

InfoLink

A Community Newsletter of the Graduate School of Library and Information Science

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Up Front



Crossing Borders

Thanksgiving in Amman

Meaghan O'Connor, Fellow for Dean's Initiatives and InfoLink guest writer, traveled with Dean Cloonan to Amman, Jordan in November 2007 for a special training session for Iraqi library educators. You can read more about GSLIS abroad experiences on Dispatches from the field blog at <http://gslis.simmons.edu/blogs/dispatches/>.

Driving in town from the airport, I saw a road sign pointing to Iraq and Saudi Arabia. "Well hey," I thought, "we're not in Kansas anymore."

It was the Saturday before Thanksgiving 2007, and Dean Cloonan and I had just arrived in Amman, Jordan for a week-long training session for Iraqi library educators. Michèle was leading the session with Harvey Varnet (a GSLIS alum and then-library director at the American University of Kuwait). I was there to provide support.

This was the third training session offered by Simmons for Iraqi librarians. In 2004, Simmons partnered with Harvard, UCLA, and Robert Gordon University in Scotland to successfully apply for a NEH grant to "preserve and document Iraq's cultural heritage." The first session took place in Amman in 2005, and the second in 2006 in Al Ain, United Arab Emirates. Part of my job as Fellow for Dean's Initiatives was to seek funding to continue the project. When I took up my post in August 2006, though, money for development work in Iraq was scarce due to the steadily worsening situation. In the end, Harvey came through by partnering with the US Embassy in Baghdad.

The ten participants were all library professors (five men, five women — two from each library school); unlike previous sessions, which taught current practices, this one focused on curriculum development and teaching management. Each day would have a morning lecture, break for lunch, and small group projects in the afternoon. The intent of the group work was to demonstrate a different way of teaching/learning. The four long days of training were a crash course in management theory, the case study method, and current trends in LIS curricula from around the world.

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Blending in and standing out: Simmons' grant to develop blended classes

This winter, Simmons became the first private U.S. college to receive a grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation's Sloan Program in Asynchronous Learning, Anytime, Anywhere, Online. This program aims to "make high quality learning, education and training, available anytime and anywhere, for those motivated to seek it" (see <http://www.sloan.org>). The \$225,000 grant will help establish blended learning programs at Simmons. Check out the official Simmons press release at <http://www.simmons.edu/about/news/releases/2008/663.php>.

Have your cake and eat it, too

So what is blended learning? Basically, it's an effort to combine the flexibility and technology of online learning with the face-to-face interaction of an in-person class. There are fewer face-to-face meetings, and much of the content is delivered online. The Sloan Foundation chose Simmons for this award to show that a college can offer high-quality blended classes and still maintain the close student/faculty relationships that are such a part of the college experience.

As President Susan Scrimshaw remarked in Simmons' official press release, the College "intend[s] to lead the way as a model for small private schools, to show the best of both worlds — a college that can maintain a strong sense of community and also meet students where they are, in the workplace and homes distant from campus."

Blended will begin with GSLIS West

The Sloan Foundation requires that the blended courses are part of a distinct program. The first blended learning classes will be developed for GSLIS West and the Doctoral Program in Nursing Practice in the School for Health Studies. GSLIS West classes will provide a more flexible schedule for the many students who attend Simmons part-time while working or taking care of their families. It will also provide another option for linking GSLIS West and the Boston campus. The blended classes that are created for the Mount Holyoke campus will eventually be implemented on the Boston campus too, so that all GSLIS students can benefit from the choice.

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O'Connor and Varnet in Amman



"I try my best to listen to what boys want from their reading, rather than telling them what reading should be to them."

Mike Sullivan, an adjunct professor at GSLIS, was born to teach. He teaches the public libraries class for GSLIS and "Boys, Books, and the Library" for the continuing education program. In addition to his teaching resume, he works to promote reading for boys, teaches chess, dabbles in origami, and is writing a series of children's books.

Q: The theme of this issue of *InfoLink* is "Crossing Borders." We'd love to hear about how you have reached out to boys and broken down a border to get them into the library. How do you promote books to boys? Why are boys so hard to reach?

Boys are hard to reach because librarians tend to promote reading for reading's sake. For many boys, reading needs to be connected with something they value, or it will be of no interest to them. I reach out to boys by engaging their interest in activities such as chess, storytelling, or origami, and then use that interest to lead them to reading. The brain is a muscle, I try to tell them; it must be strengthened through exercise if we want it to be of any use. If we as librarians are going to reach boys, we have to understand that there is a separation, a border if you will, in the perception of reading between us and them. I try my best to listen to what boys want from their reading, rather than telling them what reading should be to them. Taking this approach, I think I have discovered a very different view from that of most other librarians, of what boys read, why they read, and how they read.



