Library to Launch Voyager System

by Gwen Gregory, Interim Associate Dean, gggregory@lib.nmsu.edu

In Spring Semester 2000, the NMSU Library will install Voyager, a new integrated library computer system produced by Endeavor Information Systems, Inc. Many large libraries in the United States, including such institutions as the Library of Congress, the University of Pennsylvania, and Kansas State University, use the Voyager system, and the NMSU Library is the 500th library to purchase the system. The Library is the first site in New Mexico to use Voyager. Because it is an integrated system, Voyager will replace two existing computer systems: VTLS, which runs the OLE online catalog and circulation subsystems, and Innopac, which is used for periodicals check-in and accounting management.

A task force of eleven Library staff members representing all Library departments is coordinating Voyager installation. Librarians from the Alamogordo and Dona Ana branches are participating, since these institutions share the Library’s online catalog. Task force members attended an intensive four-day training session at the New Library on November 8 - 11, and will conduct detailed training for the rest of the library staff in November, December, and January. This group is also coordinating extractions and migration (Voyager... continued on page 2)

Greetings to Citations readers at this very special time in history. The Library welcomes the new year, the new century and the Millennium Year with many exciting projects: the new Voyager Integrated Library System, JSTOR access to older journals, Prospero delivery of documents to your computer desktop, plans for a new electronic classroom, gathering support for the National Endowment for the Humanities Challenge Grant to build the Southwest and Border Cultures Institute, and much more!

MILLENNIUM YEAR ISSUE

In This Issue:

A Matter of Time
What is the Millennium Year?
JSTOR Helps Old Journals Emerge
Prospero Delivers Documents
Staff News
Students Learn from Library Staff
Got MILK?
Recent Publications
Grants and Awards
Volunteering Helps Everyone
Footsteps through Ciudad Chihuahua
Top 50 Books in Libraries
Library Homes Save Books
The Millennium, Y2K and Libraries
Notes From the Dean

Voyager... catch the wave!
Voyager...
(continued from page 1)

of data held in the current computer systems to the Voyager database.

The switch to Voyager brings a number of advantages for Library users. Voyager includes a web-based online catalog, which will make access to our collections easier as well as more complete. Direct from the catalog, users will be able to see which individual issues of a journal title the Library has received. Voyager also enables us to link our electronic indexes directly to the catalog, so that researchers can tell immediately if the Library has a journal title listed in the indexes they are using. In the future, the Library will explore Voyager’s capabilities to index electronic images and to manage reservations for rooms and media equipment.

Watch for future announcements of public events celebrating the Library’s change to Voyager!

How to Access JSTOR

JSTOR is linked from the Library’s Electronic Journals page at http://lib.nmsu.edu/resources/scijour.html. Each journal is fully cataloged and accessible via the Library’s web-based catalog. Off-campus users can access JSTOR using the University’s dial-up connection to the Internet or through its “proxy” server. Please see http://lib.nmsu.edu/resources/offcamp.html for complete instructions on this procedure.

A Matter of Time

by Jeanette Smith, Professor
Dean’s Office, jcsmith@lib.nmsu.edu

Most people regard anniversaries — personal celebrations of birth, graduation, marriage, or other important life event, or public celebrations of our city’s or nation’s history — as an opportunity to reflect on the past, and plan and dream for the future. We may be working with a time frame of 20, 50, or, as in the case of the recent Las Cruces Sesquicentennial, 150 years. In order to make time comprehensible, people need to break it down into manageable pieces. Perhaps the second Millennium can be best understood by breaking it down into ten centuries, as CNN did in its excellent “Millennium” television series.

Yet, even as time ticks away in its small, great, natural, and arbitrary divisions, even as we mark our days by writing our diaries and our annual reports, once in a while we glimpse the ineffable vastness of time, and wonder at our place in it. The Millennium Year is such a milestone and an opportunity. It has been said that there are only three essential ingredients in a University, and that these ingredients have not changed in one thousand years: Students, Teachers, and a Library. Remembering the Library with an endowment will support a vital function of the University forever, aiding generation after generation of students. “In Perpetuity” really means something when it comes to a Library.

