

InfoLink

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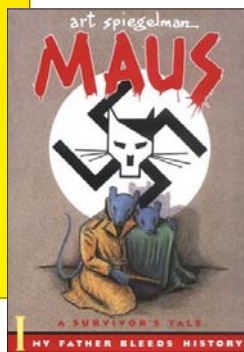
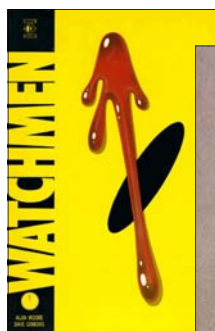
Confessions of a Former Snob

Or, How I Stopped Fighting Graphic Novels and Learned to Love Them

by Sasha Nyary, Dean's Editorial Fellow

I had a Twitter exchange recently about whether *Harold and the Purple Crayon* is a graphic novel. Well, no. There's a perfectly good term for *Harold*: It's a picture book. A brilliant and extraordinary picture book. "What about Mo Willems?" my fellow tweeter posited next. Willems, who also writes wonderful books, sometimes has text in bubbles, and uses the pages as the panel borders. But still, they aren't true graphic novels.

So what's a graphic novel? A book-length comic book, said Robin Brenner, author of *Understanding Manga and Anime*, on No Flying, No Tights, her website for all things graphic novel and manga (<http://noflyingnotights.com>). Graphic novels have pictures and text bubbles, and they are sequential; they tell a story through multiple panels. It's the story-telling that makes them more than just collections of comic strips. (By the way, "manga" is the term for Japanese comics, but manga is not just another graphic novel; it's a distinct artistic format. We'll talk about manga another time.)



Watchmen by Alan Moore, *Maus* by Art Spiegelman, *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi.

Besides, Brenner said, "If you're going to like graphic novels and comics, and champion them, then highlight the actual graphic novels out there, not the titles that kinda-sorta fit."

Champion book-length *comic books*? My inner snob cringed when I got to library school in 2010 and started hearing about graphic novels. I realized I couldn't continue to ignore them. I learned to read largely because I wanted to be able to read the Sunday comics, but I never transitioned to comic books, and I was disdainful of anyone who had. As an adult, when I saw my friends reading them, I was dismissive. Then I read *Maus*.

For me, Art Spiegelman's story of his father's experiences during the second World War was the beginning of my enlightenment. I read *Maus: A Survivor's Tale* with my book group and I came away with an utterly new sense of the Holocaust and life inside concentration camps that I knew I could never have gotten from a book or movie. The book received a Pulitzer Prize in 1992; the committee didn't know how to categorize it so they simply gave it a special award. Although many were appalled at the idea of honoring a comic book this way, a significant high-brow, low-brow cultural barrier had been broken. We also read Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis: The*

Story of A Childhood, and again my world was rocked, this time about Iran, Islam, theocracies — even teenagers. The experience was visceral; I *felt* what she was relating, rather than *understood* it. I was there with Satrapi in a way that even the animated version couldn't give me.

I posed the question about graphic-novel snobbery to Brenner, who was quick to explain it: "Everybody thinks of the graphic novel as a genre," she said, "and it's just not. It's a format. In America, of course, comics were originally dominated by superheroes. But there were huge numbers of genres that were going on and we just decided to forget about them. Romance comics were big. Archie is still one of the biggest comics in the world. Everyone has seen or read Archie at some point."

Brenner, whose day job is the teen librarian for the Brookline (Mass.) Public Library, teaches GSLIS continuing education classes about graphic novels and manga, and the students often express their dislike of the format. "Maybe they've tried

to read something that's considered a classic, like *Watchmen*," she said. "But that's not a book you should give someone unless they like that type of story. It's a fairly grim, complicated, dense book. I would not give it to someone who likes cozy mysteries." Much of what Brenner does when she introduces graphic novel newbies to the format is simple readers' advisory. "There's nothing that says you have to become a giant fan," she says, "but if you want to read one and find out why it's interesting, you need to find one you're going to like."

So what was my problem? I asked. I'd tried reading the *Buffy the Vampire Slayer Season 8* graphic novels, something I was interested in, but couldn't get into them. "Some of that will come with practice of reading graphic novels," Brenner said. "And part of the issue that is always true with comics is the visual shifts with artists. Some of them will be good at leading you through the page, especially when it's based on some other media. There's always the question of, do they look like what I want them to look like?"

I was mostly okay with how Buffy looked, I said, but she kept changing from volume to volume, and I couldn't always figure out which one she was.

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Olga Kulikova

“I like sharing information. I say that if you are an information professional, the first thing you do is share information. And I as a librarian can tell you a lot about my library, my city, my culture.”

Olga Kulikova loves travel, library and information science, and combining the two. She has recently been interested in continuing education, and received a Fulbright to study it at Simmons. She began her six-month fellowship at GSLIS in September. She is particularly interested in exploring what motivates librarians to take continuing education, as there are no mandated standards or requirements for it. Kulikova is the assistant director at the Bryansk Regional Scientific Universal Library in Bryansk, Russia, where she was born and lives today. Bryansk is about 235 miles southwest of Moscow and not far from the borders of Belarus and Ukraine. Kulikova’s English is quite good, but at her request, the language of this interview has been edited.

How do you happen to be at GSLIS?

Q: I wrote a proposal about continuing education for librarians. I am interested in this subject. I sent this application to the Fulbright program — and then I was lucky. I received the grant. Simmons chose me as a fellow, and so I am here. It’s my second participation in the Fulbright program.

How many times have you been to the U.S.?

This is my fifth visit. The first time I was an exchange librarian at the Longwood College Library in Farmville, Virginia. It was 1995. It was the first time for me in a foreign country. Everything was unknown. It was an unforgettable experience for me. I made many friends.