Tell us about your books, *Connecting Boys With Books: What Libraries Can Do* (ALA Editions, 2003), and *Fundamentals of Children's Services* (ALA Editions, 2005). What inspired you to write them?

The inspiration for *Connecting Boys With Books* was simple. Parents saw me as a male children's librarian and just assumed I would have the magic bullet, that I would know how to reach boys. I was forced to learn on the job. Then, after years of dealing with reluctant and unsuccessful male readers, ALA Editions approached me about writing a book on the subject. I already knew the "how." Writing the book made me then figure out the "why's": why boys don't read as much or as well as girls, and why the approaches I'd worked out helped.

Fundamentals of Children's Services came about when I was teaching a children's services overview class for the New Hampshire State Library and couldn't find a satisfactory textbook. Most were terribly out-of-date, and all of them treated children's librarianship as if it were simply choosing books and doing story hour. My main point was that children's librarians should be less concerned with serving children well, and more concerned with making sure children are well served. That means doing things other than direct service to children, such as advocating, planning, policy writing, and budgeting, so that these things are done in ways that serve the needs of children. Ultimately, the strength of our public libraries is based on the strength of our children and youth services. When I couldn't find a textbook that emphasized that, I wrote one.

Tell us about your work as a traveling storyteller. Who are your audiences?

I've told stories as far afield as Wisconsin and Wyoming, but mostly I travel around New England. I tell to school groups, library groups, social clubs, nursing homes, Rotary clubs, fairgoers, any audience I can get. I tell in the tradition of the itinerant tellers of Europe who went from community to community in small and intimate venues, much like the balladeers who, guitar in hand, sing in coffee shops and town squares.

What are your favorite stories to tell? What makes a good story?

Good stories stand the test of time, which is why I mostly tell traditional folktales. These stories are handed down from teller to teller for hundreds of years, each teller refining the story, embellishing it, and passing it on. The best stories are told over and over again; the rest fade from memory. My personal favorite is "Stone Soup," which is all about the power of storytelling to take bits and pieces from many places to create something magical for all to share.

To whom do you teach chess?

I teach chess in school classrooms, in library programs, and to individual students. I have a competitive scholastic (kids') team in New Hampshire that I train and bring to tournaments. My students have ranged in age from 2 ½ years old to octogenarians. I've taught in juvenile detention centers and retirement homes. Chess is the great connector; any player can sit across from any other player and spend a quality hour or two in social interaction.

How did you get interested in chess?

I learned to play chess at age six. While I was never a champion player, I was good enough to play a game with anyone, anytime, no matter what barriers existed (background, language, age, opinion, etc.). When I was teaching special needs, the headmaster of the school saw me playing with an autistic student who was often hard to reach. That night he announced to the entire school (without asking me first) that I would teach everyone to play chess: students, faculty, and staff. That was the start of my real chess interest, that of a teacher.

Tell us about the chess program you established at the Parlin Memorial Library in Everett.

Do you know how simple it is to start a chess program? I asked the Parlin Library to post a sign advertising a chess program a few days before I began work. The day after I arrived, I had two dozen inner city, teenage boys wandering into the library asking where the chess program was. Most of them had never been seen in the library before. They somehow found out about a program that had not been advertised outside the library's children's room, and they never left. I left that library seven years ago, but I still drive more than an hour each way once a week to run the program because it is just too good to let go.

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Snapshots: Iraqi GSLIS students

Abdulateef “Lateef” Hashim Khairi and Falah D. Rashid AlMosalhi are GSLIS doctoral students from Iraq. Both hold a B.A. and M.A. in Information and Libraries from Iraqi universities. In Iraq, they were university professors in the Information & Library Department of the College of Arts at Al-Mustansiriyah University in Baghdad. They arrived at GSLIS in January after a long, tiring, and complicated trip from Iraq. Here, they take time out of their busy semester to give us a peek into life as professors in Iraq, the transition to studying in the U.S., and what they hope to bring back to help rebuild the library system in Iraq. To read more about their life in Iraq and their trip to the U.S., see Abdulateef’s entries in the *GSLIS Dispatches from the Field* blog at <http://gslis.simmons.edu/blogs/dispatches/iraq/>.

