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Library Newsletter

University Libraries

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## Connections, Fall, 2002; Issue Two

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# CONNECTIONS

## *From the Dean's Desk*

The University Library takes pride in being a member of Rhode Island's academic library consortium, HELIN, and is pleased to introduce to the University community HELIN's latest initiative, the InRhode Library Catalog. InRhode combines the library resources of nine academic institutions into a single unified database, formally including HELIN's newest member, the Brown University libraries. InRhode provides access to over 4.1 million volumes, combining the resources of Brown University's library database, *Josiah*, with those of the HELIN Consortium's library database, *HELIN*. The user-friendly InRhode software overlays both catalog databases, enabling students, faculty, and staff of all HELIN institutions to place online requests for circulating books and other materials held by libraries within the consortium. Statewide delivery, through a system maintained by the Rhode Island Office of Library and Information Services, will facilitate the interlibrary transfer of requested titles within two or three days. I invite readers to learn more about the features and use of InRhode from the designated entry on our website.

Teaching and service are equally important aspects of the Library's mission. A recent and important advancement in our libraries has been the formation of our information literacy program (an instructional partnership between librarians and faculty). Barbara Kenney discusses the information literacy concept and program in detail below.

## Information Literacy at Roger Williams University

The information universe has landed squarely on our desktops via the web. The abundance of virtual information often results in "information overload" and "information anxiety," expressions that define the dizzying state of trying to keep pace with the explosive growth of information. Students are faced with a complex array of information resources and don't know where, or even how, to begin their research. Faced with papers, projects, deadlines and distractions, they often turn to the web to solve their information problems. There they are confronted with selecting and evaluating information appropriate to their academic endeavors. Google returns 12,000 hits in .6 seconds; they use the first five, and hope for the best.

Information Literacy is the set of skills that enables one to clearly define an information need, identify the sources to inform that need, evaluate the sources for relevancy and authority, and use information resources effectively and ethically. Mastering these skills alleviates the anxiety many students feel when confronted with university level research, as they become competent and discriminating information users. Information Literacy also addresses the ethical issues

inherent in the use of information technology, including plagiarism, copyright, intellectual property, privacy and the socioeconomic concerns of the information age.

The instruction team at Roger Williams is eager to consult with classroom faculty to integrate and design information literacy competencies into their curriculum. This type of course-integrated instruction includes collaboration with faculty to develop the research component for the course, and scheduled meetings throughout the semester to focus on strategies. We design subject and course-specific guides to information resources, and provide a variety of instruction options, including classes on research strategies, concept-mapping, instruction in bibliographic tools, and advanced information literacy concepts for upper division students.

The information age requires competencies that can be met by information literacy instruction. Our library instruction team invites faculty, staff and students to collaborate with us to further information competency on our campus. For more information, visit the library's web site: <http://library.rwu.edu/about/infolit.html>

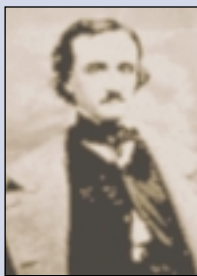
— Barbara Kenney



## Meet our New Information Literacy Librarian

We are pleased to introduce Barbara Ferrer Kenney, who joined the library faculty this summer as Information Literacy Librarian in order to expand the library's outreach to the RWU community. While at the URI Libraries, where she worked as Assistant Research Professor, Reference and Instruction, Barbara was awarded a scholarship to participate in the Association of College and Research Library's (ACRL) *Information Literacy Immersion '01*. This experience led to her teaching a 3-credit course at URI, *Introduction to Information Literacy*, which provided a strong foundation for integrating the concepts of Information Literacy into the RWU curriculum.

Barbara has been a whirling dervish since her arrival, already having taught more than thirty classes in the Library Classroom. Along with the other librarians, she offers general information literacy classes as well as course-specific classes and meets with faculty members to plan course-integrated instruction. Her sparkling wit, direct manner, and collaborative spirit are winning over students and faculty alike in support of the library's mission – educating all RWU students, faculty and staff in the effective retrieval and use of information.



Edgar Allan Poe



H.P. Lovecraft

## Friends of the Library

*Horror and Mystery in Rhode Island: The Literary Connections of Poe and Lovecraft* begins the Friends Fall 2002 program. Literary critic and lecturer, Felicity Hofferger, will discuss the Rhode Island associations of these two celebrated authors on Friday, October 25 (5:00 p.m.). Through the generosity of the Friends and the Roger Williams Family Association an additional Fall program (October 18) featured Mary Lee Settle, the author of *I, Roger Williams*.

The Friends have initiated an Academic Lecture series, beginning in Spring 2003. On the first Wednesday evening of each month (February, March, April) the series will feature a faculty member from a different academic discipline. The Spring series will include: Jim Tackach, Feinstein College of Arts and Sciences, Christopher Menton, School of Justice Studies, and Kathleen Micken, Gabelli School of Business. More information about these lectures will appear in the next issue of this newsletter.

## Collection Development: Collaboration is the Key

The teaching faculty plays a key role in building the book collections here at the Roger Williams University Libraries. This collaboration is considered to be the cornerstone in the development of a vibrant collection that meets the information needs of the RWU faculty and students and serves as a dynamic resource for critical thinking and research.

The primary selection tool provided to the faculty by the library is the Choice Card service. Each month the library receives Choice Cards, published by the College & Research Libraries Division of the American Library Association, which are delivered to representative faculty members in each of the disciplines. The Choice Cards include over six thousand reviews of significant current books in a wide variety of disciplines in higher education.

In some disciplines the Choice Card service is insufficient to meet the resource needs of the curriculum. In these areas New Title Announcement Slips are sent in addition to the Choice Cards. These slips, generated by the library's primary book vendor, Blackwell North America, are based on a profile designed to address the subjects relevant to the RWU curriculum. The New Title Announcement Slips do not contain book reviews, but do serve as a useful current awareness tool.

