

Against the Grain

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Little Red Herrings--We Have Met the Enemy, and He Is Us

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Useful blogs, eZine Articles and Online Photograph Albums

Sites useful to the collector or creator of dollhouses include <http://my-vintage-dollhouses.blogspot.com/>. *My Vintage Dollhouses* is one of my all-time favorite blogs, started by **Florine** in the USA in August 2009. She never fails to amuse and educate, with an intensely personal passion for researching and presenting her newest purchases. This “Out of control collector of dollhouses...” with her “OMG, I love dollhouses!” attitude on her profile bio says it all. The densely packed site, with links that are sometimes understandably a bit slow to upload, contains much useful information, along with hysterically funny scenarios. This blogger tells wonderful stories about the various characters’ shenanigans in her fully-furnished homes. Occasionally, this is a truly adult site, with political messages given in the venue of her world of miniatures, such as celluloid dollhouse figurines’ protests over the Texas Governor’s so-called war on women: <http://my-vintage-dollhouses.blogspot.com/search/label/Adda-Room> (“members of S.A.L. (Seniors Are Liberal) group at Shady Acres Retirement Home are returning from participating in a peaceful assembly protesting what they consider their governor’s war on women.”)

Other blogs, articles, and photograph albums that are accessible, useful, and interesting include: <http://rebeccacollections.blogspot.com/>. **Rebecca** lived in Papua New Guinea during the 1970s and provides excellent links to European dolls’ house Websites. As well, she documents an interesting history of **Mrs. Oswald Gibson** of Melbourne, Victoria, who raised funds during WWII, making several dolls’ houses and two shopping centres to sell at fund-raising raffles. The Flickr link found at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/dolldwellings/7667856820/in/set-72157630801836336/>, displays photographs of **Carrie Walter Stettheimer’s** dollhouse that she created and decorated during the 1920s and 1930s. This remarkable dollhouse features original miniatures by some of her friends, such as paintings by **Marcel Duchamp**. *Corey Moortgat, Mother. Wife. Artist. Collector.* blog is perfectly charming

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every annual convention and every national election. Rather than suck up to both parties and hope for the best, we often draw lines in the sand about first one thing and then another, leaving the preferred side silent while making the opposition furious with us enough to want to shut us down. Makes perfect sense in a time of tight budgets and scarce dollars, right?

I recall a story **Michael Novak** once told me about a time when he worked for **McGovern**. After the election was over and **Nixon** had won just about every precinct in the country, they were sitting around the table, men scratching their heads and women crying. One woman look at him and, through a multitude of tears cried, “I don’t know how this happened. I don’t know anyone who voted for **Nixon**.”

Now, if you can forget for the moment that the story is about the dreaded **Nixon**, there is a moral here about groupthink. It’s easy to get tunnel vision when you look in only one direction, and no one does that worse than people who work in colleges and universities. If we really are for our constituents, then we really do have to embrace both sides, even if it means holding our noses from time to time.

I don’t think this is peculiar to librarianship as much as it is the nature of human beings. The grass is always greener everywhere else. But you’d think in an age when our very existence is being questioned, we’d be far more agreeable on just about any question, wouldn’t you? I mean, when your spouse is ready to boot you out the door, is that really the time to ask if she’s put on a few pounds?

Now is as good a time as any to be more open-minded about such things. With our profession struggling to find a niche, any niche, we can’t afford to make any enemies. And we really don’t want to be our own worst enemies by complaining about everything, asking for more money, acting as if nothing has changed in the last few decades, wanting new staff positions for every new wrinkle we can think of, and alienating every political party but one. We need to work hard to please everyone. Extra special hard.

In times like these, it’s important to remember that it really doesn’t matter who throws you a lifeline when you’re drowning.

It only matters that you end up on dry land, safe and secure. 🐘

and visually stunning in its presentation at the link <http://coreymoortgat.blogspot.com/2012/10/doll-house-tour.html>, with sweet stories about her dollhouse and its residents. <http://www.dollhousespastandpresent.com/apps/photos/album?albumid=12182024>, *Dolls House Past & Present* is “a Website and eZine about dolls’ houses: antique, vintage, and modern. Plus furniture and accessories” started by **Wendy Gater** in 2009. It is a British site with rare antique dolls’ houses and furnishings for sale, a photo and video gallery, articles, magazine index, and archives. This is a good, solid, and long-standing Website that keeps its professional appearance intact by setting parameters for its members’ use of the site. Another of my long-time favorite blogs is *Tracy’s Toys (and Some Other Stuff)* at <http://tracystoys.blogspot.com/>. *Tracy’s Toys* blogspot is particularly well-organized, given that she is a library director: <http://www.blogger.com/profile/17093220429913265429>. “I’m a library director with a background in museums as well.” Lastly, researchers can find a plethora of useful information on Pinterest, where folks make their own houses and accessories. Bloggers provide amusement for the general public with interesting photographs of their creations, including **Jenny Lawson’s** haunted dollhouse found at the link <http://kirtsy.com/2011/10/27/dollhouse-curated-by-jenny-lawson/?kp=YToxOntzOjE6ImkiO2k6MzE0Mzt9>, and how-to tips for very modern dollhouses attached to a blog at *The Call of the Small* <http://call-small.blogspot.com/2011/08/tissue-box-house-of-three.html>.