What is the Millennium Year?

Milen-ni-um (n). A Span of One Thousand Years

According to the United States Naval Observatory, the nation’s official time keeper, the end of the second Millennium and the beginning of the third will be reached on January 1, 2001. This date is based on a calendar created in Rome, in 526 Anno Domini (A.D.), now recognized globally. Rather than starting with the year zero, the calendar begins with the date January 1, 1 A.D. Consequently, the next Millennium is not officially reached until January 1, 2001. Despite this fact, much of the world celebrated on December 31, 1999, when the calendars flipped to the year 2000.

During the Millennium Year (January 1, 2000 to January 1, 2001), the White House will lead a national Millennium program that will engage Americans in a wide variety of activities and initiatives designed to highlight our heritage and celebrate our creativity. For more information, see the White House Millennium Council web page at http://www.whitehouse.gov/initiatives/Millennium/.
Imagine the remote corners of the library stacks, where the lighting is dim, and shelf after shelf of buckram-bound journals are gathering cobwebs from lack of use. Our library doesn’t have places like that, but storage space, preservation, and the rising cost of academic journals are problems that the New Mexico State University Library shares with other large academic libraries. As a positive approach to resolving these issues, the Library has become a participant in JSTOR (acronym for Journal Storage), a non-profit demonstration project designed to show that core academic journals can be made available more economically and to a larger number of users through the technology of digitization (see URL and instructions in box on page 2). Access can be provided to the older journals via the Internet, preventing damage through handling. JSTOR is the brainchild of William Bowen, a former president of Princeton University, who now heads up the Andrew Mellon Foundation. The Foundation contributed much of the start-up costs through a grant to the University of Michigan.

JSTOR was established as a non-profit organization in 1995. Its goal is to become self-sustaining through the participation of stake holding libraries that share in the heavy development costs of digitization and hardware support. Today, 567 university and college libraries worldwide are participants. The database is created using two technologies. First, journals are scanned to produce high-resolution bitmapped images; optical character recognition software is then used to create searchable text files which link to the images. The user can view articles as they appeared in print and search them word-by-word as well. So far, more than 4 million pages have been digitized to make 27,798 journal issues available online.

Journals currently available through JSTOR represent a wide range of subject areas, with an emphasis on the social sciences and humanities: African-American Studies, Anthropology, Asian Studies, Ecology, Economics, Education, Finance, History, Literature, Mathematics, Philosophy, Political Science, Population Studies, Sociology and Statistics. Typical titles include: Annals of Mathematics (1884 -), Political Science Quarterly (1886 - ), Sociology of Education (1927 -) and the Journal of Asian Studies (1941 -). By the year 2000, the project will include the entire back files of 100 titles. Titles are selected for inclusion in the project based on the number of institutional subscribers, citation impact factor. (JSTOR... continued on page 10)

Prospero Delivers Documents to Your Desktop

by Cynthia Watkins, Instructor, Access Services, cwatkins@lib.nmsu.edu

It sounds Shakespearean: Prospero and Ariel have come to life, working their magic to better serve Library researchers. Interlibrary Loan/Document Delivery Services (ILL/DDS) is now offering Prospero, a new service that uses the Internet to deliver documents to your desktop. This computer program, developed at Ohio State University’s medical library, handles most of the tasks involved when one university library requests material from another institution’s library. Not yet six months old, Prospero is already in use by more than 100 institutions.

How does Prospero work? Once the NMSU ILL/DDS office receives the document you requested from another library or from a commercial document supplier, the staff will capture the document in a TIF image from Ariel, software that allows transmission of text files. Then, with the newly acquired software program, Prospero, the TIF image will be converted to a PDF file, which is accessible through the Internet. The PDF image of your document is placed on a secure web server at http://arielweb.nmsu.edu.

