

InfoLink

A Community Newsletter of the Graduate School of Library and Information Science

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Up Front

Kosova—from the **Ashes Arising**

Nine Kosovars are visiting GSLIS this fall as part of an ambitious training project spearheaded by the Institute for Training and Development in Amherst, MA in collaboration with Simmons GSLIS. They are taking classes at Simmons GSLIS and interning at Brandeis University and the Five Colleges, where they are learning ALEPH 500, a library management software from Ex Libris). They are attending workshops at Harvard, MIT, Boston College, Boston University, Sabre Foundation, Boston Public Library, and libraries in Western Massachusetts. They are staying with host families and in apartments and hotels in the Amherst area, and have already visited New York City. This month, they will spend a week in Washington, D.C. When they return home in December, they will be the first in Kosova with modern professional training in library science.

The story of nine Kosovar Albanians and how they came to attend classes at Simmons GSLIS this fall begins in Yugoslavia in 1989. Or 600 years earlier in 1389, if you take the long view.

Kosova — the preferred Albanian spelling is *Kosova* — is small but historically significant to the ethnic Albanians and Serbs who have lived there for centuries. Until the late 14th century, the Serbs controlled it and much of Albania and Macedonia. But in 1389 they were defeated by the Ottoman Turks at the Battle of Kosova, ushering in 500 years of Turkish rule. The Serbs — who consider Kosova the cradle of their civilization and former seat of the Serbian Orthodox Church — have never forgotten this defeat. And although the majority of Kosovars are ethnic Albanians who have lived there for centuries, Serbs have persisted in trying to claim it as their own.

Serbia and its allies finally overthrew the Ottoman Turks in the First Balkan War in 1912, and Serbia gained Kosova as a province. After World War I, however, they lost control of it when Yugoslavia was formed and absorbed both of them. For the next 50 years or so, Kosova enjoyed peace and virtual autonomy within Yugoslavia.

In the 1980s, however, ultra-nationalist Serbs began consolidating their power to build a Greater Serbia under the leadership of Slobodan Milosevic. Their goal was to reclaim Bosnia and

Kosova and drive out the minority populations who have coexisted in the region for centuries.

Ethnic cleansing

In 1989 Milosevic used the occasion of the 600th anniversary of the 1389 battle in Kosova to revoke autonomy, institute martial law, and begin a campaign that came to be known as ethnic cleansing.

Kosovar Albanians responded by setting up a shadow government and Albanian-language schools. The University of Pristina split into two institutions: a Serb state-run school and a parallel university for ethnic Albanians. According to the online magazine, *World Education News and Report*, “the latter was strictly an underground operation with classes and research conducted in private homes, cellars and other makeshift facilities. Professors and their assistants continued to teach without pay or health benefits, while books and mimeographed lectures were printed in secret.”

In 1998, nine years after the abolition of Kosova's autonomy, the BBC reported that “...the Kosovo Liberation Army — supported by the majority ethnic Albanians — came out in open rebellion against Serbian rule. Threats of military action by the West over the crisis culminated in the launching of NATO air strikes against Yugoslavia in March 1999, the first attack on a sovereign European country in the alliance's history.”

Deportation, death and destruction

Milosevic responded to NATO's interference in Kosova by cracking down harder. In early March, Serbian military and paramilitary units moved into Pristina with tanks and went door to door ordering Kosovar Albanians to leave immediately. People were stripped of identity and property documents and herded into the streets. As they lined up for the waiting convoys, troops pulled some people out and executed them on the spot. In the villages, people fled on tractors or on foot; the old and infirm were carried in arms or pushed in wheelbarrows. Organized and individual rape by Serbian forces was widespread. An estimated 10,000 to 15,000 people were killed. Some are still not accounted for and are thought to be buried in undiscovered mass graves.

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KOSOVA



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Arriving at the Macedonian border, hundreds of thousands of refugees were refused entry and forced to wait days in open fields in the March rain. Within only a week, one million ethnic Albanians — 90% of Kosova's population — had poured out of the province into Macedonia and Albania. Meanwhile, Serbs destroyed homes, schools, mosques, hospitals, libraries, and historical and cultural monuments in a systematic attempt to erase the identity and fabric of Kosovar Albanian society. In June, NATO bombing finally forced Serbian forces to leave Kosova.

By the end of the war, 80% of the housing in western Kosova was destroyed. According to reports by the Friends of Bosnia organization, "Landmines were strewn everywhere resulting in numerous deaths and injuries as farmers returned to their fields and children went out to play. Many wells were contaminated with human or animal carcasses, the roads were in terrible condition, and the economic infrastructure was non-existent."

