

U of A publishing presses on

by Lucinda Chodan

"Time sequence analysis involves the extraction of a flow of messages ..."

It doesn't sound like the first line of a best-seller.

But *Time Sequence Analysis in Geophysics* is the hottest item in the University of Alberta Press catalogue.

U of A Press director Norma Gutteridge is enthusiastic about the success of the text, a staple in geophysics courses across North America.

She's also enthusiastic about the rest of the U of A Press inventory, which ranges from texts on bioengineering to western Canadian phraseology. And with good reason. The press is involved in the publication of high-quality, stringently edited books from its campus office in Athabasca Hall.

Although the press has published more than 30 books, Gutteridge isn't surprised that few students know of the existence of the U of A Press.

"We've only really got going in the last two years," she says.

"Getting going" includes the luxury of permanent premises and a full-time staff. From its inception in 1969 until 1975, the press relied on the free-lance, after-hours labor of Gutteridge and her husband to publish books.

"We were established as the University Press committee by the Board of Governors in 1969 and published our first books in 1971 ... but we went through some very lean times until 1975."

Despite the lean times, the U of A Press managed to publish eight books in those first six years. Then in 1975, the Press was given a larger budget and a full-time director and staff were hired.

"We actually have four and a half staff members now," Gutteridge says. The staff includes a director, an editor, a designer, and a secretary/bookkeeper, along with one student responsible for invoices and shipping.

Each of these employees has an important role to play in the transformation of a manuscript to a book. "A book is like a child," says Gutteridge. "One must lavish care and attention on it ... nurture it through all its processes."

The press receives numerous manuscripts each year from aspiring authors. From these manuscripts, the director and the editor select one or two. The criteria?

"Because we're an academic publisher," Gutteridge says, "we look for reasonably well-organized books ... they should have a good theme, and the writing should be of a good standard."

"A publisher has to have a pretty wide interest in ... an enormous range of subjects, but generally, we're looking for a well-turned out piece of work."

After Gutteridge and editor Sylvia Vance select a manuscript, it is sent out to various readers — experts in the area the manuscript discusses — for technical verification. If the readers agree that the book is a valuable contribution to a particular field, the U of A Press faces the next hurdle.

"Then we have to find the money for it," says Gutteridge. Money for new publications usually comes from U of A Press sales revenue, government grants and private groups interested in the book's topic.

If money is available for the book's publication, it must still face the

university's editorial board. The board, comprised of members from various faculties, is appointed by the university president. And it makes the final decision about each manuscript.

"So far, it has never happened ... but in theory, it could reject a manuscript," says Gutteridge.

If a book receives the approval of the editorial board, the real work begins.

"First-time authors sort of have the idea that you hand in a manuscript and push a couple of buttons and out comes a book," says Gutteridge. The process is much more complicated than that, however. It usually takes from six to nine months, and sometimes much longer, before a bound volume appears.

The manuscript first goes to the designer, who chooses a general format that will complement the subject matter of the book. She decides what kind of print the book will have, and selects a style for its printing — how wide its margins will be, how large the print will appear, and what kind of binding will be appropriate.

While the designer is preparing an overall look for the book, the editor is copy-editing the book for meaning and consistency.

"The editor is the prototype reader," says Gutteridge. "She ensures that the author's thoughts come directly to the reader."

After the manuscript has been copy-edited, it is sent to a printer, where the actual printing of the book occurs. In the meantime, the designer is preparing brochures about the book for distribution and the director is booking advertisements in appropriate journals.

The printer prepared photocopies of the book in its rough stages, and these galley proofs are sent to the U of A Press. The galleys are carefully scrutinized, corrections are made, and they are returned to the printer.

Once the printer has included these

corrections in the text, he sends the press a final photocopy of the book. This final photocopy — the blue-line or brown-line copy — is the last chance for the press to make corrections. The next stage is the bound, printed book.

By the time the manuscript is printed, the publisher knows the book almost as well as the author does. But Gutteridge says this is never a tedious process.

"The thrill never goes ... no matter how many books you put out."

"In over 20 years, I've never got used to it."



Editor Sylvia Vance edits galley proofs during late stages of publishing process.



Press director Norma Gutteridge with part of U of A Press's selection of books.



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