

Mane Lines

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From the Director

by Eric Johnson

If I hear the term "holiday classic" on television one more time, I may throw one of my copies of *A Christmas Carol* at the screen. As someone who has a healthy library of some 400 or so literary classics in his office, including the aforementioned Dickens tale of greed and redemption, I feel pretty sure I know what a classic is and isn't. And having experienced more Christmases than I care to remember, and having actually been on this earth during the Golden Age of Television, I have become a self-styled expert at judging what delineates an enduring TV "holiday classic." Most screen versions of *A Christmas Carol* are holiday classics. "A Christmas Story," in which young Ralphie desperately wants a Red Ryder Carbine Action 200-shot Range Model air rifle despite everyone's warnings that "you'll shoot your eye out," is a holiday classic. "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" and "A Charlie Brown Christmas" are holiday classics. Even the famous burning Yule Log, originally a seventeen-second film loop of a roaring fire filmed at Gracie Mansion in New York City, is arguably a holiday classic, albeit one probably best enjoyed by pyromaniacs. However, most of the Hallmark Channel treaclefests that show up from Thanksgiving through Christmas are NOT classics, no matter what some advertising copywriter says. I'd put money on the fact that "Grumpy Cat's Worst Christmas Ever," one of this year's entries in the contest, about...well, a grumpy cat (who in reality has become an Internet celebrity), will not end up in the panoply of television Christmas classics, except possibly as the worst Christmas movie ever.



At a time when Christmas merchandise appears in stores as soon as Halloween paraphernalia is cleared out, and crowds knock each other over during Black Friday department store assaults, I think back on the holiday season when I was growing up. Certainly, everyone was shopping, and yes, there were "holiday classics" on television (some of them even airing for the first time), but I don't remember there being such a huge commercialization of Christmas, at least not to the extent we have today. Perhaps this is why I cling to some holiday traditions as soon as Thanksgiving has come and gone, such as watching the 1951 version of "A Christmas Carol" for the umpteenth time, or pulling out a copy of the Menotti opera "Amahl and the Night Visitors," shown repeatedly in the fifties, or reading one of Dickens' other Christmas stories, like "The Chimes" or "The Cricket on the Hearth." Or watching my all-time favorite holiday film, "White Christmas." Corny? Sure. Predictable? Of course. Does it matter? Not a whit. I enjoy it as much each year as I did the year before.

This season, why not try one of the aforementioned classics, whether in print (or ebook) or video? You may be forging a new holiday tradition for your own family. But however you spend this holiday, be sure to make it a classic one.

Editor's Welcome

by Lori Smith

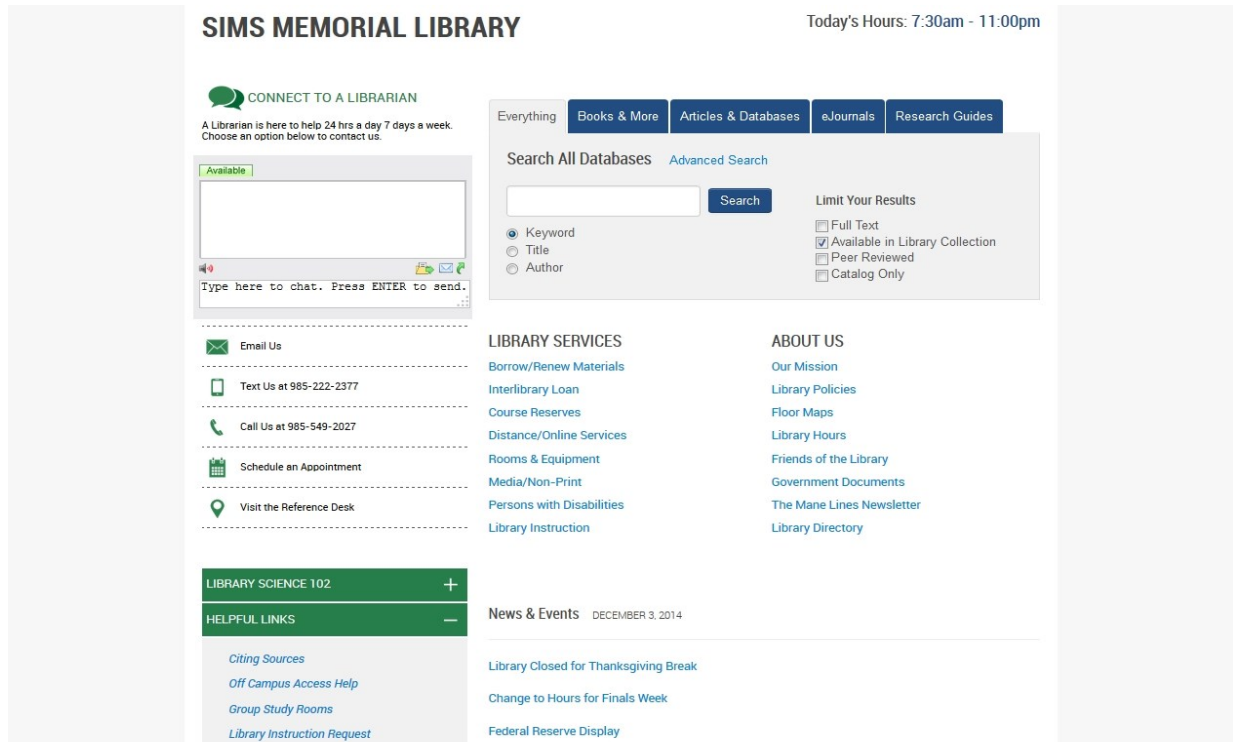
As the chair of the Sims Library Publications Committee, I am pleased to bring you this newest issue of Mane Lines. Thanks to all who provided content.