Books into clinkers

In October 1999, after Serbian troops had withdrawn, Andras Riedlmayer '88LS, bibliographer for the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at Harvard University and graduate of Simmons GSLIS, flew to Kosova. His mission was to survey war damage to architectural monuments, museums, libraries, and historical archives.

Riedlmayer reported that more than half of the public libraries had been destroyed or seriously damaged. Over one million volumes — nearly half of the collections — were lost. In addition, more than 40 percent of the public schools were destroyed or severely damaged, and 95 percent were in need of repair.

Erasing the written record

Most of the public records and archives, comprising almost the entire documentary base for the orderly functioning of government and society in Kosova, were sent to Serbia or burned. Because most refugees had been deprived of their personal documents, hundreds of thousands were left stranded after the war in a legal and documentary limbo, Riedlmayer said.

The manuscript libraries and historic archives of the Islamic Community of Kosova, which held the written record of 600 years of Islamic culture in the region, suffered terrible destruction, according to Riedlmayer. Hundreds of old, handwritten Korans and other manuscripts and religious books in mosque libraries were destroyed when 209 mosques — one-third of all Islamic houses of worship in Kosova — were burned down, blown up, or severely damaged by Serb forces.

The most serious loss, he says, was the burning of the Central Archive, housed in a building adjoining the 15th century Sultan Murad Mosque. He writes, "The Archive was torched by Serbian policemen on June 13, 1999, and burned all day, the flames providing a dramatic backdrop for television camera crews covering the arrival of the first British KFOR troops in Pristina."

Rising from the ashes

In June Serbian forces quitted the National and University Li-

brary, which they had used as a command center. Peacekeeping troops swept the building for booby traps and explosives for a week before library staff could enter. When the staff finally got inside, after an absence of nearly ten years, what they found was a shambles. Equipment had been stolen, furniture smashed, and the card catalog dumped in the basement. An estimated 100,000 books were later discovered to have been sent to a paper mill for pulping.

In 2002, after three years of instability at the Library, the Ministry of Education hired Ken Oberembt, an American consultant who specializes in international libraries, as interim director. His mandate was to find and train a new director and to develop a strategic plan for going forward.

A critical part of this plan would address the lack of library expertise in Kosova. It called for the creation of a cadre of Kosova professionals who would travel to the United States, train in modern library practices, and return to be leaders in a new university library. The next step was to find money to fund the training project.

In April 2004 funding finally appeared in the form of a grant from the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (under the Fulbright-

From *Lament for Vijecnica* by Bosnian poet, Goran Simic

Hays Act of 1961). Soon the RFP appeared on the computer screen of Julie Hooks Davis in Amherst, Massachusetts. Hooks Davis, who is director of the Institute for Training and Development, is interested in international projects like this. Her organization had already collaborated with Terry Plum, assistant dean at Simmons GSLIS, in training librarians from the Republic of Georgia and Kyrgyzstan, so a third partnership seemed like a natural.

Plum and Hooks Davis secured the grant and spent the year developing a project to train nine recent college graduates from Kosova in modern library methods. Part one of the project would entail bringing the Kosovars to Massachusetts, where they would take classes and intern at university libraries. They would learn core library science topics, practical skills, and teamwork. Part two would continue in 2006 with on-the-job training in Kosova. Their mission would be to support the university curriculum, develop the library collection, work with electronic and print reference materials, and most importantly, provide service to library users.

In April 2005, with the applications of 22 Kosovars in hand, Davis and Plum stepped onboard a plane at JFK Airport in New York City and headed for Kosova. When they arrived in Pristina, they immersed themselves in learning about the National and University Library. (These share one physical space, but are two separate libraries.) They spent hours talking with administrators from the University and the government about how to develop and implement the training. And they interviewed the 22 applicants. From these, they selected nine people. Seven are graduates in either English or Albanian language and literature; one has a degree in biology and another in electrical engineering. Four have been working at the National and University Library; one has worked at a public library and another at departmental library of the University.

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An uncertain future

The nine Kosovars are now more than halfway through their crash course in modern librarianship. When they return home in early December, they will face some daunting challenges. The most obvious is lack of money — to reconstruct their library, acquire books and electronic resources, continue their library training, and supplement their salaries, which are below the poverty level.

Another challenge for them will be to create for the first time a library devoted solely to the needs of the University. The National and University Library share one physical space but have separate missions. Unlike academic libraries elsewhere, however, the University Library has no formal relationship with the university other than the fact that it is located at the center of the campus. Its stacks are closed, and its librarians provide few reference services. Individual departments have their own private libraries, which are not accessible to people outside. So, the assumption in the training project is that the two libraries will separate in the near future, and a new library will be established to serve the University exclusively.