Next, Prospero generates an email message informing you that your document is ready for pickup and also assigns you a randomly generated PIN number for secure access to your document. When retrieving your document from the Internet, you will need to enter your full email address and your assigned PIN number. You will have a two-week time frame to view your document, which will begin on the date the email message was sent to you.
Students Learn from Library Staff

by Susan Pinkerton, Access Services
susapink@lib.nmsu.edu

During Fall Semester 1999, students in the Library Technology Program at Dona Ana Branch Community College got to see firsthand what the staff at the NMSU Library does. Students enrolled in my class, OELT 202, “Academic Library Technician,” made time to meet with Library staff members, one-on-one, to learn the tasks they perform, the skills they have, and see how the position interacts with and supports others in the Library.

For these one-on-one sessions I solicited volunteers from the Library’s classified staff. Thanks goes to the following staff members who became mentors for my students: Genevieve Bauer, Rose Sand, Myra Brown, Ceci Mendoza, Diane Lund, Mila Smith, Lisa Mendoza, Sandra Padilla, Vita Montano, Vicki Minnick, Irene Shown, Mary Chavarria, Yolanda Chacon-Valle, and JoAnne Vincenti.

The students got a lot of exposure to the Library facilities and services. They learned not only the amount of work that goes on behind the scenes, but also the types of daily interactions that go on with patrons. All of this could not have taken place without the strong support of the staff and management of the Library.

A degree in Library Technology prepares students for entry-level positions in libraries. Graduates from the DABCC Library Technology Program currently working at the NMSU Library include: Rose Sand, Collection Services; Fatemeh Zafarani, Access Services; and myself.

Voyager Task Force Announced

The Voyager implementation is being guided by a task force representing all areas of the Library. They are: Gwen Gregory, Chair; Carol Boyse, Systems; Nancy Turner, Reference/Public Interface; Holly Reynolds, Access Services/Circulation; Deborah McCarthy, Cataloging; Sherry Ward, Authority Control/Data Management; Jean Dickinson, Acquisitions/Monographs; Grace Gonzalez-Small, Serials; Anne Moore, NMSU Branch Campuses; Susan Beck, Instruction; Notice Lee, Dona Ana Branch Community College. For more information on Voyager, contact Gwen Gregory at 646-1808.
Quench your thirst for knowledge with the help of the NMSU Library’s MILK (Millennium Information Literacy Knowledge) team! Register for the Library’s Information Literacy course (LSC 311G) and build a strong brain. For more information, check your course schedule or contact Susan Beck at 646-6171.

got milk?®

The Library’s MILK team, left to right: first row: Don Taylor, Nancy Turner, Molly Molloy; back row: Susan Beck, Marlo Brown, Jan Hylen. Photo, Linda Blazer. Logo used with the permission of the National Fluid Milk Processor Promotion Board.


Gary Mayhood and Genevieve Bauer of Bibliographic Services received a donation of more than 6,000 pieces of sheet music valued at $5,200 from Karen Nichols of Nichols Music.

The Library has received a gift of $15,000 from Amy Lyman as a bequest from the estate of John Lyman, a long-time Library supporter. This generous addition to the Lyman Endowment will be used for the purchase of periodicals.

The El Paso Energy Company has given $30,000 to the Library to support the Border Maps Project. Cheryl Wilson, Special Collections Librarian, is the project director. This project will build a unique comprehensive collection of topographic maps for the U.S. and Mexican border states. This substantial grant is a matching contribution to the NEH Challenge Grant campaign.


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Footsteps...

(continued from page 7)

Villa’s widow inherited this property from him upon his assassination in 1923, and lived there until her death in 1981. Over the years, people came from all over the world to see the memorabilia of Villa that his widow had collected. People brought her other items and gave her a gratuity for touring the place. When she died, the Mexican Army took over running the museum. They have the bullet-riddled 1922 Dodge that Villa was riding in when he was assassinated.