We hope you enjoy learning about the latest news and events at Sims Library!

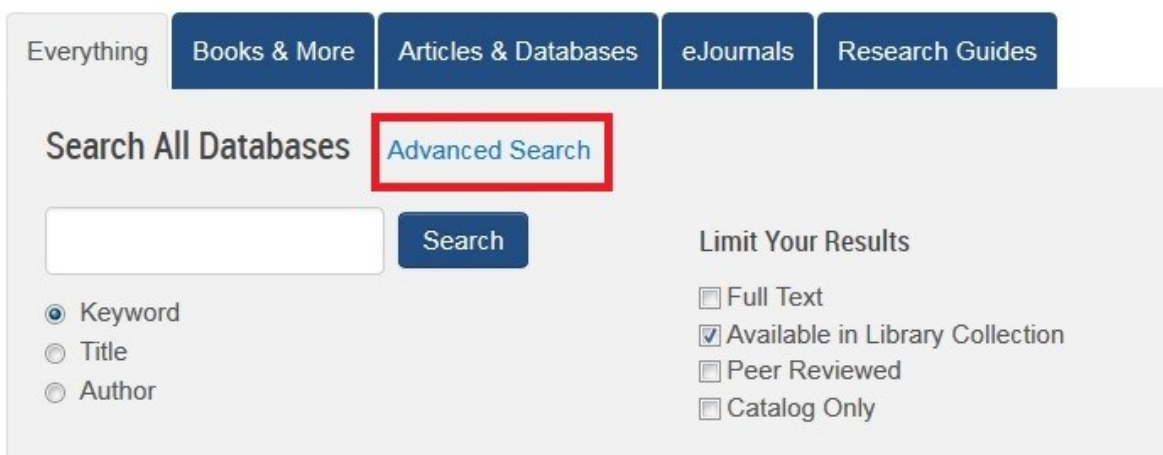
Improvements to the Sims Library Homepage

by Penny Hecker

When the University redesigned its website in 2013, the Sims Library homepage changed as well. However, it has been a work in progress. The Library's Electronic Access and Web Committee (EAWC) met a few times in 2014 to finalize functionality and appearance. Below is a screen shot of how most of the page looks now and will likely remain for some time.



Members of EAWC worked with EBSCO Information Services, who provides most of the Library's research databases, and the University's web design team, headed by Amber DeJean, to design a search box that is attractive and functional. It offers multiple tabs, links, and search options for our users. The Everything tab allows simultaneous searching of the Library's catalog and many research databases. The most recent addition to that tab is the Everything Advanced Search link, highlighted in the image below, to allow quick access to advanced search screen features.




Improvements to the Sims Library Homepage (cont.)


CONNECT TO A LIBRARIAN


A Librarian is here to help 24 hrs a day 7 days a week.
Choose an option below to contact us.



