On December 12, Wilson Library formally dedicated the A. C. Spreng Map Room. On hand for the dedication were Dr. Alfred C. Spreng; his wife, Wealthy Spreng; library director J. Andrew Stewart; the chairman of the Geology Department, Dr. Jay Gregg; and a gathering of current and former colleagues, students, friends, library staff, and well-wishers.

During Dr. Spreng’s 34-year tenure as a professor in the geology department at MSM/UMR, he taught classes, guided graduate students in their research to obtain advanced degrees, and published papers. He also co-edited Guidebook to the Geology of the Waynesville, Rolla, and St. James Areas, Missouri. While at UMR, Dr. Spreng began the geologic mapping of the Rolla Quadrangle, and since his retirement in 1985 he has continued to expand this work. In addition, he has completed A History of Geology and Geophysics: 1871-2003, which outlines the history of UMR's geology department.

Dr. Spreng was also the “custodian” of the map collection in the Geology Department until it was moved to the library in the spring of last year. He kept these maps organized, in good condition, and available for research by students and faculty. It is in large part due to his effective organization of the maps that the absorption of the collection into the library’s existing map collection went so smoothly.

The combined collection represents approximately 100,000 maps and consists primarily of United States Geological Survey (USGS) topographic quadrangles in several scales, as well as many older Army Mapping Service (AMS) maps. In addition, the library has fairly full sets of several USGS series that cover topical areas such as geology and hydrology.

The map room is in northwest corner of the lower level of the library. A general map of locations and contents can be found on the right-hand wall of the room. Most of the uncataloged maps are arranged geographically, with a few exceptions. The USGS topographic series has its own series of drawers. All of the maps may be checked out of the library.

On the left-hand wall at the entrance to the map room is Dr. Spreng’s geologic map of the Rolla Quadrangle. The wall also contains a photograph and biography of Dr. Spreng and a plaque dedicating the room to him.

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The “Why” of Journal Cuts

by Andy Stewart, Library Director

This spring the library is engaged in a project to trim its spending on journal subscriptions by thirty percent. Why would the library undertake such a large cut in subscriptions? It’s a fair question.

Simply stated, the budget for books, journals, and other library materials has remained essentially the same for the past eight years, while journal subscription prices have risen dramatically. For fiscal year 2004, the library’s acquisitions budget for books, journals, and other materials was $1.19 million. The total price of both print and electronic journals for the year rose to $923,373, an increase of over seven percent from the previous year. This percentage of price increase per year for journal subscriptions has been more or less continuous for at least the past twenty years. In an environment of rapidly rising costs, the library’s materials budget is no longer sufficient.

As the last major journal cut was in 1992, UMR faculty and students have not been made aware of journal price increases for more than ten years. The library has used other means to control costs during those years. For example, the library has cut print indexes that were duplicative of electronic databases. Also, several of the databases that the library funded out of the local budget have been moved to centralized funding through partnerships with other libraries.

Electronic formats for journals have further complicated the library’s journal subscription situation. Electronic journals benefit library users, who can access the journal much more easily from outside the library. However, the cost of providing electronic access can be an issue. Some publishers only offer either print or print and electronic access, with the combined package of both versions of the journal usually being more expensive for the library. For the publishers that offer a separate electronic version, the cost of subscribing to the electronic format of a journal may or may not be less expensive than a print subscription. For those electronic journals that are less expensive than the print, the price differential may not be significant — usually it is under $100 and often is as little as $20. When purchasing journals in an online-only format, the library may also be left without access to the issues of a journal it has paid for if the subscription is cancelled, since some publishers will not maintain perpetual access to the years for which the library has paid; access continues only as long as the subscription lasts.

Other libraries are facing similar pressures in regard to their budgets and the costs of journals. According to an article in the January 2004 issues of American Libraries, Harvard planned to cut several hundred journals for 2004, trimming over $200,000 out of its serials budget; Cornell also planned a cut of about 200 titles for the year. Last summer, UCLA cut over 1,000 subscriptions to journals and faced the prospect of cutting more in 2004. Obviously, even large, comparatively well-funded institutions are feeling the pinch of rising journal costs.

In a time of zero-growth budgets, Wilson Library continues to strive to meet the information needs of the campus. Journal cuts are necessary if the library is to continue to provide the other materials—books, databases, and interlibrary loan materials—that library users require.
I like to work on the second floor of the library, but I can’t concentrate because of all the noise. Why is the library always so noisy?

Unfortunately, because of the layout of the library, interactions between staff and patrons at the service desks on the first floor can be heard on the second floor, which may disturb some patrons. However, the third floor has many small study rooms that can be used by people looking for a quiet place to work. The ground floor is usually fairly quiet, too. If another patron is being disruptive, try asking him or her politely to be quieter. Sometimes people just don’t realize when they are disturbing others.

The library needs more computers in the lab of the second floor—the ones that are there are always busy. Can the library add more computers?

Actually, the library only provides space for the computers on the second floor; the computers themselves are the responsibility of UMR’s Information Technology department. If patrons have questions or concerns about the computers in the library’s CLC, they should be directed to the Helpdesk (104 Computer Science Building) by calling 341-HELP. Requests for assistance with computing services can also be submitted online by going to http://help.umr.edu/.

I wish the library was open later; it would be really great if it was open all night. Why doesn’t the library extend its hours?