A few blocks from the museum is a park that contains a grand mausoleum for Villa that remains empty — his body is buried in a national cemetery in Mexico City, and his head is missing.

There is a patio cafe near the cathedral and main hotel called the Cafe de los Milagros (The Cafe of Miracles), which is in a restored building from the 1890s. This could very well have been the place Ambrose Bierce spent the ten days he was in Chihuahua City in December 1913.

At the tender age of 71, Bierce had ridden the 250 miles from El Paso alone on horseback. Then he spent ten days in Chihuahua City, sending his last telegram on December 26, 1913, and heading out the next morning for the battle of Ojinaga, rode into his historic disappearance. Bierce, surely would have made the cantina his last office those ten days.

I’d like to think he finished his last definition there.

Save Books...

(continued from page 9)

had done on the previous Monday. In the second flood, 174 books got wet, and many more cart-loads of books were quickly moved away from the endangered area.

The mold outbreak was completely cleaned up by Friday, October 15, the books gradually dried, and things returned to normal the following week. The books will always bear their water stains. A low estimate of the replacement costs of the 520 wet books saved is $15,000. This is conservative, as the average cost of academic science books is currently $60. Many of the books and journals would have been impossible to replace at any cost. The mold count was down to only 800 at last count, and plans are in progress for a more careful monitoring of the building and its air quality. It has never been determined why the mold broke out on the second floor, but there may be some connection with the unseasonably wet year in Las Cruces. Happily, the Library’s recent experiences demonstrate that we work together very productively, even under extreme circumstances.
Volunteering Helps Everyone

by Marlo Brown, Assistant Professor
Branson Reference, marlo@lib.nmsu.edu

With classes to teach, papers to grade, reports to write, and books to catalog, it’s easy to forget that there’s a world outside the university. We, as academics, may present papers at conferences in such far-flung locations as Zurich or Minneapolis, or perhaps we write articles for journals that are read by our peers. This does not, however, bring us closer to local people who are not part of the university. One way to become better acquainted with members of the community is through volunteer work. Volunteerism benefits the community, the university, and the volunteers, both directly and indirectly.

There is a great need for volunteers in this community, and this can be seen as a tremendous opportunity to help others. Some faculty and staff members at New Mexico State University should find it easy to apply their hard-won professional skills to volunteer work. Agricultural experts could provide information to the public on xeriscaping, thus saving precious water. Maintenance personnel might use their unique skills to “fix up” a local senior center. Budget managers and bookkeepers could assist many organizations in managing their funds. The librarians and staff at the NMSU Library have found volunteer opportunities in the public schools, in the public library, with local organizations such as the Sierra Club and KRWG, and in helping individuals in such simple ways as delivering clothes to people in need or inviting someone to Thanksgiving dinner.

The key issue is finding a place where our skills and labor can be utilized to benefit others. Volunteer work helps not only the direct recipients of our efforts, but also serves to foster good relations between NMSU and community, as well as giving the provider the feeling of having done something truly worthwhile. Before the next holiday season approaches, we may find some people in Las Cruces who may not be looking forward to a merry Christmas and a happy New Year. Perhaps we can change that situation.

Footsteps through Ciudad Chihuahua

by Marv Wiburg, Bibliographic Services, mwiburg@lib.nmsu.edu

I had the good fortune to spend two weeks in Ciudad Chihuahua this past September. My wife, Karin Wiburg, was using part of her sabbatical to work with students on computers in Spanish in a technological preparatory school there. I aided her, and also walked about the city, tracing the legendary footsteps of Pancho Villa and of Ambrose Bierce, author of The Devil’s Dictionary of Ambrose Bierce, and model for The Old Gringo in the novel by Carlos Fuentes.