 Email Us

 Text Us at 985-222-2377

 Call Us at 985-549-2027

 Schedule an Appointment

 Visit the Reference Desk



The left side of the homepage features the many ways that users can connect to reference librarians to receive assistance with their information research. Users can type their questions directly into the live chat box, which says “Type here to chat. Press ENTER to send.” A transcript of the conversation between the user and librarian appears in the empty box above. (For more information about the chat service, see the article on page 4.) The other reference services, linked below the chat box, have remained the same. All contact methods continue to keep Reference staff busy!

Pictured below is another recent design change. A style was adopted for News & Events that archives stories and provides an RSS feed.

The widgets or dropdown menus on the bottom left have largely remained the same from the early days of the 2013 redesign. The link “Citing Sources” brings users to a popular and useful research guide that features information on citation styles such as APA and MLA.

LIBRARY SCIENCE 102 +

HELPFUL LINKS -

- [Citing Sources](#)
- [Off Campus Access Help](#)
- [Group Study Rooms](#)
- [Library Instruction Request](#)
- [Forms](#)
- [ILL Login](#)

News & Events DECEMBER 3, 2014

[Library Closed for Thanksgiving Break](#)

[Change to Hours for Finals Week](#)

[Federal Reserve Display](#)

[Classes for Monday 10/27/2014](#)

[More news >>](#)



New Statistical Titles

by Lori Smith

Southeastern users now have access to the digital edition of the [*Statistical Abstract of the United States*](#). This title was published by the U.S. Census Bureau for many years but is now published by ProQuest. It provides more than 1500 tables of statistics on topics from births and deaths, to banking, transportation, communications, crime, national defense, and many others.

A companion title, [*Statistical Abstracts of the World*](#), provides statistical information about more than 40 foreign countries. Statistics available vary from country to country.

Off-campus use of these resources is restricted to authorized Southeastern users, but anyone may use them on campus.

Changes to Chat and Text Messaging Services

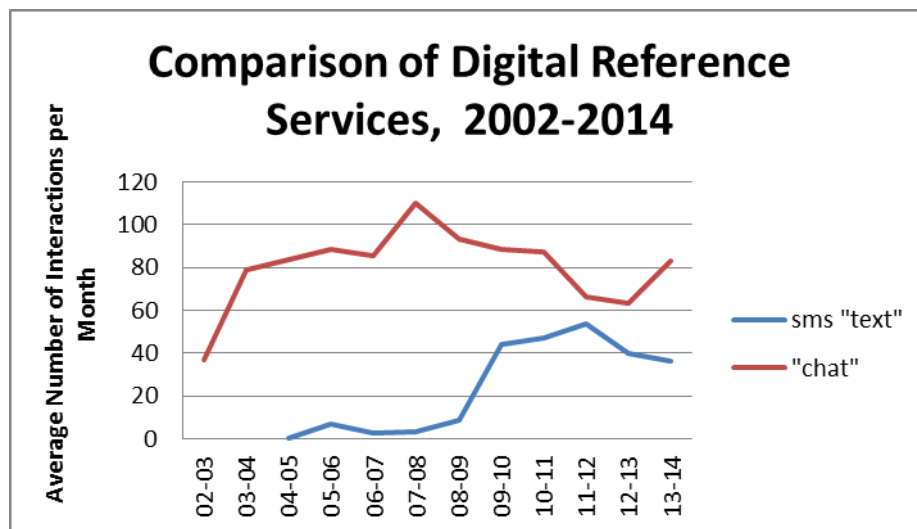
by Beth Stahr

Beginning on July 1, library users noticed not only a new homepage (see related story on page 1), but may have also noticed some exciting changes to our library reference services. Sims Library has marketed a suite of five reference services for several years: face-to-face in-library, phone, e-mail, sms text message, and 24/7 online “chat” services. To provide the text and chat services, the library contracted with two different vendors. Tutor.com provided the system and 24-hour back-up librarians for the online service and Altarama provided the software for the sms text message service. In July 2014, the library moved to a single vendor for both services. Altarama now provides the software and after-hours librarian staffing for both the online “chat” and text message reference services.

There have been several advantages for both the library and our users. Librarians find the online service easier to use when answering incoming questions. Visitors to the library homepage can easily see the open chat box, an obvious and inviting doorway to the online reference service. Additionally, text messages are now answered around the clock and not just when Sims librarians are available to answer.