I also participated in the Small Town Library Project of Mortenson Center for International Library Programs at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. We learned about libraries in small towns and rural communities, how they work with their government, with their community, with their patrons. The main reason for this project was to show how a library can be the center of a community. I was excited. We visited many libraries — small, academic, museum. We saw how librarians serve people without homes.

What is your library like?

The Bryansk Regional Scientific Universal Library, is run by the state. Russia has 83 regions, each of which has a main library. This is the main one in our region. We supervise the whole public library system. Our region has more than 600 of these. We supervise research and work on computer initiatives with others. We connect with university and school libraries. I am the assistant director of scientific and research work; I deal with staff training, professional development, management, and research work, as well as the authorities and the government on how to support libraries. I work with library training for the whole system.

Can you tell me more about your library?

Our library is young. It is only 67 years old. It’s interesting that

my city is quite old, more than a thousand years old. Our library was founded at the end of World War II, in 1944. Can you understand that a library was founded during wartime? World War II was finished in 1945. Our city was liberated in 1943, in September, and the library was founded in 1944 and opened their doors for users at the beginning of 1945. Can you see? Our city was destroyed completely. There was no good place for libraries. But that first year when our city was liberated, it was decided to open a library. During wartime.

I am proud of my library. It combines the functions of academic and public institutions. Ours is the main informational, cultural, and educational center of the region. I can talk about it for a long time. It’s quite young, as a main library. It’s well known

throughout our profession. My native city was the library capital of Russia in 2007. We were the host of the main Russian library conference, which we hosted with the Ministry of Culture and Russian Library Association. The second interesting thing is that we organized a Russian congress for rural librarians, to support the rural small libraries, in 2009. We decided to form the congress to help and support rural libraries.

And there are other things that I’m proud of. The library regularly participates in many international projects. We have a strong international connection with colleagues

around the world. The library initiates its own propositions and actively participates in various programs of international centers and organizations, and is a cross-cultural communication center. Nowadays a German reading room, American Corner, Slavic literature room, and Irish and Polish literature corners are accessible to the population of the Bryansk region. The library exchanges books with the Library of Congress, the Bavarian National Library (Germany), the French Municipal Library Jouelles-Tours, and Konin Public Municipal Library (Poland).

Where did you get your doctorate, and what did you write your dissertation on?

I have my Ph.D. in library science. I did post-graduate work in Orel State Institute of Culture, and I defended my dissertation in the Moscow State University of Culture. Bryansk is on the border between Belarus and Ukraine, between Moscow and Kiev. We have strong connections between our colleagues in these other countries, and my dissertation was about this connection, our liaisons, our resources, specific features, a cultural area that was created by librarians on the border, a frontier. We have a special liaison; we are friendly with each other. We have a lot in common historically and culturally. In the frontier area they mix all the languages and speak their own language.

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Olga Kulikova
photo courtesy of Olga Kulikova



Research: Phase One of Your Job Search

It is never too early to start targeting potential employers and gathering information about organizations so you will be prepared when you apply for jobs. Research is a proactive job-search technique that many job seekers overlook. The real advantage of this preliminary research is to gather credible information to help you become informed about potential employers, the current job market, and new trends in the field. By using online research tools, you will also locate library professionals, including Simmons alumni, working in various library settings. Building a strong professional network with these contacts will help you understand the potential career paths in the field.

Questions to investigate:

1. Who are the major employers in the geographic areas I am targeting?
2. Which organizations hire new graduates with my skills?
3. Are there Simmons GSLIS alums working at organizations I am targeting?
4. Which professional associations should I join?
5. Which professional conferences can I attend to expand my network while in graduate school?
6. Do I have any LinkedIn connections in the geographic areas I have targeted?
7. Did I join all the applicable LinkedIn groups to expand my network of professionals?

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW FIRST

Being armed with good information is the first step of an effective job search. Here are some research tips:

Reflect on your ideal job. Consider the work environment, the size of organization, and the type of patrons the organization serves. Identify the top three geographic areas in which you would like to live and work. Look at this website when considering relocating to a new geographic area:
http://libfs2.simmons.edu/libraryguides/index.php/Relocation_and_Telecommuting#Relocation_Descriptive_Information

Examine the market trends. Get familiar with what changes are occurring in the field. Determine the demand for library professionals and best locations for job opportunities. Review the Simmons Library Market Trends Career Guide for an extensive list of articles describing future trends and anticipated changes: http://libfs2.simmons.edu/libraryguides/index.php/Library_and_Information_Science;_Archives_Careers#Market_Trends. Glance at professional journals, free e-newsletters, and publications from professional associations to gain further insight from professionals and scholars.

Identify job titles and learn the buzzwords. Peruse postings on job banks to learn about the requirements and technical knowledge for specific job titles. Check out the postings and look at the type of buzzwords and career-specific wording used by

employers. Visit websites of employment agencies that specialize in placing library science professionals in temporary and permanent positions and view the job descriptions. Here are some sites to visit:

- America's Career InfoNet: <http://www.acinet.org/>
- Simmons Library list of Job Banks: http://libfs2.simmons.edu/libraryguides/index.php/Library_and_Information_Science;_Archives_Careers#Job_Hunting
- InfoCurrent: http://www.corestaff.com/Solutions/Pages/Specialized_Services/Infocurrent.aspx

Expand your network. First reach out to “warm contacts.” These are the people you know — such as your former or current supervisors, co-workers, fellow students, professors — and ask for advice, information, and referrals. Reach out to recent graduates and young professionals working in the area that you have a special interest in learning about. Get involved in student groups: <http://www.simmons.edu/gslis/resources/groups.php>. Register for Simmons Alumnet: <http://alumnet.simmons.edu/>. Join LinkedIn Groups (ex. Simmons College GSLIS Group, ALA, LISSA), and visit the LinkedIn learning center for tips: <http://learn.linkedin.com/students/step-4/>.