Abdulateef Hashim Khairi



“Lateef” Hashim Khairi

by the militias and the terrorists. They have assassinated many of our colleagues there in our university and in all Iraq.

What was your teaching load?

I taught one class a day for four days a week.

What were the requirements for students?

I taught first-level students and assigned them homework after each session.

What was your biggest challenge? I understand you sometimes had to teach with no electricity?

There are many challenges there. Electricity is one of them. Since I was teaching techniques courses, computers were required. Another difficulty was getting all the students into one class, because there are many reasons why students could not come to the university for each class. Because of the overall bad situation we have there, particularly on exam days, we had to repeat the classes or exams several times.

What has been your biggest adjustment to life in Boston?

Almost everything. Food, transportation, language, and being away from my family.

What is the best thing about living in Boston?

I have discovered that there are a huge number of colleges and universities around us. We are surrounded by a college community here, which is very nice.

What is the worst thing about living in Boston?

Well, I believe that being away from my family there in Baghdad in bad situation is difficult. This makes me very worried about them all the time. It takes up most of my thinking.

What were your goals in coming to Simmons?

First of all, I am very interested in the new technologies, especially the digital libraries, and I’d like to learn more about them. So it was the best opportunity to come here to learn from the people that really have the experience and ability in this field. The second goal is to learn whatever I can from the new information in our field (LIS) and to get back to my home and try to share this information with my colleagues and students. I am trying through that to help in the reconstruction of our country, especially our libraries, which need a lot of hard work to restore so that they can serve their communities.

What do you hope to bring back to Iraq from your time at GSLIS?

Honestly, everything I can get.

How long do you plan to be in Boston?

As long as it takes to achieve my goals, which might be four years.

What do you see as the differences in the purposes of libraries in the U.S. and in Iraq? Do you think there is a difference?

Yes, there are certainly some differences. But libraries have the same purposes in the whole world. At the same time, the techniques that they use to perform these services are different from one place to another. It almost depends on the librarians themselves—whether they really like to work in the library, or whether it is just a job for them.

If you could say one thing to the people in the U.S. and in Iraq, what would it be?

I would like to say that our people do not resent the American people, nor do the people here have anything against the Iraqi people. I am grateful for the generosity of the American people who have invited us to come here and have given us the opportunity of a lifetime. I hope to use it for the good of my people back home, who will surely appreciate it.

Falah D. Rashid AlMosalhi



Falah D. Rashid AlMosalhi

How did you get interested in LIS?

I was accepted into the department after I finished high school, then I liked this field after the wonderful things that I have mentioned in it.

Tell us more about being a librarian and a professor in Iraq.

It was one of the highest jobs in Iraq, but in the last few years, it has become too dangerous a job.

What was your teaching load?

I taught many classes, and they have been different from one year to another. I was always attracted to the techniques courses.

What were the requirements for students?

There are no special requirements for students. I always taught first-level students and assigned them some homework and reading after each session.

What was your biggest challenge?

There are many challenges there. Electricity is one of the greatest challenges for us. But there are other difficulties, such as how you can get all students into one class or exam. *Continued on Page 4*

Snapshot, continued

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What has been your biggest adjustment to life in Boston?

It was the language, and being away from my family. And how to adjust to the new night classes that we were not used to.

What is the best thing about living in Boston?

Meeting many new people from different countries and cultures, and being surrounded by a college community here, which contains the best and the oldest universities in the world.

What is the worst thing about living in Boston?

It is being away from my family, and the cold weather here.

What were your goals in coming to Simmons?

Getting my Ph.D. from one of the best colleges in our field, through getting the best opportunity to come here to learn from the people that really have the experience and ability in this field. Then trying to pay back our country through sharing the new information with my colleagues and students.

What do you hope to bring back to Iraq from your time at GSLIS?

I hope to bring back any new things in our field.

What do you see as the differences in the purposes of libraries in the U.S. and in Iraq? Do you think there is a difference?

Absolutely, there are certainly many things, like the services, and the way that they are doing it, especially through using new techniques.

If you could say one thing to the people in the U.S. and in Iraq, what would it be?

I will say one thing: "The people in all the world are the ones who can make the peace. Whether their governments agree or disagree, they all need one word: Love."