Clubs

Sites include a historical society dedicated to promoting the accurate representation of period dollhouse scenes <http://www.cheshirehistory.org/dolls2004.htm> (**The Cheshire Historical Society** in Cheshire, Connecticut, USA). There are many dollhouse clubs and societies around the world, and it’s worth checking the Internet for your local area. You might find a group of like-minded folks with whom to share your favorite hobby.

Videos

Videos pertaining directly to collecting antique dollhouses and miniatures include the YouTube **Amersham** dolls’ house video, uploaded in July 2009: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U1StrWYeUL4>. I am including this link, not because the house was for sale, but because the narrator describes the house ... what to look for; features denoting what decades the house was produced (1930s through 1940s); and frankly, the narrator has a lovely voice and excellent presentation of this vintage dolls’ house. *Dolls House – British Pathé* is an incredible link, with short films — some silent, some narrated — on the topic of dolls’ houses from all eras. These short movies were filmed between 1928 and 1969. <http://www.britishpathe.com/workspaces/BritishPathe/7Tbb2gvQ>

How-to Sites

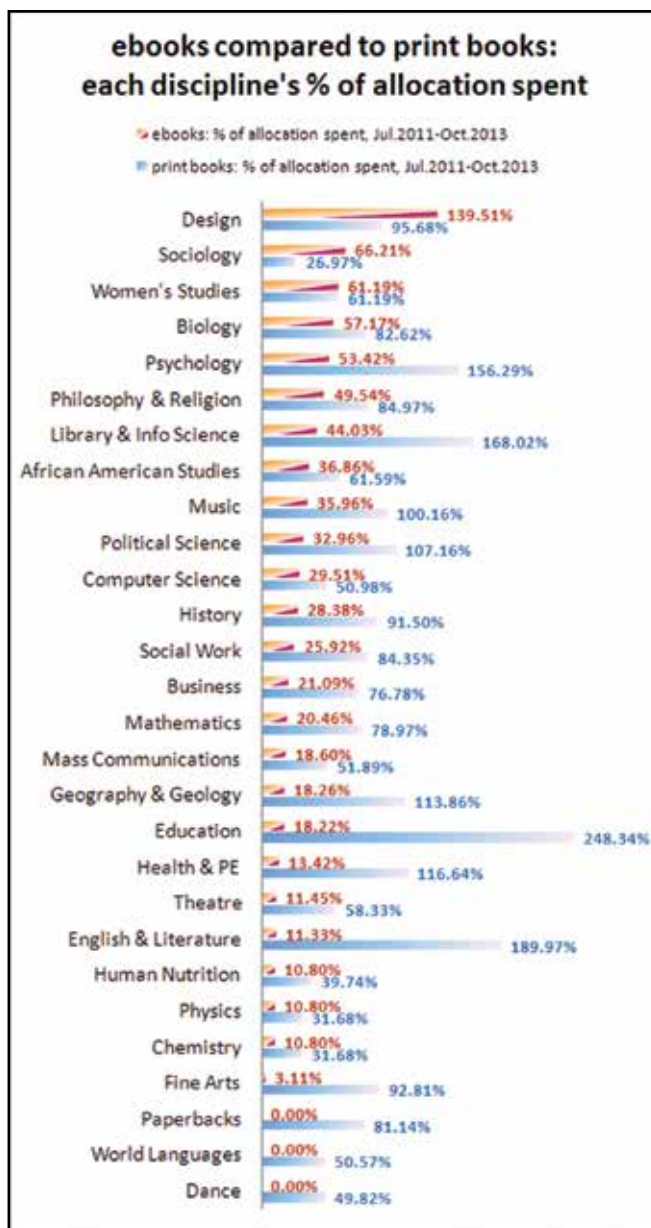
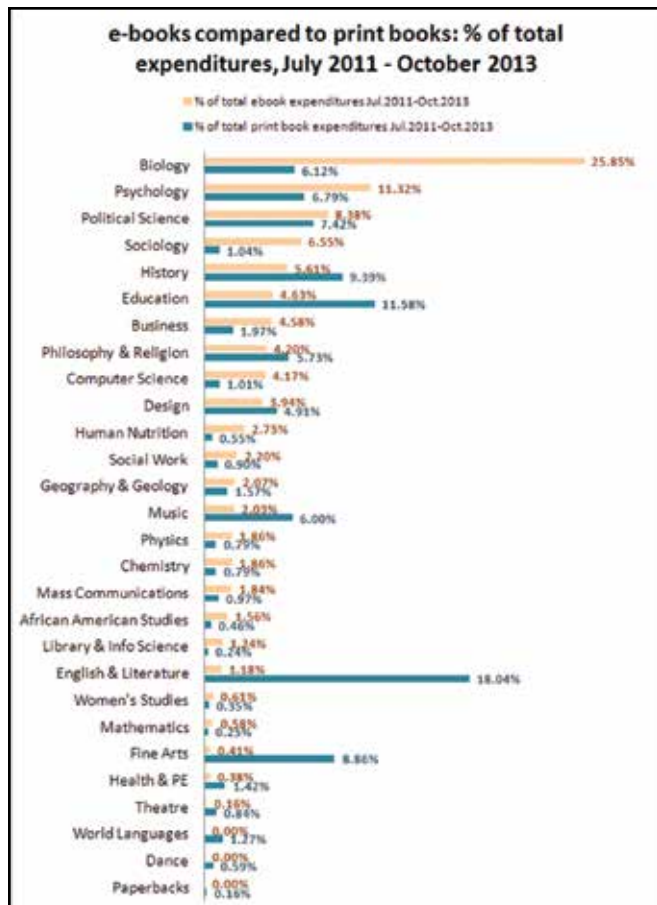
Susan’s Mini Homes includes an article written in November 2012, *Candy Containers as Antique Doll House Furniture* with photographs of homemade furniture from the 1870s to 1920s: <http://susanshouses.blogspot.com/2012/11/candy-containers-as-antique-doll-house.html>. *About.com Miniatures* features, among other topics, how to make custom dollhouse scale doors, windows, stairs, and other building parts in **Lesley Shepherd’s** 2010 article: <http://miniatures.about.com/od/makeminaturedisplays/tp/Make-Custom-Dollhouse-Scale-Doors-Windows-Stairs-And-Other-Building-Parts.htm>. A how-to site for tiny kitchen utensils you can make at home with non-toxic materials for little children is attractive and adorable on *Made by Joel’s* August 2013 blog: <http://madebyjoel.com/2013/08/miniature-kitchen-set.html>.