Build your profile on LinkedIn, one of the largest social networking sites for professionals with more than 100 million members. Your profile is a summary of your academic credentials, internships, and professional experience.

Investigate typical salary ranges. Learn about typical salary ranges for recent graduates and mid-career professionals. Make sure to talk with people familiar with the library field, including recent alums, networking contacts, and especially recruiters who know up-to-date salaries. Here are some links to try:

- Simmons Library Salary Information: http://libfs2.simmons.edu/libraryguides/index.php/Salary_Information
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics: <http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes254021.htm>
- Riley Guide: <http://www.rileyguide.com/salguides.html>
- Salary Calculator: <http://about.salary.com/>

CareerSearch

This database is useful for targeting jobs in corporate or academic libraries. It helps you identify employers by location and category. Also, it provides specific contact names that can be helpful when you are ready to set up informational interviews or contact employers directly. A new feature quickly locates professionals on LinkedIn by identifying your first and second connections and group affiliations. Find the database at: http://libfs2.simmons.edu/libraryguides/index.php/Template:Career_Search. For Public Libraries, visit <http://www.publiclibraries.com>. This database provides a list of libraries by state (categories include Public, State, Presidential, College and Law) and international (National Libraries).

Contact the Career Education Center to schedule an appointment with a Career Counselor: 617-521-2488 or careers@simmons.edu.

Article by JoAnne Amann, Career Counselor

Confessions of a Former Snob (cont.)

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“One of the things that comics fans get into is that artists change every six months or so,” Brenner said. “You have to get used to the fact that the characters are going to look different. Artists get hired for a particular stint, so they get eight issues or six issues, say.” It’s the nature of the mostly freelance industry, she says, but often the artists don’t want to stay on one project, either. They want to build up a portfolio or try a different style of comic.

At the same time, artists get known for particular styles. “The major artists are distinct, so as soon as you open a book, you say, oh, this is a Jim Lee comic,” Brenner said. Inevitably, not every graphic novel reader cares for every artist, even some of the best in the business. “Frank Quitely is incredibly well known,” Brenner said. “He has a particular talent for laying out comics in a particular way. They’re beautiful. His layouts are famous. I admire his talent for layout, but personally I hate the way he draws characters. But if the comic is well written, I’m going to keep reading it. Just because the art changed isn’t going to put me off. It’s just a personal preference.”

I came to appreciate graphic novels as a format when I took Young Adult Literature (LIS 483) with GSLIS professor of practice Linda W. Braun, so I continued the discussion with her. “I define a graphic novel as a novel that is in mostly visual form,” Braun said. “*Maus* has some text to help sell the story, but actually the story is told primarily told through the visuals. It has a beginning, middle, and end, and we read it as we would read text. Except we read the pictures.”

That’s the challenge of graphic novels, I have found. I forget to read the pictures. What’s with that? Turns out reading visuals is a learned skill, just like learning to read. “Just because something has a picture, because something is visual, doesn’t mean it’s easy to read,” Braun said. “It’s the same with text. Just because it uses words and we learn to read in first grade doesn’t mean it’s easy. You need visual literacy just as you need textual literacy.”

And not just visual and textual literacies, Braun said. “Have you heard the terms ‘transliteracy’ and ‘transmedia’? The idea is that there are all these literacies you need to be able to transcend, translate, transform. Trans- all of them. You need to be able to read pictures, and images, and movies, and TV. You need to be able to read text. You need to be able to understand what it all means, comprehend it. And be confident in it.”

Who reads graphic novels, then? “Anyone who likes visuals,” Braun said. “But I think it’s a lot of people who aren’t confident or comfortable with text, and want story, and this is how they get it.” Brenner agreed that graphic novels can be appealing to reluctant readers, but she doesn’t see that population as the primary readers. “Many readers are adding graphic novels to the mix of what they read,” she said. “And my best graphic novel readers are my best readers period. They read anything and everything.” Graphic novels are just a delivery method, just one more way to get a great story.

They are certainly becoming mainstream, Braun said, and what is key is letting people know they exist and that it’s okay to read them. She suggested that librarians promote graphic novels by including them on every resource list — *Maus* should certainly be on a list of World War II materials, for instance. “Including them shows that these are valid reading materials,” she said, “that they are a part of the whole collection. We need to make them available, not just for pleasure, but also for information.”

Braun also advocates that librarians educate themselves, talk the graphic novels up, and show teachers what is available and why it might be useful. “Many librarians have the materials but they don’t understand why they have them,” she said. “They just know that they’re popular. But why are they popular, and why does it make a difference? What’s the benefit for young people? Or old people? We should say to teachers, ‘I put the graphic version of *Beowulf* on this list of classics, and here’s why.’”

Now, wait just a second. Doesn’t an AP high school English class have to read the real thing?

“What makes it the real thing?” Braun says. “The original format? Isn’t it the story? The words are important, but they also are what turns everybody off. So why not be able to get that story, and talk about that story without being challenged? They’re not going to learn anything if they just don’t get it.”