Unfortunately, the library does not have the funds to hire the additional staff needed to keep the library open for longer hours. Even when the library isn’t open, though, many of our resources are available online through our web page, including the catalog, databases, and electronic reserves.

Where do the materials that I get through interlibrary loan come from?

All over! Libraries across the United States and Canada, as well as some libraries in other countries, participate in the interlibrary loan system. When you make a request for a journal article, for example, the request is sent out to a network of cooperating libraries. Generally, the request is submitted to a “string” of five libraries; a particular string might include libraries from within and outside the state of Missouri. The first library in the string has several days to agree to fill the request. If it agrees, the lending library will process the request and send the item to our library. If the library does not agree to fill the request, it will go to the next library in the string, and that library has to make the same decision about whether or not to fill the request. Sometimes all the libraries in a string may decline the request. If more libraries own the item, the Interlibrary Loan department will submit the request to another string of libraries (a request can be submitted three times), and the process begins again. So when you make an interlibrary loan request, you never know where your book or journal article might come from!

How do I find UMR theses in the catalog?

Finding theses and dissertations used to be challenging, but the catalog makes it easy. Choose a keyword search, and search for the word “thesis” along with whatever keywords describe your subject. So, if you were looking for a thesis written about Raman spectroscopy, search for “thesis raman spectroscopy,” and anything written on that topic will come right up! As a side note, you can also find every thesis the library has for a particular department by searching for “thesis” and the first word in the name of the department. A search for “thesis civil,” for example, will find 819 theses written for the civil engineering department.

Where is the UMR Depository, and how do I get a book from there?

The depository is actually a cooperative storage facility for low-use materials from the four UM System campuses. It’s located in Columbia, but you don’t have to make a trip up there to get a book. Materials at the depository can be requested by clicking on “Request Item” in the library catalog record and submitting the information requested. Items will usually arrive at our library in three to four business days.

I can’t remember what books I have checked out. Is there some way I can find out?

In the library’s catalog, look on the right side of the main menu, and click “View Your Own Record (Renew Items/Create PIN).” You will need to enter your name, Social Security number, and a ‘PIN’ or ‘personal identification number.’ You will be asked to create a PIN if you do not have one. Then you will be able to see what materials you currently have checked out, as well as the status of any items you have requested from another MERLIN or MOBIUS library. You can renew your books online, too.

Once you have entered your PIN, you will need to remember it to access your record online in the future. If you forget your PIN, you may come to the library’s circulation desk; we won’t be able to tell you what your PIN is, because it is encoded, but we can purge the old PIN so you may create a new one. You will need to show us some identification for us to purge your old PIN.

“The important thing is not to stop questioning.” — Albert Einstein
Need Tax Forms?

The library has a limited quantity of federal and Missouri tax forms for 2003 available at the table in the lobby at the front of the library. Not all Missouri tax forms will be available in print this year. Electronic versions of these forms are available for printing at http://www.dor.state.mo.us/tax/forms or by following the links from the “State Government Information Resources” page in the Government Documents section of the library web site.

Federal tax forms not available in the library can be found online at http://www.irs.ustreas.gov/formspubs/index.html. Before going online, you may want to ask at the reference desk if we have the forms you need. We may have extra forms that are not out on the table. We also keep reproducible copies of less commonly used forms at the reference desk.

As you work on your taxes, please remember that librarians and library staff are not qualified or allowed by law to give any tax help. If you are having trouble filling out a form or need help selecting the correct form, call the IRS help line at 1-800-829-1040.

The avoidance of taxes is the only intellectual pursuit that carries any reward.
- John Maynard Keynes

ACM Digital Library Now Available

Wilson Library is pleased to announce that we are now subscribing to the ACM Digital Library Core Package. The package of publications includes all of the ACM’s journals and magazines both in print and online. In addition, it includes electronic archives of all of this material from the 1950's forward, when available.

Another benefit of the Digital Library Core Package is access to the ACM Portal page (http://portal.acm.org), which is available from anywhere on campus. On this page, you have the option of searching either the ACM publications alone or searching them in conjunction with the Guide to Computing Literature. This service provides over 750,000 fully searchable records from major publishers in computing.

The portal page provides much more than just access to publications and articles. For example, it has links to the ACM’s Professional Development Centre, offering free online courses on a variety of topics in computing. Users can also find links to tech news articles from the Web, which are updated daily.

With its combination of article searching, current news, and professional resources, the ACM Portal site is a useful starting place for computer and information technology research needs.

Staff Updates

Departures

Virginia Schnabel left the circulation department in December to take the position of senior secretary in Civil Engineering’s advising center. She is working with graduate students in the CArE programs.

Arrivals

John Seguin, reference librarian and library instruction coordinator, began working at the library in January. John grew up in LaGrange Park, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago. He attended the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, graduating with a bachelor’s degree and teaching certificate in music education and then subsequently receiving his master’s degree in library science in the spring of 2003. He is very happy to be living in Rolla with his wife Sarah, a graduate student in electrical engineering, and their dog and three cats.

Library & Reference Desk Hours

Wilson Library is open from 8:00 a.m. to midnight every day, all year, except for the following holidays: New Year’s Day, Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day, July 4, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and the Friday following Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and New Year’s Eve.

During the semester, the Reference Desk will be staffed Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and on Sunday through Wednesday evening from 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

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