Ciudad Chihuahua is fortunate in not being a big city, a border city, nor a tourist destination/trap. We stayed with a family who lived a few blocks’ walk from the old part of the city where there are narrow residential streets that were laid out in the 1720s. Buildings are built right up to the sidewalk in that area, and houses have walled back yards or are built around interior patio courtyards. The house we stayed in was within walking distance from three sites that are related to Pancho Villa, and one site that could be related to Ambrose Bierce.

In 1910, 32-year-old Pancho Villa was living in a small adobe house at 500 Calle Decima in central Chihuahua City near the cathedral, trying to put behind him his days of cattle rustling and banditry up in the surrounding hills. He was running a butcher shop, and having to suffer assertions from enemies and competitors that perhaps some of the meat he was selling might have come from “lost” cows. It was at his humble adobe casa that Villa was contacted by representatives of the Revolution and recruited. It is no longer a humble adobe casa. It is now a parking lot.

At the other extreme is the Pancho Villa Museum, also known as the Museum of the Revolution. It is in the 3000 block of Calle Decima, and is in a mansion Villa occupied during the Revolution. (Footsteps... continued on page 6)
A survey was taken of the 8,650 libraries that list their collections in WorldCat, the OCLC Online Union Catalog of materials in libraries in the U.S. and other countries, to find out what books they were most likely to have on their shelves. Here are the top 50 of these titles, listed with NMSU Library call numbers. Pleasant reading!


3) A manual for writers of term papers, theses, and dissertations, by Turabian, Kate L. LB2369 T8 1987.


36) The third wave, by Toffler, Alvin. HN17.5 T643.

37) Roots, by Haley, Alex. E185.97 H24 A33.


40) I’m OK, you’re OK: A practical guide to transactional analysis, by Harris, Thomas Anthony. RC480.5 H32.

(Book... continued on page 10)
Library Heroes Save Books

by Jean Dickinson, Instructor, Collection Services, jedickin@lib.nmsu.edu

The week of October 8 - 15, 1999, was a memorable one for Library and University personnel who battled an outbreak of mold and two related floods in Branson Library. On Friday, October 8, Branson Library was evacuated and closed because of high concentrations of mold in the building. Results of bulk air sampling tests taken earlier in the month, received that day, showed that there were species of Aspergillus and also Cladosporium molds in the Library. In one area of the building, the spore count was as high as 400,000 (an acceptable count is 1,000). Since some kinds of these molds can cause serious illness, it was decided to close the building, and take immediate steps for abatement.

The areas most affected were the second floor Government Documents area and the mechanical penthouse on the northwest side of the building. The rest of Branson had more normal, acceptable levels of mold counts, so it was decided to concentrate the containment and clean-up in Government Documents. According to CoOL (Conservation Online), “There is no easy way of responding to mold outbreaks on collection materials. Because the metabolism of fungus is much like our own, what is deadly to mold can also be dangerous for us, e.g., ethylene oxide effectively kills mold but is not safe for humans... Because the presence of mold can also be harmful to people, knowledge of and adherence to safety precautions is imperative.”

Ben Woods, NMSU Vice President for Facilities, explained that the prime intention was to be as conservative in handling the collection and the building as they could be, while ensuring complete destruction of the mold outbreak. The Sun City Analytical and Acme Environmental companies were hired to deal with the mold bloom. A large contingency of workers from NMSU’s Physical Plant (PPD) did most of the hard work over the long days it took to carefully clean everything.

Extensive clean-up efforts began on Saturday, October 9. The main air-handling unit was cleaned, and pipe insulation, internal duct liners, and all air filters were removed and thrown out. On Sunday, October 10, the mold on the second floor began to be dealt with. Ceiling tiles were removed and bagged, and the area above the ceiling was washed with a half-bleach, half-water solution. The air was filtered on the affected floor with HEPA filters. The walls, half of the affected books in the Documents collection and the bookshelves were all wiped with a solution of four ounces of bleach to three gallons of water. All of the Government Documents collection was then covered with plastic.