Okay, I’m sold. Time to work on my visual literacy. *Buffy*, here I come. ▲

Clare Davitt, Fellow for Dean’s Initiatives



Clare Davitt is still astounded to find herself in the position of Fellow for Dean’s Initiatives. After wanting to attend Simmons GSLIS for years — even applying, being accepted and then deferring twice — the fact that she is not only finally in Boston and in the program but also in the exciting role of the Fellow is more than she ever expected. “I’ve wanted to get my MLIS ever since hearing an NPR report that mentioned their Broadcast Librarian. My immediate thought was, ‘That’s a job? I want to do that!’” Davitt grew up in Maine and then moved out west for an AmeriCorps position more than ten years ago. She lived in California, Washington, and New Mexico before coming back East this May. She has also traveled outside the US, most recently for her work at GSLIS when she went to Seoul, South Korea in August with other GSLIS students and Dean Cloonan for the Yonsei University Summer Program. “Getting to go to Korea for work, visiting some of their cutting-edge libraries, and also getting to eat amazing food is more than I would ever have expected from a fellowship.” Davitt has a BA from The Evergreen State College in Olympia, WA, and an MA from St. John’s College in Santa Fe, New Mexico. When she is not trying to balance the work load of the fellowship with her classwork she loves hiking, sampling the craft beers of the Northeast, and exploring all the variety Boston has to offer.

Why Some Resume Jargon is Important; or, How I Started My LIS Career at Simmons College



Cheryl Kohen '09LS is currently the Emerging Technology Librarian at Daytona State College in Florida, but she used to be the Career Resource Librarian at Simmons College. She also happens to be a Board Liaison for the GSLIS Alumni Association Board and a former LISSA President. In a new, ongoing column, we have asked her to share some professional tips she learned from her former role as a career librarian and experiences she has gathered in becoming a professional in the LIS field.

Life-long learning. This is career jargon that we see on resumes and hear in interviews all the time. And even though it's becoming cliché, it's still a relevant term, especially for information professionals. We read this in articles, it gets discussed in the classroom and at conference sessions, that as traditional library roles change so too must we continue to learn and change.

As my current job title alludes, I spend much of my time reading about new and fantastic (or not-so-fantastic) technology trends in libraries and higher education. To remain relevant and vital, I am a life-long learner, exploring what other libraries and librarians are doing in our field to meet our users where they are and support their ever-increasing and diversifying needs. Employers like this type of language. It shows initiative. It speaks of the future, and how libraries are now more important than ever in the digital and information age.

“During the learning process, remain open minded.”

A phrase that I repeated twice in my job interview at Daytona State College (my current place of work) was this: *I don't know everything, but I'm willing to learn anything.* As I spoke these words, I saw the hiring committee nodding along with me. I thought, *Bingo*, my brand was formed. Or at least a fundamental part of my brand. Here I was applying for a job that literally states that I will have an expertise in anything new. Guess what? That's not exactly possible. But what is possible? The willingness to continue to explore.

Let me tell you a story about how I even got started with Library and Information Science. I am an alumna of Simmons College, beginning my academic pursuits as a double major in English and Philosophy (I like to read and analyze). While writing my senior thesis on Samuel Beckett's "Waiting for Godot," I stumbled across my future profession of librarianship. Writing my thesis was the first time that I needed secondary resources during my four years of college. Before that, my professors had wanted my classmates and me to respond to our readings with only our own interpretations.

Through this process of going to the library, leafing through books, clicking through databases, and meeting with the friendly library staff (who would become my future employers) I

discovered that when I found relevant resources, I got excited. Oddly enthusiastic, actually.

It took me most of my senior year to understand that what excited me was the prospect of becoming information savvy. I'm a little ashamed to say that eleven graduate school applications later to Master's programs in Literature, I realized that what I wanted was to remain in the library. I called my mom that next day and say, "You know what, I'm thinking about becoming a librarian."

I tell this story a lot and I think the point is this: During the learning process, remain open minded. When I was skimming through the many texts about Beckett, discussing his being wooed by James Joyce's daughter and the impact of existential philosophy in his fiction, I discovered that while I liked learning about a playwright whom I admired, the thrill came from finding relevant information on my topic. I embraced this feeling and continued to explore Library and Information Science; and two professional LIS jobs later, I am still exploring.

Let me give another example of remaining an open-minded lifelong learner. When I entered the GSLIS program, I had the initial idea that I would like to work in some kind of reference capacity in an academic setting. So I took courses that would help me to do that, but I also took some courses that would broaden my scope and skills for other career paths, including the introductory course into archives. Taking LIS 438 set me up with an internship (which I needed to fill in the gap of my then-lacking work experience) and provided me with the foundations of processing and understanding archival material.

My initial assumption that I would not become a future records manager or archivist was correct, but there were benefits to the experience. Perhaps one of the greatest lessons I learned — aside from an excellent foundation in archival practices (thank you, Donna Webber!) — is knowing when to stop. I began the course wanting to remain open-minded about exploring archives, and I finished the course knowing for certain that I would not have the word "archivist" anywhere in my future job titles. I walked away certain of this knowledge, with an internship, and a few more professional contacts than I had before I took the course.

This brings me to my concluding advice regarding life-long learning, which is knowing how much of it you need. This is easier said than done when it comes to learning, especially for an information professional. I can tell you right now that the *College & Research Libraries* journal and *Campus Technology* magazine remain in piles on my desk and my Google Reader is forever stuck on 1000+ because a) I probably subscribe to too many forms of information and b) I can't learn and explore it all. I find a few things that I want to do, and I try to do them well by moving in a positive and productive direction.

Of course, ask my friends, and they'll tell you that I still don't know how to say "no" to new opportunities. Knowing when enough is enough is another life-long lesson that I'm still learning.

Article by Cheryl Kohen '09LS

GSLIS at the Occupy Boston Library

The Audre Lord to Howard Zinn Library at Occupy Boston is inside a U.S. Army surplus tent on the edge of the dozens of tents that make up the Dewey Square site. It's complete with a smoke hole to vent a woodstove, and when you peel open the flaps of the faded green canvas and walk inside, you half expect to see Hawkeye Pierce perched over his still, offering you a drink.

