

Gems of wisdom await in library

by Greg Halinda and Kisa Mortenson

You've been doing research all morning for that paper and wow, did you just find a great book in the library!

It's almost like finding a gem in a pile of rocks. Thousands upon thousands of books confront you on those shelves, and that one friendly volume found its way into your hands.

How did it get there? Who ordered it? What if they hadn't? Are there better titles you'll never know about because the library never ordered them?

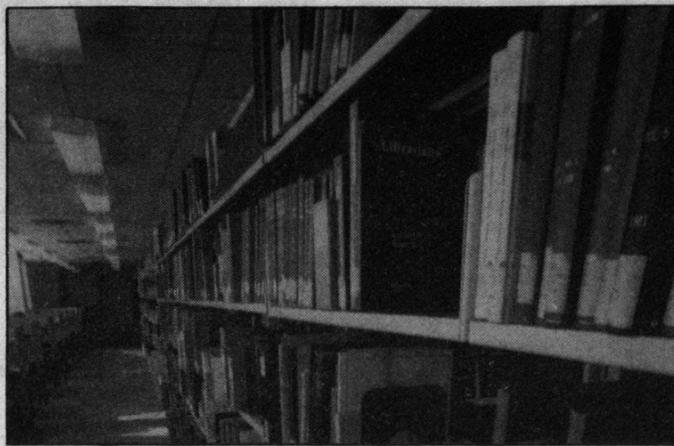
Last year, the U of A libraries ordered 41 thousand titles, and 331 new periodical subscriptions. Including binding and other projects, the libraries spent over \$4 million last year. Little wonder we have the second largest library in Canada.

There are about 40 librarians, called liaison librarians, who are responsible for recommending the bulk of new book purchases. Each liaison deals with one or more teaching departments on campus, and has a specialized knowledge in these fields.

For instance, David Jones, Collections Coordinator for the Science library, is a liaison librarian specializing in physics, chemistry, genetics, and biology.

Jones helps develop a profile of what subjects and levels of books are needed in these disciplines. He then examines what the publishers have to offer, and makes a decision to buy, based of course, on how much money is in his budget.

The various faculties work with the liaison librarians and will also recommend titles not available from the main suppliers.



Books sit waiting, inconspicuously...

Students can do the same. "All the libraries are open to student requests. If a student requests

a book, we'll certainly consider it," said Jones. Brian Hobbs, acting collection

coordinator for the U of A libraries, said the U of A buys books from several vendors located in Canada, the U.S., Great Britain, and western Europe.

"A lot of people know how good our library is," said Hobbs. "We get scholars coming from all over the country and outside the country doing research here."

Many of these intellectuals give guest lectures while they're on campus.

"That all helps to build the reputation of the university and the library," said Hobbs.

Incidentally, since the on-line catalogue and the on-line index systems were implemented, students are finding and using more books and periodicals than ever.

There's a gold mine out there, get out and use it!

Wilson budget ignores education and research

OTTAWA (CUP) — The latest budget brought down by federal Finance Minister Michael Wilson fails to address funding problems for education and research, lobby groups say.

In fact, the Canadian Association of University Teachers says the "one positive thing" to come from Wilson's Feb. 18 announcement is the elimination of import tariffs on

many English language books and computer parts, among other things.

"We're happy with that," said CAUT president Allan Sharp, "but otherwise, it was pretty bleak."

The government imposed the tariff last June in retaliation to an American tax on Canadian cedar shakes and shingles. Book publishers are confident that an extensive

postcard campaign, which attracted an estimated 130,000 Canadians, was key to changing the Cabinet's mind.

The budget contained no explicit references to research or post-secondary education. Sharp said the Tories "missed the boat, again" by not introducing long-promised measures to aid research in Canada.

"This was the year for them to

live up to their election promises," Sharp said, referring to the Conservative's pledge to double Canada's research and development performance.

"If they do anything next year, it'll look like another pre-election trick. It will be greeted with cynicism," Sharp said.

However, he said CAUT and other lobbyists are not prepared to

just wait for the government to make improvements at its own pace.

"Now is the time for increased pressure, not the time to give up," Sharp said. "It's still not too late."

Todd Smith, executive officer of the Canadian Federation of Students, said CFS was neither pleased nor surprised by Wilson's budget.

"Quite frankly, there wasn't anything in the budget for students," Smith said, adding "but we didn't expect any great news from Michael Wilson."

Smith said the absence of any announcements about research or education worries CFS. He said the proposed forum on post-secondary education, announced last October, may be used by the government as a catch-all for dealing with funding problems.

"We are quite concerned that the government is putting all of its eggs in the national forum basket," Smith said.

"By golly, we're going to have to get some significant dividends out of this forum," Smith said.

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