Calls to the two services have increased dramatically with the new chat box.

The graph below shows the average monthly usage for the two services since the online “chat” service was introduced in 2002 and the text message service was introduced in 2004.



The highest monthly average use of the “chat” service with the previous vendor occurred in fiscal year 2007-2008 with an average of 110 “chat” reference sessions per month. The highest monthly average use of the stand-alone text message service occurred in fiscal year 2011-2012 with an average of 54 text message questions per month.

For the first five months of the new, combined service Sims Library has answered an average of 211 “chat” questions and 14 text questions per month. These numbers are clear evidence that the location of the chat box on the library homepage, and the ease of use of the new system, have enhanced synchronous library reference services for Southeastern students and faculty.



Shameless Plug #1: New Novel

by Dayne Sherman

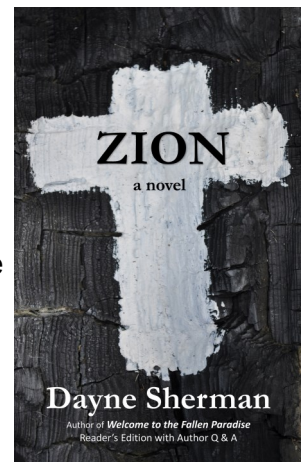
I am a librarian and an author. In fact, I have been writing since I was eighteen years old. In some ways, I went into librarianship because I wanted to be a writer. This is usually not the best route to take to become a writer, but it has worked for me.

A decade ago, my first novel was published to critical acclaim. *Welcome to the Fallen Paradise*, set in Baxter Parish, took me 30 days to write. Though I had carried much of the story in my head since I was in my mid-teens, the book was published a year after the first draft was completed.

My new novel, *Zion*, on the other hand, took seven years to write. *Zion* is a mystery set in the rural South, the story of a war fought over the killing of hardwoods in Baxter Parish. The tale begins in 1964 and ends a decade later, but the Hardin family, faithful members of Little Zion Methodist Church, will carry the scars for life.

I am happy with the new book, despite the years of writing. Persistence paid off. It goes to show that every work is different, and so is the writing process. [David Armand](#), a Southeastern English instructor and author of *Harlow: A Novel*, writes, "...*Zion* is a book you will not want to put down, and it will make the ten years you've waited since Sherman's first novel seem worth every second."

I encourage everyone to read books they like to read, and for writers to create books they would like for readers to enjoy. That's what I have tried to do as an author. Likewise, as a librarian, I am always trying to make sure library users get the best information possible. I think my work as a writer and a librarian serves readers, and I am pleased to work in both areas.



Shameless Plug #2: New CD

by Ben Bell



Ben Bell greatly enjoys his Reference Librarian/Instructor position at Southeastern Louisiana University and gets much satisfaction from his career. While Ben loves librarianship and teaching students, he also enjoys making music, which is a hobby he enjoys along with family life and cooking. In fact, he is currently working on a new CD. Recorded in November live at Red Dragon Listening Room in Baton Rouge, the CD features his singing, songwriting, and guitar work in collaboration with the violin and mandolin work of Joel Willson. A departure from his self-styled retro-country roots, this record is called "Ben Bell: Folk Singer."

Recording a CD has definitely become what people in the industry call DIY, or "Do It Yourself." Ben contracted a local recording engineer to set up at the venue itself. He hired a local graphic designer to create the cover. Additionally, he works with a national CD duplicating company to print his graphics and music to CD. His goals are to be more prolific and to accentuate his musical diversity by being able to depart from the high octane, rockabilly sounds of his old and beloved group, The Stardust Boys, who enjoyed some success in Baton Rouge for weddings, private parties, and corporate events. Instead of monetary success, his goal now is striving for success of the artistic variety.

New Furniture in the Serials Department

by Lori Smith

The Serials Department on the 2nd floor was recently brightened up by the addition of some new furniture, including two charging stations with multiple electrical outlets on each. For more information about the furniture and plans for further additions, please see the recent article in the [Lion's Roar](#).



Federal Reserve Centennial Display

by Lori Smith

A display was done in November to commemorate the centennial of the U.S. Federal Reserve. A selection of materials for the display was provided by the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis and the remaining items were compiled by Government Information Librarian, Lori Smith.