This tent, however, contains some 600 books displayed in stacks of wooden crates. Folding tables hold magazines, newspapers, tape, pens, and copies of the U.S. Constitution for the taking. A hanging shelf designed for sweaters offers *Roget's Thesaurus*, *Webster's II*, and *The New York Public Library Desk Reference*. A bulletin board calling for favorite information sources is full of suggestions: Radical Ref, socialistworker.org, Democracy Now. Power strips allow for multiple lights and laptops — the Occupy Boston wi-fi is open, of course — and a long piece of white lace hanging from the tent's peak is as a reminder of a library as a refined, genteel space.

“Even if people don't like what the Occupy movement is about, or don't understand it, there's a certain solidarity,” says current GSLIS student Clare Davitt (who also happens to be the GSLIS Fellow for Dean's Initiatives). “They can say, ‘well, there's libraries! So it must be okay.’ ”

The library was founded in early October by John Ford, owner of The Metacomet Bookstore in Plymouth, Mass., in collaboration with the Boston Radical Reference Collective (including Vered Meir '11LS and Heather McCann '07LS) and the Simmons Progressive Librarians Guild (including current students Bryce Healy, Joanna Breen, Kristen Parker and Davitt). The A to Z Library, as it's nicknamed, is one of many Occupy libraries, including the People's Library at Occupy Wall Street and libraries at Occupy Sacramento, Portland, San Francisco, Washington, and Maine, many of which catalog their collections through LibraryThing.

Tourists, visitors, and activists parade through Occupy Boston regularly. Today they include a nurse's demonstration just outside the library's door and an eighth-grade class from Belmont, Mass., that steps inside in groups of seven or eight to listen to someone from the media tent next door explain the set-up. (Other themed tents include information, food, clothes, and sign-making.) The A to Z Library is open 24 hours a day, so librarian coverage varies. Books are circulated on the honor system; borrowers sign them out in a notebook. “We like it when they come back,” Davitt says, “but we trust that if they don't, there's a good reason for it.” The library recently received 15 books about anarchy; all were quickly borrowed and not one has come back.

The original inventory came from Ford's bookstore, but many donations have followed — enough, Davitt says, that they don't have room for it all, so they've set up free boxes where people can just take what they like. The collection is organized by

subject, with the headings written on yellow stickies that fly from the crates. The predictable include communism/socialism, economics/consumerism, race/culture, gender, unions/labor, and “Papa Noam” [Chomsky, the linguist and activist]. Several copies of Naomi Klein's Shock Doctrine cram one crate, and the populist historian Howard Zinn, for whom the library is partly named, has his own section. Every movement needs roses as well as bread, though, so there are other perhaps less expected topics: poetry, art/DIY, classic fiction, and young adult literature.



Top to bottom: Occupy Boston Library exterior; Clare Davitt inside Library. Photos by Sasha Nyary.

Naturally, the library has a strong online presence, with associated websites and listservs [see below], partly so the organizers can communicate with each other. Aside from scheduling staffing, organizers discuss issues such as winterization plans and creating pathfinders about many topics, such as intellectual freedom and children's literature.

The online presence also allows those who can't get to the physical site to be involved. People can send questions to the general listserv; a recent example was a request for political children's book titles. Along those lines, the library has also hosted several storytimes for families under a donated pop-up tent so parents of small children to feel welcome at the site.

Given that police in other Occupy communities around the country have been arresting the inhabitants, the organizers have also been discussing what to do if local police become aggressive. Should their priority be to protect the collection by moving it to a safe place, or should they try to stand their ground? “What does that mean as a librarian?” Davitt asks in response. “As a librarian I am here because I think people should have books. But I'm also here because of my political beliefs.” Where the line exists between the two isn't always clear, she says. “I have a car and would be happy to get stuff out of here. But I'd also like to link arms and stand.”

Her professors have been supportive, Davitt says, and she's hoping the A to Z Library will encourage GSLIS to offer a class in library advocacy. “You have to advocate for your building, your tax payers, your users,” she says. “We have to explain why libraries matter. I think people are getting better at it, and this helps.”

Some links to the Occupy Boston library and others:

- Occupy Boston Library: <http://wiki.occupyboston.org/wiki/Library>
- Simmons PLG: http://gslis.simmons.edu/wikis/plg/Main_Page
- Occupy Boston Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/OccupyBoston>
- Radical Reference Collective Boston: <http://radicalreference.info/localcollectives/boston>. Most of the activity has moved onto the collective's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/170046570078/?ref=ts>
- LibraryThing's Occupy libraries blog: <http://www.librarything.com/blogs/librarything/2011/10/occupy-libraries/>

Article by Sasha Nyary

Graphic Novel Reading Lists



We asked Robin Brenner and Linda Braun (pictured at left, in avatar and photograph, respectively) for their current top picks for graphic novels. As you can see, there are a lot of genres to choose from.

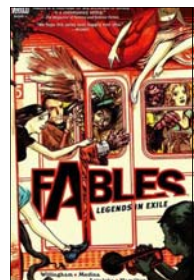
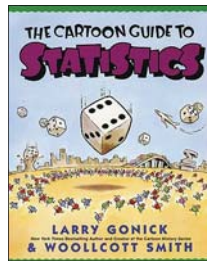
Linda Braun's Graphic Novel Picks



Bottomless Belly Button by Dash Shaw
A fast-moving graphic novel for adults that tells the story of a dysfunctional family who comes together so the parents can let their adult children know they are getting divorced.

The Cartoon Guide to Statistics by Larry Gonick

If math is not your thing, then a graphic novel about statistics might do the trick. The images and text together explain the basics, along with some advanced principles.

