Grant. The Moving Image / Media Hub is designed to help students, faculty, and other researchers find good moving image resources on the Internet and in our library’s collection.

Libguides

Libguides tools are wonderful because they enable librarians to create multimedia content with embedded videos, links to catalog items, widgets, and links to a world of other websites offering motion pictures and other useful information. Sites are organized by tabs. For example, professors can click the Education Related Websites tabs. Nursing professors and students may want to scroll down and check out the link to Google’s Biodigital Human, a great tool for exploring the anatomy of the human body. Try exploring the Online Moving Image Search Engines or the Archival Moving Images tabs. The site is a Web 2.0, open access, one-stop resource for everyone, and best of all, it requires no user name and password. The site also reports on performing arts news from BMCC, such as plays that are being produced by faculty and students at the College.

The BMCC Moving Image / Media Hub can be accessed at: http://bmcc.libguides.com/media

BMCC Library’s media collection includes books, films, DVDs, VHS, and film databases. BMCC Library has three very good databases for Moving Images on our Library Website: Films on Demand, American History in Video, and Theatre in Video. Off-campus, they require your BMCC user name and password. They can be accessed at: http://lib1.bmcc.cuny.edu/finding/databases/video.html

A Research Game for Teaching Sense-making Skills

Professor Lane Glisson collaborated with Writing Center Director Jason Schneiderman on two models for games that teach students how to synthesize information from research. To address the difficulty that students often experience in the process that begins with research and ends in a paper, Glisson and Schneiderman developed research activities that can be used in a classroom or workshop to help students draw connections between the content in a range of articles. The goal is to help students make meaning from the research sources and gain a greater ability to assess the pertinence of those sources to their chosen topic. The game went through several stages of development and trials with students in actual classrooms. The evolution resulted in the game’s current iteration, described below:

Research Poker

The citation game teaches students to synthesize information from research. Each group is dealt a hand of four cards, each card containing citation information and several sentences from an article. The group can discard up to two cards and receive replacement cards. Once the students have their hand of cards, they build a thesis based on the information gathered from the cards. The group that comes up with the best thesis (as judged by the instructor) wins that round. We have played up to four rounds in an hour. The group that has won the most rounds wins the game. The current deck of cards is designed around the topic of globalization, but a deck could be built for any subject.
Dr. Kanu Nagra, Electronic Resources Librarian

What’s New in the Library E-resources?

New E-Readers Program
The BMCC Library launched E-Readers loan program in this Fall Semester. E-readers are available to the students on a first come first serve basis at the Periodical desk. The loan period for e-reader is seven days. Students can borrow one e-reader at a time on a valid BMCC ID Card. BMCC subscribed e-books can be downloaded on these e-readers. Students can also read their own purchased e-books or free books on these e-readers. Help handouts and instructions on how to use e-readers and download e-books are available at the periodical check out desk. Data from e-readers is wiped after every single returned loan. A team of librarians, consisting of Professor Nagra, Professor Brown, and Professor Wadas, are available to assist students and faculty with their e-Reader questions.

New E-books in the Library
- Contemporary Black Biography, Volumes 1 - Current
- World Eras, 10 Volume Set
- Encyclopedia of Emerging Industries, 6th Edition
- LGBTQ America Today: An Encyclopedia, 3 Volume Set
- Gale Contextual Encyclopedia of American Literature, 4 Volumes Set
- Contemporary Theatre, Film and Television, Volume 1 - 52 Set
- Encyclopedia of Sustainability, 3 Volume Set
- Open For Debate, 27 Volume Set
- Class in America: An Encyclopedia, 3 Volume Set
- Gale Encyclopedia of American Law, 14 Volume Set

New Databases: Trial Access
- Latino Literature
  A collection of fiction, non-fiction, poetry and drama related to Hispanic and Latino countries.
- Global Reference Center
  Comprehensive encyclopedia in a variety of global languages including Spanish, Japanese, and Korean simplified Chinese and French.
- Image Quest
  Global collection of more than two million rights-cleared educational images.
- Mango Languages
  An online language-learning system that helps you learn English and other languages.
- Spanish Reference Center
  Comprehensive encyclopedia in Spanish.
- Theatre in Video
  Collection of hundreds of the world’s most important plays and video documentaries available for streaming.

Video Tutorials on the Library Website
Professor Lane Glisson, Evening / Weekend Librarian

The library has three new videos that faculty and students can use on our library website. On the BMCC Library home page, under Research Help, click the Guides / Tutorials link to access the Tutorials page. In addition to Professor Robin Brown’s English Composition videos, check out Professor Lane Glisson’s videos about APA Style, MLA Style, and Off-campus Login. In addition, Professor Lane Glisson has made a pirate-themed library instruction video that is available for use in English courses on Blackboard.
An Embedded Librarian in An Online English 201 Course

Professor Lane Glisson, Evening / Weekend Librarian

This fall, Professor Lane Glisson worked with Professor Kelly Secovnie as the embedded librarian in her online English 201 – 981 course. The goal of the embedded librarian project was to create a friendly presence in Blackboard that would inform students about our library resources and give helpful advice on completing their assignments. Since e-learning students are often not able to attend a library instruction class onsite, Lane worked with the students in the following ways, using the Blackboard platform’s Weekly Folders that Professor Secovnie had created.