The building was opened on Monday, October 11, except for the second floor, and the Interlibrary Loan (ILL) and Document Delivery Offices. The air-conditioner for the rest of Branson was not turned on, as it too was still being cleaned. By the next day, Tuesday, October 12, the PPD staff had constructed a plastic tunnel for the ILL and Document Delivery people to get through to their offices. But there was still more to happen on that Monday. That was when the first flood came pouring down on books on Branson’s fourth floor. One of the building janitors happened to be working on that floor, when water started to rain down on the TP 900 call number area of the shelves, and he immediately called for help from those of us who had just ended our meeting with Ben Woods. Because of the work going on in the penthouse above that area of the ceiling, the water being used to flush out the Heating Ventilation Air Conditioning (HVAC) system was coming straight through onto the collection. A team of staff, librarians, students, and PPD workers immediately sprang into action to stop the water flow, cover the bookshelves with plastic, mop up the growing puddles, remove the endangered books from the shelves, and place the soaked books in a safe place to dry (either in racks on the floor, or in the Library’s Wei To freezer). After about ten minutes, the water flow lessened, then stopped, and books continued to be saved from those shelves. 346 books got wet in that first flood; many books nearby were saved from damage by their quick removal from the shelves.

The books that were saved were left to air-dry in another part of the fourth floor, and were turned every 15 minutes throughout the rest of the day and night, with the time intervals widening as the evening and night came. Everyone in the Library, both from Branson and from the New Library, helped tremendously, with a wonderful spirit of solidarity and teamwork. A HEPA filtration system was built on the fourth floor as well now, and negative air was pumped into the wet area. There were large, long plastic tubes made out of plastic sheeting taped with electrical tape that conducted air out the emergency exit doors all night and into the next day. This was to help prevent the imminent danger of more mold growing in the agreeable circumstances of wetness and warmth that the flood had engendered. Several air movers were brought in to conduct a constant flow of air onto the damp floor and under the stacks, as well as several dehumidifiers.

Unfortunately, on Wednesday, October 13, while another portion of the roof and HVAC was being flushed, there was a repeat of Monday’s flood. This time it was in the QL - QP section of the fourth floor. Again, providentially, there was a worker on the fourth floor when it began to pour, and again, the ad hoc Branson emergency crew rapidly mobilized for the same good work they...

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two digits from 99 to 00. Egads! A computerized apocalypse.

* Y2K. Perhaps no other image better represents the melding of Christian apocalyptic symbolism with our current highly mechanized secular society than Y2K. As with previous portents of end times, reaction to Y2K ranges from the skeptical to the hysterical. As I write this essay at the end of November, “Y2K: the Movie” fills my television screen with National Enquirer-like images of widespread electrical and nuclear meltdown. We cannot help but wonder about these things just as our predecessors wondered about the plights of their time. Reactions to Y2K range from that of a hoax perpetrated on society to fears of lost bank accounts and computer meltdowns to complete societal collapse and annihilation. Did these events happen or not? Writing from the other side of the Millennium I can safely say that I am neither a prophet nor a soothsayer and no amount of divination will reveal things yet-to-be a month from now, let alone ten minutes from now. Face it, we just do not know. However, even the most skeptical among us must have wondered at the prospects of “what if?” Now, what has all this to do with libraries?

* Libraries. As with most elements of society, libraries have become so technologically entwined within even its most basic operations that dire Y2K consequences could spell disaster. That we cannot even begin to contemplate a library today without computers, electronic catalogs, electronic journals and billions upon billions of bytes of information at the press of a computer key speaks to our reliance on these frail things. Yet for thousands of years, society and libraries functioned without the devices which we cannot live without today. Libraries have survived all sorts of horrors throughout the centuries and would have survived any computerized conflagration that may have befallen them at the stroke of midnight, December 31, 1999.