Television Series

Just for fun, I am including a stop-photography film clip of the British dolls’ house adventure *Tottie: The Story of a Dolls’ House*, based on books by the renowned **Rumer Godden**: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8aEF-1qr4CU>. This YouTube film presents rare footage of the 1980s animation series. A 10-minute YouTube film can be found at the link <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U8f2Le2B3ok>. Information about the producers of *Tottie* and other brilliant children’s television series can be found at the link <http://www.thechestnut.com/pinny.html>. **Peter Firmin** and **Oliver Postgate** created wonderful shows for almost three decades, bringing a love for dolls’ houses and their inhabitants into the late 20th century. 🐘

occurring in business, biology, English, political science, sociology, and history was found in disciplines with hybrid and online courses, graduate programs, students who work in addition to study and need off-campus access, and faculty members who value off-site electronic access for research. Informal user

feedback is not unanimous: some professors refuse eBooks under all circumstances, while others value the versatility of off-site access; many students express preference for print books despite acknowledging the convenience of eBooks. First and foremost then is the library's role as knowledge ecosystem in support of student learning. 🌐



Little Red Herrings — We Have Met the Enemy, And He Is Us



by **Mark Y. Herring** (Dean of Library Services, Dacus Library, Winthrop University) <herringm@winthrop.edu>

Sometimes, we librarians are our own worst enemies. That's not altogether unusual in any profession, but we librarians often make things harder than they need to be. We are in difficult times as a profession. Had it not been for the **Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program**, we might already be dead, a fact that I know gives many colleagues heartburn as the name "Bush" or the idea of Republicans helping sits unwell on most librarians' stomachs. And therein hangs the tale of shooting ourselves, first in the foot, and then in the head. But I'll come back to this particular point later.

First, we are sometimes our own worst enemies on our campuses. We are at times unyielding about our budgets. It goes without saying that we do not get enough money — who does on a university cam-

pus? — but we librarians often seem to be especially prickly about it. Sometimes, we think we're targeted for lower funding on purpose. Sometimes, we think everyone else is getting what they asked for, but we are not. Sometimes, we even think there is some sort of conspiracy of funding to starve the library of money. Seriously?

Second, we are, at times, unyielding about staff positions. Now, there are never enough positions in any area. I mean, how many businesses say "We've got plenty of staff"? But sometimes, we librarians think that there are jobs only librarians can do, and jobs only paraprofessionals can or should do, and never the twain shall meet, ever. But it really isn't that way any more (read **Gillian Gremmels'** "Staffing in College and University Libraries" (*Reference Services Review*,

Vol. 41 (2) 2013), but do not do it before bedtime or you'll never get to sleep). We think we have to do everything the same way we've always done it, a recipe for obsolescence for any profession. We make stark divisions between technical services and public services staff, and what each is "allowed" to do. We tend, too, to make especially sharp divisions between what intelligent student workers can do regardless of their ability to do them.

Finally — and the point I said I'd get back to — we shoot ourselves in the foot politically. I don't mean that librarians shouldn't have political opinions. Lord knows, I have them. I mean that as a profession we cannot afford to favor one political side against another publicly. And yet, we do that at just about

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