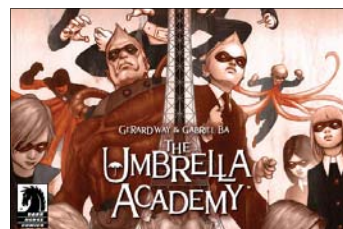


Fables, Vol. 1: Legends in Exile by Bill Willingham

The first volume in a classic series in which fairy-tale characters reside in Fabletown, where they live out their lives in ways unexpected, from the likes of Snow White, Prince Charming, and Rose Red.

The Runaways by Brian K. Vaughan

In this series, a group of teenagers discover that their parents really are as evil as they think. That's because their parents are supervillains. What can the teens do but run away from the evil and take matters into their own hands?

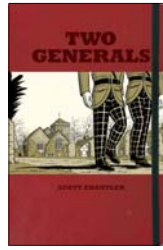


Umbrella Academy: Apocalypse Suite by Gerard Way

My Chemical Romance lead singer Gerard Way wrote the comics that make up this first volume. The story follows a group of super-powered young people who are making their way from

adolescence to adulthood and trying to figure out how to deal with family relationships, lies, and super powers at the same time. Trauma, tragedy, and humor ensue. ▲

Robin Brenner's Graphic Novel Picks

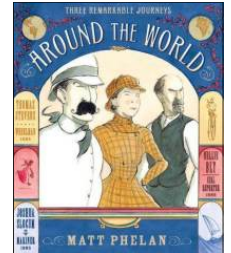


Two Generals by Scott Chantler

Based on his grandfather's journals, this story of two young Canadians joining up at the start of World War II is charming, heartbreaking, and beautifully told. The book is designed to resemble the journals it draws from, and Chantler's work here is a master class in the importance of using color judiciously and effectively.

Around the World by Matt Phelan

Phelan is known for his fine line work and expressive characters, and this latest work is a lovely look at three trips around the world, each taken for various reasons. But the curiosity to see what's beyond the next horizon ties them all together.



Hark! A Vagrant by Kate Beaton

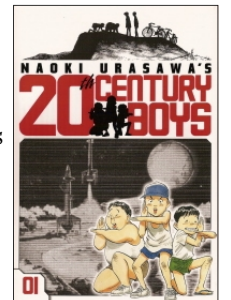
This hilarious collection of Kate Beaton's comic strips, from her website of the same name, is everything I want from one of her strips: intelligent, clever, irreverent, and giving spot-on observations about the ridiculousness of history. Her sense of timing and expression are what make her work so

funny — check out her take on Nancy Drew covers for some of my recent favorites.

20th Century Boys by Naoki Urasawa

Urasawa is one of the top manga creators working today. For folks new to manga, his work is also visually accessible. This series is not yet finished here in the US, but it's well worth waiting for the last five volumes. It follows childhood dreams twisted into adult nightmares. A rag-tag team opposes a labyrinthine government conspiracy in a plot straight out of the best sci-fi thrillers.

With Urasawa's handling, the story is kept on an effective human scale, zeroing in on friendship, loyalty, determination, and a strong sense of justice, the key elements to any epic storyline.



Hexed by Michael Nelson and Emma Rios

I was as big a *Buffy* fan as the next girl of my generation, and I know many of us still search for a similar, kick-butt, no-nonsense heroine. Our reluctant heroine, the slim young woman Lucifer, is just my kind of character: smart, snide, and a survivor. Trapped by horrific circumstances, she nonetheless perseveres, clinging to the slim hope of coming out on top eventually. The art is gorgeous, and despite what the cover may

imply there is zero cheesecake: Lucifer is a great heroine and does not sex it up for the reader's entertainment. ▲

Andrea Cronin '12LS, Graphic Novel Aficianado



It wasn't difficult to find graphic novel enthusiasts in the GSLIS community. Here are GSLIS student Andrea Cronin's thoughts on the genre, along with her top picks.

How did you get into graphic novels?

I was born in 1989. Unfortunately, I missed my decade. All my influences from childhood were iconic '80s characters — the Ninja Turtles, Transformers, and others. True to my age, though, I collected *Sonic the Hedgehog* comics, which were produced by Archie Comics. Every month a new issue came in the mail; it was the best day of the month. I loved Knuckles and I couldn't even tell you what echidnas are (spiny anteaters that live halfway across the world). It was only a natural progression from single-issue serial American comics to serial Japanese graphic novels [manga].

What is the difference between a comic and a graphic novel?

Depends on whom you ask. Comics are generally serial issues of a story, like initial Marvel and DC comics. But now, because of the popularity of Japanese manga or graphic novels, it is popular to publish larger graphic novels. Serial-issue comics are often republished into a larger book as well, making the distinction even more difficult. The words can be used interchangeably. But as a rule, graphic novels are thicker than comics. Comics and graphic novels are no longer directed at a certain age group.

What do you like about them?

The visual, plain and simple. World creation is probably one of the most difficult aspects of fantasy fiction. As difficult as it is to describe a foreign planet, creature, or physic ability, imagine trying to *illustrate* fantasy that enables the reader take that jump with the comic into the impossible. I would guess that we might not have superheroes as we know them without comics and graphic novels.

How do you talk about them when you talk with your friends?

It's like recommending a television show or book. "I think you'd enjoy this story." Graphic novels can tell excellent stories. And who doesn't love a good story? Perhaps I've been reading them too long, but I think everyone can find a comic or graphic novel that he or she might enjoy. There are all sorts of genres and artistic styles.

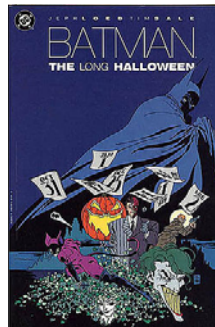
How do you know if a library has a good collection?