Interview by Elisabeth Zimmer

GSLIS Podcast at NERCOMP

On Tuesday March 11th, 2008, the Northeast Regional Computing Program (NERCOMP) held their Annual Conference in Providence Rhode Island. Presenters included Linnea Johnson (GSLIS Assistant Manager of Information Technology), David Dwiggin (GSLIS Dean's Fellow for Technology Support), Meaghan O'Connor (GSLIS Fellow for Dean's Initiatives), and Constantine Zavras (GSLIS Multimedia Specialist).

The program theme was Education and Technology in Service of the Networked Society, and the session offered by GSLIS delegates covered the implementation of GSLIScast, the GSLIS podcasting program. GSLIScast was awarded funding by way of a PTRC grant, and through this service, lectures, workshops, and other educational events are now regularly posted for students' online viewing, enabling distance learners the opportunity to benefit from events and activities for which they may not otherwise have had an opportunity.

The presentation showcased the implementation of GSLIScast, as well as providing a checklist for introducing podcasting services in higher education, discussing policies with real-world examples, and offering solutions to common problems. Visit the GSLIScast website at: <http://gslis.simmons.edu/podcast>.

Bridging East and West

This semester, the GSLIS administration began providing a shuttle van between the GSLIS Boston campus and the Mount Holyoke campus. This allows Boston-based students to take Saturday morning and/or afternoon classes at GSLIS West without the hassle of putting miles on their cars.

This semester marks an experiment in GSLIS East meets GSLIS West... and no, it's not a bowling match. Many GSLIS West students take a class or two in Boston, but how many Boston-based students experience the advantages of GSLIS West? Several this semester, thanks to a new Saturday shuttle between the campuses.

It's a long day — the shuttle leaves Boston at 7am so students can take a morning class at 9:15. It doesn't leave Mount Holyoke until after 4:15pm to allow students to take afternoon classes. In spite of that, however, many of the students say that it has been a good experience so far. They like the convenience of Saturday class. For example, the Saturday section of Photographic Archives (LIS 471) fit in much better with Jessica DeAngelis' schedule. She said, "Although the photo archives class was also being offered in Boston this semester, the time conflicted with my intro to archives class. I figured that since I have an internship this semester, it would be more convenient to take a class on Saturday and leave another weekday open for the internship."

Another advantage of heading west is the smaller classes. Many people have remarked that the smaller classes lead to more opportunities to participate and learn. DeAngelis commented, "My class only has six students in it, which makes it a lot more personal. The Boston section of the class, in contrast, has at least 20 people in it. The smaller class size makes things a little more flexible and informal, in a good way, and allows for more discussion and interaction... once I started class there I found that it is a very friendly, welcoming, and close-knit community."

The shuttle from Boston to Mount Holyoke was the brainchild of Associate Professor Jeannette Bastian (when she was caretaking the GSLIS West program) and Anne Reid, Administrative Manager for the Office of the GSLIS Dean. GSLIS West likes to offer a wide array of courses to satisfy the diverse interests of students who primarily take classes there. Some of these classes have room for additional students. "This is definitely a 'win-win' situation," said Terry Plum, Assistant Dean for Technology and Director of the GSLIS West program. "It makes it possible for us to offer the range of courses at Mount Holyoke that our students want, providing additional scheduling flexibility for Boston students, and increasing the opportunities for all students to network and share experiences."

There have also been some unforeseen advantages to taking the shuttle. As Tom Hohenstein, who is taking Literature of the Humanities (LIS 413), remarked, "Taking a Saturday morning class and being 'stuck' at GSLIS West until 4:30 forces you to get a lot of homework done." Jessica DeAngelis said she often uses the time before class to get work done in the Mount Holyoke College Library: "The library itself is beautiful and old, but it's been updated with cozy reading rooms and an information commons area. There is also an area with Legos and board games for students to play with, and a café where I often have lunch." All that time in the van also allows people to catch up on sleep, knit, read, or chat. Sound good to you? Keep an eye on your e-mail for announcements about the van in the fall!

Interview by Elisabeth Zimmer

Thanksgiving in Amman

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The first session was, for me, the most interesting. After getting acquainted, we had a rambling discussion about the state of LIS education in Iraq, how the five programs are structured, and some of the major challenges they are facing (aside from the most obvious).

A few highlights:

- The basic degree is a bachelor's, although there are also three master's programs and one doctoral.
- The high schools work on an exam system, and students are assigned to an undergraduate program based on their scores.
- Primary schools and high schools don't have libraries, and the public libraries are in bad shape. Very often, the students being assigned to library science programs have never used a library.