At the outset of this essay I state that some are concerned about the possible horrors that might await us after 12:01 a.m., January 1, 2000. Others have no real concern, and still others will gladly embrace whatever comes as a sign that Christ’s thousand-year reign will follow shortly on terror’s heels. With the turning of the last Millennium, most people just went about their regular business and kept society moving at its steady pace, even in the face of all those wars and rumors of wars. Once the crisis passed, and Christians saw that the Second Coming was not manifested in these things just as our predecessors wondered about the plights of their time. Reactions to Y2K range from that of a hoax perpetrated on society to fears of lost bank accounts and computer meltdowns to complete societal collapse and annihilation. Did these events happen or not? Writing from the other side of the Millennium I can safely say that I am neither a prophet nor a soothsayer and no amount of divination will reveal things yet-to-be a month from now, let alone ten minutes from now. Face it, we just do not know. However, even the most skeptical among us must have wondered at the prospects of “what if?” Now, what has all this to do with libraries?

Whether the end times will be truly manifest in this Millennium still remains to be seen. However if not, as with the last Millennium, one can only hope that our society will be infused with a new creative spirit of artistic growth. And libraries will be there to continue their role as repositories for all evidences of these creative endeavors, carrying out their mission from this new Millennium into the next.

Books...

(continued from page 8)

42) The good war: An oral history of World War Two, by Terkel, Studs. D811 A2 T45 1984
49) The path between the seas: The creation of the Panama Canal, 1870-1914, by McCullough, David G. F1569 C2 M33.

J STOR...

(continued from page 3)

But J STOR provides more than storage and access. It offers a completely new way of researching patterns of writing and recording ideas through time. For example, lexicographer Fred Shapiro at Yale University was able to thoroughly document the usage history of “hopefully” as a sentence adverb. This word was long assumed by scholars to be an adverb. This word was long assumed by scholars to be an utterance of sloppy speakers in the 1960’s, Dr. Shapiro was able to identify several uses prior to 1937 using J STOR. His article in American Speech describes the potential uses of full-text electronic journal databases for linguistic research. In addition to language study, the history of mathematical theories, concepts in political science, and sociological issues can be traced over the decades. More modest research can be accomplished as well, including access to a journal article from home.

The Millennium, Y2K and Libraries

by Gary Mayhood, Associate Professor
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By the time you read this, the year 2000 will already have begun and hopefully nothing untoward has befallen any of us, as had been predicted! But wait. We still have the rest of the year to go and then some, according to some accountings. For some, the Millennium conjures up images frantic with untold hardships, mass destruction and thoughts of personal and collective death. Soothsayers and self-styled prophets point to signs in the heavens and in the earth that something horrendous might take place.

* The Millennium. Millenarian cults abound, from the relatively benign, to those advocating stockpiling weapons and food for the troubles ahead, to those who have exhibited frightening consequences in anticipation of the end. The last includes Heaven’s Gate members who committed mass suicide to join with a UFO trailing behind the Hale-Bopp Comet, Japan’s Aum Shinikyo who gassed Tokyo’s subways, and David Koresh and his Mt. Carmel compound in Waco, Texas. All of these groups were obsessed with the end, all expected something horrible to happen, and all focused around the year 2000. Where do these doom-thoughts originate, and how are they connected with the celebration of the year 2000?

In the first book of the New Testament (Matthew 24) Jesus announces to his followers that his return will be preceded by certain signs: wars, famines, pestilence, earthquakes. Then will follow a great tribulation at the end of which Jesus will then appear in the heavens and gather the faithful unto himself. The last book of the New Testament, Revelation, or Apocalypsis in Greek (hence our word, apocalypse, meaning a great earthly conflagration), describes these end times in detail and sets them within the context of a timeline following a thousand-year cycle of Christ’s reign on Earth. Horrible events precede and follow Christ’s reign before Earth’s re-creation.