Choice Cards and New Title Announcement Slips annotated by the faculty are returned to the Acquisitions Department and reviewed by the Collection Development Librarian. Decisions for purchase are based on the quality of the title, faculty interest, collection needs,



curricular demand and available funds. New titles added to the RWU Libraries are highlighted monthly on New Books List published on the RWU Libraries Home Page. An online request form is also available so that faculty may conveniently request new books that they feel would enhance the library collection. Further information regarding collection development is available on the library home page, including the RWU Collection Development Policy.

The goal behind this collaborative arrangement in building the library collections is the integration of library resources with the curriculum and enhanced access to information for our students. Faculty with questions regarding book requests or the library collections should contact Christine Fagan, Collection Development/Acquisitions Librarian or the Library Liaison associated with their discipline. — *Christine Fagan*

## Connecting from Home

Connecting to the Library's subscription databases is now easier than ever before. This past summer, HELIN developed a new proxy service. The proxy now works much like HELIN Request and Electronic Reserves. To search a database from an off-campus location, click on the title of the database. At the next screen, type your name and your library barcode number (no spaces). Then click on the *Go to Database* button. For a complete listing of RWU subscription databases see the [Alphabetical list of Databases](http://library.rwu.edu/articles/database.html) found at <http://library.rwu.edu/articles/database.html>. You will need an activated library barcode to use this service.

## Archive News

To help preserve the "collective knowledge" of the university, an Archive Task Force has been established. As facilitator of this task force, the Library's archivist, Mary Wu, hopes to:

- Investigate the records and documents currently kept in the Archives.
- Analyze the organizational structure created by the previous Archivist.
- Plan and conduct an archival records survey that covers

all constituencies of the University.

- Establish a mission statement for University Archives, and create policies and procedures for collection development, records preservation and retention, and archival services.
- Establish a long-term strategic plan for the future development of the Archives, including the creation of web based finding aids, digital initiatives and archival personnel training.

Please forward your ideas and suggestions to Mary Wu at extension 3053 or [mwu@rwu.edu](mailto:mwu@rwu.edu). Your help will be very much appreciated.



## Forget Jeeves! Ask a HELIN Librarian!

Can't find the answer on the World Wide Web? Can't locate sources for your research paper? Need a librarian in a hurry? AskHELIN is your answer.

AskHELIN is a new virtual reference service pilot project offered by the HELIN Library Consortium. Building on HELIN's long tradition of collaboration and resource sharing, librarians at eight of the HELIN libraries are offering to the Rhode Island academic community real-time, online, reference assistance. Faculty, students, and staff at any of the HELIN universities and colleges may ask questions via the Internet and a librarian will be available to answer instantly. To learn more about this new service, please see the frequently asked questions on the following page.

Log on to this virtual reference by clicking on the *Ask HELIN* icon located on the library web site and following the instructions.



## FAQ's about Ask HELIN

**Q.** What is AskHELIN?

**A.** AskHELIN is a chat-based service where a HELIN librarian will help you online in real time. Ask us a question and then follow along (co-browse) as reference librarians use special software to guide you with your research or help you locate quick factual information.

**Q.** What does co-browse mean?

**A.** It means that you and the librarian can collaboratively browse web sites and web-accessible databases in real-time. Both you and the librarian will be able to view the same web sites and can search a database jointly.

**Q.** When is AskHELIN available?

**A.** Hours of service are Sunday through Thursday, 3:00 - 10:00 p.m. (EST)

**Q.** Who can use AskHELIN?

**A.** AskHELIN is available to all students, faculty, staff, and alumni of HELIN member institutions: Bryant, CCRI, JWU, PC, RIC, RWU, Salve, & URI.

**Q.** How does it work?

**A.** Once you connect to the service by clicking on the CONNECT button at the bottom of the form, a reference librarian will join you. Please be patient - there may be a time delay between clicking on the CONNECT button and the librarian receiving your message.

**Q.** Do I need special software to use this service?

**A.** No, no special software is required. Simply log on to the service using your web browser. Netscape or Internet Explorer 4.0 and above. Mac users should use Internet Explorer 5.0

**Q.** What type of Internet connection do I need?

**A.** Any connection will work, but a dial-up connection will result in slower sessions. A network or cable connection will be faster.

**Q.** What happens if I lose my connection with the librarian?

**A.** If you should get disconnected, please log on again to AskHELIN to reconnect. Just go to the library home page and click on the icon for the log on screen.

**Q.** What should I do if it looks like a Web page has completely taken over my screen and I can no longer see my chat session with the librarian?

**A.** If at any time during the chat session a Web page takes over your screen, just click on the back button twice to return to the chat.

**Q.** What types of questions will you answer?

**A.** We will identify appropriate resources and databases for your research need and guide you in their use; help you use HELIN; provide guidance on researching a topic; and answer quick factual questions.

**Q.** How long does a reference chat session last?

**A.** Session lengths vary depending on your information needs. Most questions can be answered in less than 15 minutes. If your question is complex, a librarian may need to follow-up via email. There may be times when a virtual reference librarian may refer you to a subject specialist.

**Q.** How can I remember the resources that the librarian has shown me during our virtual reference session?

**A.** If you provide your email address, we will send you a transcript of the session. It includes the complete conversation between you and the librarian as well as a list of web sites visited during the session.

**Q.** What if I have questions or comments about this service?

**A.** We encourage you to contact us at: [askhelin@etal.uri.edu](mailto:askhelin@etal.uri.edu) Since this is a pilot program, we encourage you to fill in the exit survey, so we can determine the value of this service at the end of the pilot project.