Harvey was very straightforward when talking about the larger problems in Iraq, acknowledging outright that many things simply can't be accomplished because of the security situation. Once in a while someone would make a comment recalling the bleakness of the situation. When discussing a particular program's required course in human rights, one participant said, "Yes, we are teaching human rights in a country without human rights."

Once class was done for the day, we would rest, get cleaned up, and head into town for dinner and shopping. It was quite an experience to shop with such skilled bargainers. Sometimes forceful, sometimes demure, always persuasive, the Iraqi ladies would whittle away at prices until they were satisfied. With their help, I bought far too many things; all the spaces in my suitcase that held course materials on the way over were filled with new clothes on the way back. In the evenings, the women would gather in one of the apartments to drink tea, talk, play music, and dance, and they welcomed me and Michèle to join them. These were wild times — one night they tied scarves around our waists and "taught us how to dance." I have a whole new appreciation for hip shaking.

I had planned to visit Petra while I was in Jordan, even if it meant slipping out one day during training. This turned out to be unnecessary — just about everyone wanted to go, so we worked four very long days instead of five shorter ones and took a day trip out to what is undoubtedly the most amazing place I have ever seen.

For me, the week in Jordan was a perspective shift and an opportunity to put a personal face on the current situation. It also reaffirmed my belief that open, equitable access to information is key to any country's development. It's difficult to say what long-term impact the program will have on Iraqi libraries and library schools, especially since the future of the entire country is a big unknown. The talented and passionate people that I met gave me hope for post-war development. If we accomplished nothing else, we were able to give ten people living in an untenable situation a brief taste of normality.

Article by Meaghan O'Connor

Blending in and standing out

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In the Doctoral Program in Nursing Practice, the program's goal is to help alleviate the shortage of nursing faculty by recruiting more students through increased geographical and schedule flexibility. At the College level, the grant will be coordinated by Gail Matthews-DeNatale and Bradlee at Academic Technology. Professor Jeannette Bastian will coordinate the program for GSLIS.

The plan

Two blended courses will be offered at GSLIS West in the Fall 2008: Information Organization (LIS 415 with Candy Schwartz), and Reference/Information Services (LIS 407 with Terry Plum). In Spring 2009, Professors Sheila Denn and Rong Tang will offer Evaluation (LIS 403) and Technology for Information Professionals (LIS 488). Principles of Management (LIS 404), will be offered later on. In the Fall, 407 and 415 will be offered in the same time slot on different days. This means that GSLIS West students can add a third Saturday course where only two were possible before. Terry Plum, Director of the GSLIS West program and Assistant Dean for Technology, warns, "For students tempted by the convenience of this arrangement, be careful of the workload! Even though a blended course might appear to be more convenient and easier to schedule, because of the medium the workload is often greater than face-to-face courses, especially for slow typists."

View from the professor's seat

Candy Schwartz is already teaching a blended section of LIS 419 (Subject Analysis) this semester, and she's looking forward to teaching other blended classes too. Her interest in blended learning started last summer, when she took a workshop at the Simmons PTRC. Candy said, "I was surprised by how much I enjoyed the workshop, and I loved the idea that you could maintain the face-to-face contact and the classroom teaching (which I thrive on), but also provide flexibility to students by making some content available in other ways. While it has been a lot of work for me to orchestrate everything [in LIS 419], I have enjoyed it, and the students tell me that they have as well. I especially had fun with and learned a lot from creating my first Camtasia lecture last month." Camtasia is software that lets you record voice-over visuals, where the visuals can be anything from Web to PowerPoint.

Candy sees schedule flexibility as a major draw for students. She remarked, "I guess it all kind of goes along with the TiVo approach — you can 'attend' class on your schedule rather than mine." However, she cautioned, "I do have to say that I think blended learning is not for every teacher and not for every student, and I think it should be an option rather than the only choice. It's also not for every subject — I would never teach the digital libraries course (LIS 462) this way, for example."

A second grant for Simmons

The blended learning grant is Simmons' second award from the Sloan Foundation this year. Simmons was also one of six master's-level universities to receive a \$200,000 Alfred P. Sloan Faculty Career Flexibility Award. In Fall 2008, Simmons will begin a program to help mid- and senior-level faculty members move into academic administration. Among other things, the plan will also help reduce faculty course loads.

Article by Elisabeth Zimmer

March — April Events

March 29, Saturday, GSLIS Alumni Day: Educate, Empower, Transform: Preparing Leaders for the 21st Century. Linda K. Paresky Conference Center, 3rd floor, Main College Building, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Register online at alumnet.simmons.edu.

