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Fifty Years: the Associated College Libraries of Central Pennsylvania (or the History of ACLCP in less than 10 minutes)

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Abstract

A brief presentation given by Gettysburg College's Dean of the Library and ACLCP's 2015 President, Robin Wagner, commemorating fifty years of history of the Associated College Libraries of Central Pennsylvania.

Disciplines

Cataloging and Metadata | Collection Development and Management | Curriculum and Instruction | Educational Assessment, Evaluation, and Research | Higher Education | Information Literacy | Library and Information Science | Scholarly Communication

Comments

This presentation was part the [ACLCP 2015 Fall Conference](#) for the Associated College Libraries of Central Pennsylvania as part of the *50th Anniversary and Member Showcase featuring Access, Collaboration, Learning, Community, Preservation* in Harrisburg, PA on October 23, 2015.

Fifty Years: the Associated College Libraries of Central Pennsylvania (or the History of ACLCP in less than 10 minutes)

by Robin Wagner
October 23, 2015

In the last 50 years our libraries have gone from this to this:



From this to this:



From this to this:



From this, to this and this:



This was my library when I was a freshman at one of the ACLCP schools. ACLCP was 7 years old. This is where I studied. The technology of that era was the typewriter you see on the desk in the foreground.



This is where I worked—checking out LPs and handing out headphones. If I needed to look something up I used one of these. I most definitely had an outfit like this. I don't think I ever asked a librarian for help. I am not sure that I knew who any librarians were. I certainly never had an information literacy class. I never borrowed a book from another school. I used interlibrary loan once, my senior year.



ACLCP was 7 years old when I started college. It was called Area College Library Cooperative Program. In 1965 three libraries, Dickinson, Gettysburg and Shippensburg, got together in September. In October they had their second meeting with 4 more including Franklin & Marshall, Juniata, Messiah and Wilson. These were the original 7 members; by the end of the decade there were 16 members. Other members were Elizabethtown, Millersville, the State Library, Bucknell, Harrisburg Area Community College, Lebanon Valley, Penn State Harrisburg, Susquehanna and York.

ACLCP started off with four goals:

- Improve interlibrary loan among the schools
- Exchange acquisitions lists
- Select areas of specialization
- Establish uniform circulation rules with a courtesy card for all students and faculty at member libraries.

Their first project was a union list of periodicals—had 3,600 titles on it. This initiative was followed by union list of special collections, a union list of musical scores, a selected list of monographs on early music (before 1800) and a bibliography of reference books. They sold the union list of periodicals and other lists to interested libraries outside our region. In the early years they set up workshops on music, cataloging, sharing duplicates and applying for federal grants. Much effort was put toward weeding and exchange of discards.

They formed committees to seek grants, established a clearing-house to identify areas of subject strength and weakness of the membership and to oversee the sale of publications.

Another committee addressed the then fledgling concept of automation in libraries. It's charge: "to discover the status and plans for the future."



One of the most interesting documents that Christy Fic, ACLCPs wonderful archivist, turned up for me was a list that the original libraries put together listing their collection strengths. Libraries were asked to indicate between 2-5 areas for specialization. One library couldn't follow directions and listed 12 specialties including contemporary poetry, Africa, earth science, German literature, Scandinavian countries, India, graphic arts and Shakespeare to name a few. Another school simply listed "Milton."

The union lists, the focus on exchanges and on subject specialties – all this was indicative, I think, of how early members were thinking about a consortium. It was a resource sharing group. In short, we will buy all the books on India so you don't have to.

At another point in the archives there was mention that F&M sent Gettysburg 54 French literature books that they were about to discard. Gettysburg accepted them joyously! This made me laugh because I am the liaison for French and I've been doing collection assessment in the French literature collection lately and there is a lot to be weeded. I'm willing to pass those F&M books from the 1950s on to you. Let me know.

Another early initiative that was important to the growth and longevity of ACLCP was a shuttle service which delivered books among the libraries twice per week. The shuttle service piggy-backed onto the State Library's Commonwealth-wide delivery service, making resource sharing more affordable for ACLCP libraries.

In 1987 the consortium got a grant for telefacsimilie equipment to be distributed to each library. I remember this well because I had just begun working at F&M and was a member of the telefacsimilie working group. The word “fax” entered the lexicon much later. We said the whole word: telefacsimilie. The telefacsimilie really changed the way and speed by which we did interlibrary loan.

For a time especially in the eighties and early nineties ACLCP redefined itself as a buying cooperative, seeking the best deals on packages of resources-- until other consortiums like PALINET (now Lyrasis) and PALCI could do it better.

We are now a consortium of 24 members with an emphasis on programs, continuing education and a special interest groups.

At the 20th anniversary of ACLCP, Lillian Smoke, Director of the Gettysburg College Library gave what appeared to be a 45 minute address in numbing detail on the history of ACLCP up to that point. I’ll apologize in advance for her pun but she ended by saying:

“ACLCP enjoyed from the beginning remarkably smooth sailing on three dependable and enduring “C’s”—Communication, Coordination and Cooperation. Now, you are becoming fully launched on the new and exciting fourth “C”—Computerization—I hope that you will find great sailing.”



So today on the 50th anniversary I’d like to introduce another C-- a member show **CASE** featuring lightening round presentations on **A**ccess, **C**ollaboration, **L**earning, **C**ommunity and **P**reservation—ACLCP. And after the special interest groups meet this afternoon I invite you to enjoy a sixth C—a special 50th anniversary birthday **c**ake. Enjoy the program and like Lillian Smoke I wish you all great sailing.