Professor Secovnie gave Lane teaching assistant status in Blackboard, enabling her to post content in the Weekly Folders. Lane created guest blogs that helped students find books and articles that related to the class’s assignments, log on to our library’s online databases, and cite using MLA Style. The issue of plagiarism was also addressed. Students were given links to our online video research guides and helpful pages on the Library’s website. They were also invited to attend any of the walk-in library instruction classes that BMCC Library offered this fall.

In addition to the selection of online videos that are currently available on the library’s website, Lane created a 8-minute video specifically designed to be used in an online English class, Hunting for Treasure at BMCC Library, which uses a Pirate theme and visual images to teach some of the research skills that are often addressed in a library instruction class.

In the blogs, Lane recommended specific books and online resources in our collection related to topics that the class was working on, including the Theatre of the Absurd and Chinua Achebe’s novel Things Fall Apart. The students were informed about how to get help at BMCC Library, using our Ask a Librarian chat service and the Library’s Reference Desk. They also received Lane’s contact information where she could be reached for a consultation.

The Courage to Teach, by Parker Palmer

Professor Robin Brown, Information Literacy Librarian

This book builds on a simple premise: good teaching cannot be reduced to technique: good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher.” (Palmer, 10)

The Courage to Teach builds on the idea that teaching and learning is about the human bond. Students and teachers work together in a “community of truth” (90) to consider whatever discipline is being considered. This means we must steer around the structures the erect barriers between teachers and students and overcome the fears that divide us (36). Teachers must also overcome “objectivism” – which makes education a very detached, one-way process, without the emotional involvement that Palmer finds so important (51).

The web of relationships extends beyond the classroom. Colleagues can become an essential support network, validating the inner work that Parker is suggesting (152). Parker’s “clearness committee” structure is very specific and is based on the idea that the truth is within us, if someone will simply ask the right questions (152-156).

There is an amazing amount of material here to be pondered by anyone who feels called to teach. I highly recommend this book. If, after you have read it, you wish to discuss Parker’s ideas, my door is open.
Books With Global Themes

**Novels with Post-colonial Themes**

**Professor Lane Glisson,**
Evening / Weekend Librarian

*Sea of Poppies* and *River of Smoke*, by Amitav Ghosh. (*Novels 1 and 2 of the Ibis Trilogy*).

These novels take place in the 1830s, just before the Anglo-Chinese Wars, also known as the Opium Wars. Ghosh’s epic saga of the Ibis, a former slave ship, features an international cast of fascinating characters, speaking an intriguing polyglot mix of dialects. *Sea of Poppies*, the first novel, focuses on the Ibis’s ill-fated voyage to transport Indian coolies to Mauritius, and the fates of the people on board. *River of Smoke* is the story of Seth Bahram Moddie, an Indian trader who buys the Ibis to transport a huge cargo of opium to Canton, China, risking his family’s life savings. The wonderful characters from the first novel return in the second book, which illustrates the fraught relationship between Britain and China that led to war. Modern issues of global hegemony and the economic and moral problems related to human trafficking and the opium trade are vividly woven into the plot. Ghosh’s eloquent style, combining vivid dialogue, humor, tragedy, and a strong dose of irony make these books a must-read.

*Season of Migration to the North*, by Tayyeb Salih.

Although this novel is only 139 pages long, Salih has packed it with complex themes relating to the fraught historical relationship between Europe and Africa. Salih’s novel can be read as an anti-Heart of Darkness, in which the author has changed the perspective to the African point of view. The narrator returns to his home village in Sudan, after completing his studies at Oxford. He befriends a newcomer, the charismatic Mustafa Saeed, who has spent much of his life in England. As the older man confides in him, the narrator is intrigued, even obsessed, by Saeed’s complex and mysterious past. Saeed’s respectable family life in the Sudanese village belies his apparently violent past in England, involving abusive encounters with a string of British women. The fraught relationship between the colonizers and the colonized is treated in a masterful way by this brilliant Arab novelist. The novel offers opportunities for fascinating discussions with students about the legacy of British colonialism in Africa.

**Focus on Hispanic Heritage in November at the Library.**

**Ned Sublette at CETLS**

Professor Vicente Revilla, in collaboration with Professor Ivelisse Rodriguez, organized a program at BMCC’s Center for Excellence in Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship (CETLS) on May 15th, 2012, featuring the renowned musician and musicologist Ned Sublette. Sublette spoke about his book *Cuba and Its Music: From the First Drums to the Mambo*, which is available in our library collection.

Sublette demonstrates that rock and roll, country, jazz, ragtime, and hip-hop have all been influenced by Cuban music. In an article that he wrote about Cuba and Its Music, Professor Revilla describes the vast scope of the research that Sublette includes in his book. Sublette follows the African musical influence from Cadiz, Spain to other parts of Europe, and eventually to the New World with the arrival of African slaves in the early 16th Century.

Professor Revilla writes, “Sublette’s book intimately explains the passage of the African drum to the Middle East, Spain, Cuba, and then back to Europe. Eventually, the African sound migrated from Havana to New Orleans, where it would influence jazz and other popular music in the United States. Slavery would produce not only cotton, sugar and free labor but also the music that would influence American music: influence that was ignored by music scholars because of its association with the Moorish and African worlds. Sublette’s book is a musical journey across continents.”
### Searchable Reference E-book Databases

- Oxford English Dictionary, Encyclopedia Britannica with workspace feature, Credo Reference, Gale Virtual Reference Library (with collection of many reference books in all subject areas), Funk and Wagnall's New World Encyclopedia and Short Story Criticism are available.

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