

## **BECOMING PART OF THE LARGER WHOLE: THE MARINE SCIENCE LIBRARY EXPERIENCE**

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### **HISTORY**

The University of Texas was aware of the need for marine studies along the Gulf of Mexico as early as 1893 (Edwards 1893), however, it was not until May of 1900 that the University appropriated funds to begin studies in the Gulf of Mexico. That work was at Galveston and included a class of five students, studying littoral and shallow water fauna. A few months later, a hurricane struck, destroying Galveston, killing many thousand people, and all but destroying the laboratory's steam launch research vessel.

In 1915, the University again tried to establish a marine research station in Galveston, when Regent Breckenridge donated his personal yacht, an imposing 114 foot schooner the NAVIDAD and \$500 to convert her into a research vessel to be the nucleus of a grand "Gulf Biological Station." Before the NAVIDAD could go into service, however, another tropical storm hit, causing enough damage to the NAVIDAD that she was sold and the dream of a Gulf marine station in Texas was thought dead.

In 1935, Dr. E.J. Lund at the University of Texas Department of Zoology, came to Port Aransas to investigate the massive fish kill. He constructed a rough lumber one-room shack on the old Corps of Engineers dock on the present site of the Marine Science Institute. The Marine Science Institute was formally founded in 1941, but World War II postponed plans for a permanent facility. Nonetheless, research began in the old pier building with one of the first projects being the distribution, life history and relative abundance of marine fishes of Texas by Gordon Gunter, who was Lund's student. Dr. Gunter's dissertation was published as *Publications of the Institute of Marine Science*, v.1. no.1, 1945. He was later hired as the first Director of the Marine Science Institute. Dr. Lund began collecting books on oceanography, which became the basis of the Library.

The Marine Science Institute is located on the north end of Mustang Island near the Aransas Pass. The Institute grew from a one-room rough lumber shack on 12 acres of land to a 72 acre, 130,000 square foot research facility with running seawater systems, video classroom, regular classrooms, student housing, instrument room, weather station, a pier laboratory with tide gauge, and of course, the library. There is also a four-acre marina with multiple boats.

### **LIBRARY**

The Marine Science Library (MSL) grew from that small collection of books on oceanography, to the best marine science research library on the Gulf of Mexico. MSL currently receives in excess of 650 titles. In an attempt to evaluate the holdings, MSL has compared our holdings to several lists (Barnett 1986; FAO 1996). MSL's serial holdings measure between 60-70% of the lists reviewed. Using FAO's Marine Science Contents Tables as a measure, the library holds nearly

70% of the titles listed at this date. About ten years ago the holdings exceeded 80% of the titles monitored by FAO, but due to journal cuts in recent years that percentage has diminished.

Until February of 1991, MSL was an institutionally supported library when it was transferred to the General Libraries (GL), the University of Texas at Austin. It became the Marine Science Library, a branch of the General Libraries.

At the time of the transfer to the General Libraries, there was one professional librarian, one library assistant II, a serials budget that had been level funded for five years and no book budget. There was a library full of aging books and journals. The series which had survived the cuts of the last five years were still being collected but not bound. There were two staff computers, one DOS 8086 Leading Edge and a DOS 386 Zenith with the earliest version of Windows. The library had card catalogues, a manual check-out system; the books had been converted from a "Cutter type" system to the Library of Congress system manually. The professional librarian was cataloging each book received as a gift or on exchange and all books purchased on research grants; cards were being generated using Word Star word processing package, printed and filed. Labels were being created on the "Seal-Lin" system and ironed onto the books. Book cards and pickets were manually typed and put in each book. Interlibrary loans were being generated on ALA ILL forms and after looking at printed reference tools, mailed to the lending library.

#### **AFTER THE MERGER**

The first step was to identify the needs. MSL felt that the most pressing need was to streamline the ILL system, then to automate the library.

After meeting with the General Library's professional staff, which included representatives from the computer departments, the catalogers, the space utilization specialists, and preservation specialists, the plan identified below began to take shape.

1991/93 Identify needs. Secure access to OCLC for ILLs and cataloging. Upgrade electronic wiring into the library for data transmission. Secure software and proper boards to connect to the Internet. Purchase and install Ariel Document Delivery system.

1993/94 Deselection and moving lesser used or duplicate materials out of the library.

1993/94 Retrospective conversion of monographs.

1994/96 Retrospective conversion of serials. Moving some serials and monographs into library storage.

1996/97 Binding backlog of serials and completing the serials conversion project.

As of this date, each project identified has been or is currently being completed. Project deadlines were met.

## **PROS AND CONS OF THE MERGER**

Probably the greatest single hurdle for me was mentally moving from an autonomous unit to a branch of a VERY large organization.

### **Hurdles to overcome**

- A. learning the politics of the large body
  - learning to protect my territory
  - opposing merger of our collection
  - opposing empire builders
  - learning not to offend
  
- B. lack of understanding of remoteness
  - justifying duplicate titles even though our user community is small comparatively
  - justifying duplicate binding
  - justifying special handling of items shipped between the libraries
  - justifying series to be moved from Austin to MSL
  - making administration understand that we do not have the support services available in Austin and that we need added personnel
  
- C. learning how to justify my needs in writing

### **Benefits of the Merger**

- A. Interlibrary loan system
  - dial-in access using PRISM software to OCLC and access to the ILL system
  - dial-in access using PRISM software to OCLC to gain access to the cataloging module. (Phone time paid by MSI) [after dataline was installed we moved to Internet access]
  - purchase and installation of an Ariel Document Delivery Workstation
  
- B. Book budget
  - First full year under General Libraries, MSL was given \$5,000 for books
  
- C. Computers
  - MSL received two public workstations, one 486 (DOS) and a Macintosh IIsi. These workstations provided access to the CD-ROM network and bibliographic databases.
  
- D. Retrospective conversion
  - OCLC contract to do retrospective conversion of the monographs.
  - OCLC contract to do retrospective conversion of the serials.

E. Support for serials

- First year renewal of journals under General Libraries (1992). Overall increase of estimated 17%; 8% was covered by General Libraries budget. MSL cut 9%.
- Second full year under General Libraries, serials cut was limited to an estimated 4%. Balance paid by General Libraries.
- 1994, 1995, 1996, and 1997 the General Libraries have covered all serials increases.

The 1997 budget has not appeared; however, I have been informed that we will not have to cut serials this year.

- Monograph budget from the General Libraries increased by 12% in 1997.
- Fall of 1996 MSL will receive two additional public workstations (Pentiums) and one Pentium staff computer.

In addition, the General Libraries and the Marine Science Institute have jointly supported a full-time clerical position since 1993. Another ¼ clerical position is to begin in January of 1997, supported by the General Libraries.

## CONCLUSION

Without a doubt, merging with the General Libraries has been extremely beneficial to the Marine Science Library and its user community. The University's decision to centralize all library resources has apparently brought about better management and this library has benefited from that decision. The serials budget has increased by 40%, monographic budget provided by GL was increased in 1997 by 12%, OCLC access was provided along with the software, OCLC retrospective conversion projects and a total of four public workstations and one staff computer all have been provided through the General Libraries. However, the greatest single benefit to MSL has been access to a team of professionals who willingly shared their knowledge, their skills, and time to assist in transforming MSL into a resource available to the University's staff and students on their desktops and available to the world-wide marine science community through OCLC and the General Libraries' web site.

We are not through yet. MSL still has a manual check-out system and still lacks complete access electronically. Our goal is to make all the library's resources accessible from the desktop, providing services and resources faster while maintaining quality.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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