The problem with graphic novels and comic anthologies is that these items are expensive. At this time, because of the nature of the stories, which are often reinvented with the same characters under that same overarching universe (or separate universes; see *Transformers*), it's hard to have a complete collection. A good collection is generally shared among a library network and is not often all in one place. While American comics have the Marvel Universe and the DC Universe, Japanese manga have a different problem. The serial graphic novels tend to overstep the story. Ten volumes, each 120 pages, constitute a small graphic novel story arch in manga. The most popular ones are terrifyingly long. *Naruto* is now at 57 volumes and *Bleach* is at 50. That's too many volumes for one library to invest in.

What are the two dozen titles every library should have?

I won't touch that question. That's what Comic-Con and anime conventions are for. (Manga and anime are closely related, as often a series is a comic and an animated show.) Fans have avid debates about the best comics and graphic novels all the time. I don't think they have ever reached a consensus.

Andrea Cronin's picks for comics/graphic novels to try:

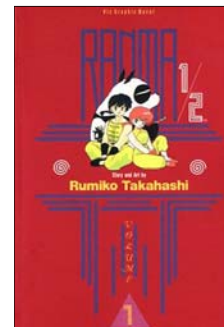


***Batman: The Long Halloween* by Jeph Loeb and Tim Sale**

I know Frank Miller's the man when it comes to Batman, but Loeb and Sale together on this novel are an awesome surprise attack. The graphic novel is beautifully illustrated. Villain Holiday has you guessing right along with Batman in this murder mystery.

***Ranma ½* by Rumiko Takahashi**

Takahashi wrote comic gold in late '80s and '90s with *Ranma*, a teenage boy who transforms into a girl when splashed with cold water, and back again to a boy when it's hot water. This was the first manga series I ever read and it got me hooked.



Flight anthologies

These anthologies showcase some good talent and are available in local bookstores. Amy Kim Ganter is featured in the fifth volume, but it's unfortunate to hear that she has left the comic scene. Her artwork is beautiful, and her storytelling is simple but adorable.

IDW's The Transformers

The artwork, again, is astounding, because of Guido Guidi, E. J. Su, Don Figueroa, and Alex Milne. Simon Furman, writer, comes back into the fold for this universe of *Transformers* comics and the addition of Shane McCarthy with his *All Hail Megatron* series is just brilliant. It's worth looking at just for the display of emotions that can be illustrated across alien robot car faces.



***A Bride's Story* by Kaoru Mori**

From the mangaka (graphic novel artist) who created *Emma*, *A Bride's Story* (Otoyomegatari) is a new manga in which 20-year-old Amira in 19th-century Central Asia travels to meet her intended husband, 8-year-old Karluk. Trouble occurs when Amira's family wants her back. This is almost a historical graphic novel, not in that it actually happened, but rather that the amount of authentic detail Mori puts into the artwork and

story simply amazes the reader.

Interview by Sasha Nyary

Snapshot, continued

Continued from Page 2

Russian scientists study this dialect. Librarians who live in this area collect the words that citizens use in this area and make their own dictionary. I'm proud of such library work. If you visit my library, you will be fond of it.

What does your work at GSLIS entail?

I know that Simmons has a strong interest in continuing education, and I am studying this program. I'm going to visit libraries in this area, and interview librarians and para-professionals about what they think about continuing education. Is it helpful for them, how do they find their main topics, and how do they choose opportunities? And I do research and find interesting things that I will use in my home. I am especially interested in how to make changes in my community. Of course we use technology and have distance learning, but I am also interested in training and delivery methods, not just about computers and databases. I'm learning how they study new features, how they research, and fundraising, and how they learn about these fields.

I love to study. I use any opportunity to study. I like sharing information. I say that if you are an information professional, the first thing you do is share information. And I as a librarian can tell you a lot about my library, my city, my culture. I keep talking about information.

Tell me about your husband.

I am here with my husband and we are classmates. We got acquainted in kindergarten, so when someone asks me how long we've been married, I'm joking: 50 years! He is not a librarian, he is an electronic engineer.

He is going to illustrate the new book of our friend, who is a poet from Canada. His hobby is glass-making, Tiffany-style. So here he has his own work.

Do you have children?

We have two children, and they are in Russia. Our son is 26 — he is married — and my daughter is 22. This summer she graduated from the same university I did. My son is a systems administrator. My daughter works in a community center for children. We call it a culture center. She just started. Of course, I'm nervous about it a little bit. She organizes events and classes for the children. And of course, she wants to teach them Tiffany.

What do you do for fun?

For fun? Bike, bike, bike! I like to do everything with my hands. We travel a lot. We try to find time to see something interesting. Our region is marvelous. There are a lot of interesting places around our region that we like to visit. If it's possible, we bike there. We like to canoe. And we are tourists.

Interview by Sasha Nyary

Folks on the Move

Adjunct Sid Berger gave two recent talks: "Art Marbling and the Genius of Edward Seymour," for the British Association of Paper Historians, in Canterbury, England, September 23-25, 2011, and "The Movement of Paper from Japan to the United States," at the Paper from the East conference, sponsored by China Culture Connect, in Greenwich, England, October 7, 2011.

GSLIS Students **Maya Bery** and **Laura Szaro** attended the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) Conference as winners of an essay contest held by the officers of the Massachusetts School Library Association; their attendance was sponsored by MSLA-SIG. The conference, AASL: Turning the Page, was held in Minneapolis from October 26-30, 2011.

