Librarian in a Strange Land
My Experiences as a Librarian in Abu Dhabi

How did I get here? The short answer is that Jill Gremmels, the Leland Park Director of the Davidson College Library, suggested I attend the American Library Association’s midwinter meeting in 2010. There I met Steve Shorb, who hired me as the access and public services librarian at New York University Abu Dhabi, in the United Arab Emirates. Thanks, Jill!

The slightly longer answer is that despite my wonderful experiences at Davidson and an aunt who had a long and happy career as a librarian, it never occurred to me to actually become a librarian until a few years after graduation, when I took a career assessment test. The first result was library director, and a light bulb went off. When I reached my final semester of library school, having already completed a master’s degree in French studies from NYU (that important “subject master’s” required by so many academic libraries), I needed a job. Who better to ask for advice than the director of my beloved alma mater’s library?

During my time at Davidson, I really appreciated the friendly and helpful librarians and library staff. While I was in graduate school, I appreciated the depth of resources available to me at a research university. Part of what appeals to me about NYUAD is the marriage of these two worlds—liberal arts college and research university.

The opening of NYUAD began a significant reconfiguration of NYU into the “global network university”—one integrated university with portal campuses in New York and Abu Dhabi (and soon, Shanghai). While NYU already had several study-abroad sites around the globe, NYUAD is distinctive in that we are a complete liberal arts college, with many of the same traits as Davidson. NYUAD is currently located in a temporary campus, until our permanent campus on nearby Saadiyat Island is completed in 2014. The entire campus is just two three-story buildings—the library occupies about half of two floors of one building.

My husband, Vic Lindsay ’04, and I moved to Abu Dhabi in April of 2010, and I started my job right away. Although NYUAD’s first class of about 150 students didn’t arrive until the end of August 2010, we were very busy making preparations to open a brand new university and library. When I arrived, we had approximately 1,000 books on the shelves. Now we have so many books (more than 12,000) that we’ve had to move some to an offsite location we call the Annex. NYUAD faculty are very interested in incorporating film into their teaching, so we have what is probably the largest DVD collection in the UAE.

Since we are new and our footprint is small, our collection is very limited, though constantly growing, so we rely heavily on electronic resources and the “mother ship” back in New York. We have more than 700,000 ebooks and nearly 100,000 journal titles available electronically! Bobst Library, the aforementioned mother ship, holds more than four million volumes, most of which are eligible for loan. Our patrons can log in to our catalog and request items be shipped to Abu Dhabi with just a few clicks. They can also request that portions of items be scanned and made available electronically. This service, as well as circulation, interlibrary loan, and course reserves, are my main areas of responsibility. I also get to participate in instruction, some collection develop-

(cont’d on page 2)
Over the last several months, the library has hired some new employees. Jim Harris has joined the Discovery Systems team as an archives assistant. He is working on a variety of projects in the Archives, including enhancing our digital collections, maintaining the Archives and Special Collections Web site, and contributing content to the Archives blog, Around the D, and to the Davidson Encyclopedia.

Harris holds a B.A. in history from Albion College and an M.A. in history from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. In addition to his duties at Davidson, he works as a research assistant at UNCC and has taught there as an adjunct instructor of history as well. His primary area of academic interest is Britain during World War I. Please join us in welcoming Jim Harris to the Discovery Systems team.

In July, the Information Literacy and Content Selection department welcomed two new information literacy librarians—Cara Evanson and Chris Langer. Evanson and Langer are newly minted librarians, both having received their MLIS degrees in the spring, and they bring valuable knowledge and experience to our team. Both have strong academic backgrounds; Evanson has a B.A. in Spanish and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa at Gustavus Adolphus College. Langer has B.A. and M.A. degrees in history from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. In addition, both worked in academic libraries while they were in library school. Evanson held several positions in circulation and technical services at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and also held reference and instruction internships at the university and at Gustavus Adolphus; she also had a summer internship at Mmankgodi Community Library in Botswana. Langer was awarded a series of internships at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, as well as an instruction internship; he served as Learning Commons intern, worked as an intern in the Multicultural Services department of the library, and also held a teaching assistantship in the library school.

As members of the ILCS team, which also includes Sara Swanson, Sara Lee Enders, and Susanna Boylston, Evanson and Langer will teach information literacy sessions, provide reference help and research support, assist with the development of training materials, and help to staff our “Ask a Librarian” services, including research consultations and the Text a Librarian service. They look forward to working with students and faculty, and we are delighted to welcome them to Davidson.

In Abu Dhabi, the U.A.E. Unlike Paris, we can find Ro-Tel tomatoes in the grocery store here. My husband and I are both originally from Texas, and Ro-Tel tomatoes are essential to many Texan recipes. Many of my favorite stores and fast food chains can be found here in Abu Dhabi or in nearby Dubai. But in other ways, Abu Dhabi is quite different from home; for example, many of the expat workers are single men, so there is a noticeable gender imbalance on the streets.

Working in Abu Dhabi has whetted my appetite for working and living abroad, much to my mother’s disappointment. We hope to stay at least through the opening of NYUAD’s permanent campus on Saadiyat Island, and after that, who knows?

For more information about Beth’s and Vic’s experience in Abu Dhabi, please check out their blog: http://uae.viclindsay.com/.

And for more information about NYUAD, please refer to this Web site: http://nyuad.nyu.edu/.
**DONOR LISTS**

Each year, we are so grateful for the generosity of people who contribute in many different ways to the library. The following lists encapsulate some of the ways people honor loved ones, friends, esteemed scholars, and others through their contributions. You’ll find contributions to existing endowed funds, new funds that have been established, book and archival donations, and funds given by the Alumni Office to memorialize former students. To all who have honored us this year with gifts, we extend our most heartfelt thanks. Your gifts greatly enhance our collection and the educational experience of Davidson students.

### July 1, 2010—September 15, 2011

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Mary Alice Mayor
Mr. and Mrs. John Alexander Mawhinney, Jr. ’39 in memory of
Mary Alice Mayor
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Mother’s Day  
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(clockwise from upper left) Students work in the new technology forum. Verna Case, director of the Center for Teaching and Learning, chats with staff member Robert Lee. Kathie Turner, communications professor, and students welcome visitors to the Speaking Center in the CTL. Librarians Chris Langer and Susanna Boylston converse with English professor Alan Michael Parker.