April 7, Monday, Digital Divide Panel (hosted by PLG). Time and location TBA; visit the PLG website for more details:

http://gslis.simmons.edu/wikis/plg/Main_Page.

April 18, Friday, ACRL-NEC Annual Conference: "Media and Popular Culture: Effects on Academic Libraries." University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT. Watch the ACRL New England Chapter site (www.acrlnec.org) for announcements.

April 19, Saturday – April 20, Sunday, Boston Skillshare. This year's [Boston Skillshare](http://www.bostonskillshare.org/) will be held at Simmons, and may include a PLG-led session on library services. For more information visit: <http://www.bostonskillshare.org/>.

April 26, Saturday, MSLA-SIG Conference. Email [Amy Sprung](mailto:amy.sprung@simmons.edu) or [Elisabeth Zimmer](mailto:elisabeth.zimmer@simmons.edu) if you are interested in volunteering: http://gslis.simmons.edu/mw/msla_sig/Conference.

More information about these and other events can be found at <http://my.simmons.edu/gslis/resources/calendars/events.shtml>.

GSLIS CE Workshops

Check out the Jessamyn West workshop on March 30 at Mount Holyoke. For more GSLIS CE, visit: http://www.simmons.edu/gslis/continuinged/workshops/mtholyoke.shtml#mhc_Ho2.

Folks on the Move

Prof. Robin Peek has been appointed Associate Editor for Book Reviews for the *Journal of the American Society for Information Science & Technology*.

GSLIS West student Kate Pritchard has published an article in the next issue of YALS, YALSA's membership magazine.

Petitions to Graduate

Petitions to graduate in January 2009 (coursework completed fall 2008) must be submitted to the GSLIS Administrative Office (PIII) by Friday, July 18, 2008.

You may also fax the form to 617-521-3192 or mail it to: Simmons College GSLIS, 300 The Fenway, Boston, MA 02115, Attn: Graduation. You may download the form at: <http://my.simmons.edu/gslis/resources/student-info/graduation.shtml>.

Those who are unsure of their graduation plans should submit the petition with their anticipated term of completion. If your graduation date changes, please submit a new petition with the new graduation date. If you have already submitted a petition and received confirmation, you do not need to submit another one.

Snapshot: Michael Sullivan (cont.)

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In 2000, the U.S. Conference of Mayors City Livability Award recognized the program for reaching a population desperately in need of services. I've seen kids who spent years in the program go off to college, and even come back to teach more kids from their neighborhood the same lessons about fair play and healthy competition that they learned.

What is the connection between who you are and what you do? What personality traits, talents, and interests make you suited to your work? I firmly believe that my core talent is teaching. I have done many different things in my life, from history to origami, juggling, chess, baseball, librarianship, writing, and storytelling. But whatever I have done I have ended up teaching it to others. I see teaching as a process of guidance and helping others to frame new experiences in ways that are meaningful to them. I myself am an avid learner, taking on new interests on a regular basis, and I love to share that experience with others.

What exciting upcoming plans are on your radar?

I'm most excited to be writing a fiction series for kids based on a character named Escapade Johnson. The series is high on action and humor, following Escapade and his fifth-grade pals as they face down a bear on the side of a mountain, tangle with three witches in a haunted house, face down zombies armed with hot beverages, and try to unravel the mystery of a haunted science fair. Book one is *Mayhem at Mount Moosilauke*, book two, due out in March, is *The Coffee Shop of the Living Dead*; book three, due out in May, is *The Witches of Belknap County*; and book four, due out in September, is *The Phantom of the Science Fair*.

Which fictional character do you most identify with?

I suppose the easy answer is Mr. Peterson, the old professor of folklore in book two of my Escapade Johnson series, *The Coffee Shop of the Living Dead*. I actually wrote him as a fictionalized version of myself 60 years from now. All right, that's cheating. I would like to think of myself as William Dobbins, the stolid and faithful friend and companion from Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, but I expect I'm more like Eeyore. [Interview by Elisabeth Zimmer](#)

For more information...

To read more about Michael Sullivan, visit the *InfoLink* online supplement at <http://web.simmons.edu/~lislive/infolink/>.

InfoLink

InfoLink is the monthly newsletter of the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at Simmons College. Its purpose is to provide school- and career-related information and to foster community among the many diverse people who make up the school.

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Copy deadline for the April issue is Monday, March 31, 2008.