These potent symbols have become bound within the very fiber of our culture, even to those who desire a strictly secular society, or who hold differing or no religious views. While the images set forth in Matthew’s Gospel and in Revelation stir the imagination of every Christian and non-Christian alike in some way, reactions vary. Placed within our human historical context, wars, rumors of wars, earthquakes and the like abound in every age, but since the Christian era, some have interpreted these things as signs of the end times. Based purely on our own assumptions of time and our own existential understanding of what happens around us, or worse, to us, some see these signs as being worse and in unusual abundance in the later half of the last or in the beginning of this century. Literature and the arts, television and movies, other forms of media and politics—all have dealt with these apocalyptic images of our time, mostly in the extreme, pointing to the year 2000 as the end of it all, in a one big Hollywood blockbuster exit for poor old planet Earth and its inhabitants.

One thousand and two thousand year dates have their meaning in relation to the birth of Jesus and to his thousand-year reign at the end times. Pious Christian scholars began dating their history from that birth event (even though, for various reasons, the calculations were wrong). Rather than use the old pagan Roman calendar, the sixth-century Scythian scholar Dionysius Exiguus suggested using a system dating history from the birth of Christ. It was, however, the English scholar the Venerable Bede in his 725 A.D. work, De Temporum Ratione (On the Reckoning of Time), based on Exiguus’ earlier work, that our system of Anno Domini was fine-tuned.

But the earlier miscalculations remained. Therefore, the true Millennium should have been celebrated in 1996 or 1997. However, calculating Jesus’ Second Coming into this calendrical schemata was a bit trickier since many Christian scholars saw the foretold signs of the end times during their own age, just as some do in ours. Those who saw Jesus in the flesh expected to see his return in their lifetime. Others calculated the years 100, 800, 1000, etc., up into our own recent history as the appointed time. Ends and beginnings of centuries and millennia lend themselves handily to the concept of the beginning of Jesus’ thousand-year reign and the end times.

As we celebrate the end of the second Millennium and the beginning of the third, we naturally draw upon these images of the end times, seeing antichrists in the personae of any figure from Hitler to Saddam Hussein. The great battles pictured in Revelation—World War II and the horror images of Cold War nuclear confrontation—and ecological disasters from Mt. St. Helens and Hurricane Andrew to global warming may seem like heralds of those end times. And now there is Y2K, that computerized roll-over of (Millennium... continued on page 10)
Library Instruction
Critical to Student Success

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NMSU students conducting library research are faced with an increasingly difficult challenge. Besides the usual array of printed books and journals, they are faced with a growing array of electronic resources that change frequently. Printed indexes and card catalogs have given way to electronic access tools on many subjects, some of which contain full-text articles and documents. Increasingly, many more journals and even some books are available only in electronic format. Many of these electronic resources are excellent vehicles for research. But the potential for finding unreliable data and publications is just as likely.

The NMSU Library has been very successful in building a wide and sophisticated range of electronic resources. As you can imagine, students are quite eager to use electronic resources. However, early on we began to realize that uncritical use of electronic products, including the World Wide Web, could lead to serious problems.

To respond to this challenge, we began to take steps to ensure student success in this area. In addition to existing library instruction classes, we began to offer an information literacy course (LSC 311G) at the junior and senior level (see page 5). We also built an electronic classroom in New Library, consisting of twenty-four computer workstations and an instructor's station. The class, ably coordinated by Susan Beck and taught by several members of the Library faculty, has proved popular and successful. Hundreds of NMSU students have learned how to use all library resources critically and successfully.

In fact, this program has proved so successful that the University administration recently allocated $100,000 to the Library to build a second electronic classroom. For some time, we have discussed making the information literacy course available to first and second year students so that they can use the skills developed in this class for a successful undergraduate career. The new classroom will provide us with the opportunity to meet this goal. It is our job to ensure that undergraduates learn to use the entire range of library resources so that they will be successful academically and in their chosen careers. The Library is very grateful to the University administration for its support, and we look forward to the challenge.

Many thanks to our loyal Library supporters who make a big difference in the quality of our collections and programs. We could not do it without you. Best wishes for a happy and prosperous New Year!