James M. Matarazzo '65LS and **Toby Pearlstein '77LS** published an invited article, "Continuous Advocacy Creates Opportunity for Survival," in *Information Outlook*, September, 2011. Pearlstein and Matarazzo will speak at the SLA Boston Chapter meeting at the Social Law Library on October 25, 2011, on "The Corporate Library in Turbulent Times." Matarazzo wrote the foreword to Eva Semertzaki's book, *Special Libraries as Knowledge Management Centres*, Oxford, U.K.: Chandos Publishing, 2011. Semertzaki '88LS is the Deputy Director of the Library at the Bank of Greece.

Prof. Rebecca Morris participated in the Treasure Mountain research retreat, which preceded the AASL Conference. Her paper, "From a Conceptual Model of Responses to Digital Storytelling: Approaches for School Librarians and Teachers to Instruct and Support Digital Storytelling," is in the Treasure Mountain publication *Knowledge Building in the Learning Commons: Moving From Research to Practice to Close the Achievement Gap*. Papers of the Treasure Mountain Research Retreat #17, Oct. 26-27, 2011, Osseo, Minnesota, edited by David V. Loertscher and Blanche Woolls. Morris also participated in the Exploratorium, a research and practice poster session at the AASL Conference. Her poster was "If I Do It Again I Would Do That: Students Respond as Listener-Viewers of Class Digital Storytelling Projects." Information about the Exploratorium is at <http://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/news/ala/aasl-s-exploratorium-showcase-school-library-best-practices>; <http://www.aasli.org/programs/exploratorium/>.

Prof. Amy Pattee hosted a panel at the Boston Book Festival, Saturday, October 15. The panel, "YA Fiction: On the Edge," tackled controversial subjects and telling stories in unexpected and experimental ways. The panel included graphic novelist Danica Novgorodoff (*Refresh, Refresh*), author Ellen Levine (*In Trouble*), and author Daniel Nayeri (*Straw House, Wood House, Brick House, Blow*).

Johanna Radding '11LS has been hired as the GSLIS West Program Manager. Radding is a graduate of the GSLIS West program and has worked at the Amherst College Library. She has considerable knowledge of the program because she was the GSLIS West office student assistant for almost two years. Among her new duties will be working with the GSLIS West students, organizing information sessions, and integrating the GSLIS West presence on the Simmons website.

Continued on Page 10

Folks on the Move (continued)

Continued from Page 9

Prof. Kathy Wisser has received another grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. With her co-director, the director of the University of Virginia Institute for Advanced Technology, Wisser will use the grant to bring further order and organization to the national and international archival community. She will administer a scholarship program and teach several regional workshops that are tentatively scheduled to begin in March 2012 and end in summer 2013.

Congratulations to **Samantha Lee Wickman**, the 2011 recipient of the Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies Century Scholarship. The annual scholarship provides up to \$2500 in funding to a current library school student. It was established in 2000.

Adjunct **Chris Swerling** gave a presentation at the AASL Conference with two school library teachers from the Newton Public Schools who are also supervising practitioners for our SLTP practicum candidates. The presentation, "Reading as a Window to the World," focused on evaluating and promoting multicultural literature for children.

Got news? Send it to infolink@simmons.edu.

Johanna Radding, GSLIS West Program Manager



Welcome to Johanna Radding, who was recently hired to be the GSLIS West Program Manager. Johanna earned her BA in Theater and History from the University of Washington in 2005 and graduated from Simmons GSLIS West in May 2011. After moving from Seattle to Boston in 2008 to attend Simmons, she and her husband decided to move to the Pioneer Valley in 2009. While a student at GSLIS West, she

worked for almost two years with Assistant Dean Terry Plum and then-GSLIS West Coordinator Rayna Bowlby as the Student Office Assistant. During her first semester at Simmons, she worked as a library assistant at the Boston Architectural College Library. During her final year at GSLIS West she was an intern in Technical Services at the Amherst College library.

Radding also has an extensive customer-service background after having worked in retail and restaurants for 10 years.

"Librarianship was the perfect way to combine my love of research and interest in technology with my customer service experience and my desire to continue working with people in a way that builds relationships with and supports the community," she says. She is excited to continue working with Simmons GSLIS to support and be a part of the GSLIS West community. In addition to her position as the GSLIS West Program Manager, she works part time in tech services at the Amherst College library. In her off time she enjoys hiking, baking (she bakes a mean cupcake), and imparting a love of libraries to her 2 ½-year-old daughter.

Shelley Quezada wins NELA's Greenaway Award



Adjunct Professor Shelley Quezada was named the 2011 recipient of the New England Library Association's Greenaway Award. The award was established in 1988 to recognize distinguished service in the field of librarianship.

Quezada, a long-standing GSLIS adjunct, teaches Literacy and Services to Underserved Populations: Issues and Responses, as well as some youth services courses. She is the Consultant

for the Underserved at the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. For more about Quezada, please see: <http://www.simmons.edu/gslis/people/faculty/adjunct/2402.php>.

Kate McGrath, Dean's Fellow for GSLIS West

When Kate McGrath was completing her undergrad studies at Providence College, an advisor told her that she would be well suited for the library science field. Though she initially disregarded this advice, the seed was planted. Now, seven years later, Kate is in her second semester of the GSLIS program and we welcome her as a member of the GSLIS staff. As the new Dean's Fellow for GSLIS West and Online Library Support, Kate provides library assistance, teaches face-to-face and online user instruction sessions, and offers the Technology Orientation Requirement and additional workshops to the GSLIS West community. In her spare time, Kate enjoys playing the piano, reading (naturally), and cooking. She also likes to travel, and this winter she spent some time in Paris. While at Simmons, McGrath hopes to take advantage of the study-abroad opportunities offered to GSLIS students.

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Copy deadline for the February issue is Monday, January 23, 2011.