There's also the challenge of bricks and mortar. Large portions of the library need to be reconstructed to accommodate modern students' needs for information technology, open stacks, and various kinds of study spaces that are not only practical but also dynamic and vibrant. Such reconstruction will be a challenge managerially and financially. Several possibilities are being explored by Dr. Sali Bashota, director of the Library, and the U.S. Office of Pristina. One alternative is to create an annex that functions as a modern information commons and reference center in the government-owned art gallery next door.

The biggest and most important challenge, according to the participants, will be achieving independence. Legally part of Serbia, the province has been run by the United Nations for six years, secured by 17,000 NATO-led troops. "We are in a No Man's Land as far as our legal status," says Barlet Berisha, one of the visiting Kosovars. "It's extremely difficult to get a visa to leave the country. Our passports to come here are very special, from the United Nations. Even if we had money to go to international conferences, it would be very hard to just to leave." Without nationhood, the Kosovars remain isolated from the much-needed support of the international library community. They could join the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) under the flag of Serbia, but this would contradict their efforts to become independent.

Later this month, talks will begin to determine Kosova's future. Even though the conversation about independence has not yet begun in official places, it is going strong in the houses, cafes, and streets of Kosova. At a recent dinner party in Boston, the Kosovar librarians talked hopefully about the future. Sinuous Albanian music issued from a laptop computer on the dining table; laughter and talk filled the room. When the hostess rose to propose a toast, the Kosovars raised their glasses with "Gezuar!" (Albanian for Cheers!) and then amended it to "Gezuar, per nje te ardhme te lumtur dhe te pavarur!" Cheers, to an independent and happy future.

by Victoria Thatcher



L-R, top row, Shukrie Rama, Bedrije Mekolli, Bukurije Haliti, Terry Plum (assistant dean), Elhame (Eli) Buzuku, Barlet Berisha, Ramush Zeka. L-R, bottom row, Besim Kokollari, Ardian Haxhaj, Urim Sallauka



The remains of the main public library in the municipality of Malishevë (Southwestern Kosovo), which was burned down July 1998.

For more information on Kosova, see:

<http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/1998/10/kosovo/>
<http://archnet.org/library/webpages/kosovo/andras/>
http://www.unesco.org/courier/2000_09/uk/signe.htm
<http://www.ifla.org/faife/faife/kosova/kosorepo.htm>
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/static/map/yugoslavia/>
http://www.state.gov/www/global/human_rights/kosovoi/homepage.html#exe
<http://www.friendsofbosnia.org/index.html>

Snapshot Bonnie Isman Libraries for the People

"I'm a puzzle solver. I do needlework and put quilts together and knit. So I like to see pieces come together, to see a plan come together."

Bonnie Isman is the director of the Jones Library in Amherst, Massachusetts, and teaches "Organization and Management of Public Libraries" at GSLIS. She and her husband live in Amherst.

Q: You grew up in Topeka, Kansas. How did that influence you?

It influenced me a lot. I really *look forward* to big thunderstorms, and I can tell when there is a tornado coming by the color of the clouds. Also, people are generally friendly and optimistic in the Midwest, more so than in New England. So I think I'm much more interested in reaching out to people. I think it gave me a feel for customer relations.

What did you want to be when you grew up?

I was very involved with community theater and wanted to be an actor or a director.

But you went on to study Spanish and Latin American studies at the University of Kansas. What drew you to that?

I did a summer-long student exchange program in Mexico City. We got to do great things there that we'd *never* get to do in Topeka—like go to nightclubs, the beach in Acapulco, and bull fights!

Your mother supported this?

Oh, yes. Every time I had a birthday she gave me a suitcase!

How did you get interested in library work?

I was in Montevideo, Uruguay, on a Fulbright to study theatre and nationalism in Uruguay. That turned out to be a hot topic because it was a time of political upheaval, riots, and strikes. And then I discovered that there were NO public libraries. There were university libraries, yes, but they were on strike. Not finding public libraries was a shock, because libraries had been a regular part of my life. How do you do research if there are no libraries? So two years later when I moved to Washington, D.C., I began volunteering in school libraries, and then went on to get my M.L.S. degree at the University of Maryland.

Then you went to the Virgin Islands for four years, is that right?

Well, actually I first went to work right here at the Jones Library as the adult services librarian. After that I moved to the U.S. Virgin Islands and lived on St. Croix. I worked for the territorial librarian doing research on library development in remote locations, grant writing, and supervising VISTA volunteers. And I worked in a junior high school media center.

Why didn't you stay in the Caribbean?

There were three hurricanes during the time I was there! Too much for me. So when I got the chance to return to Massachu-

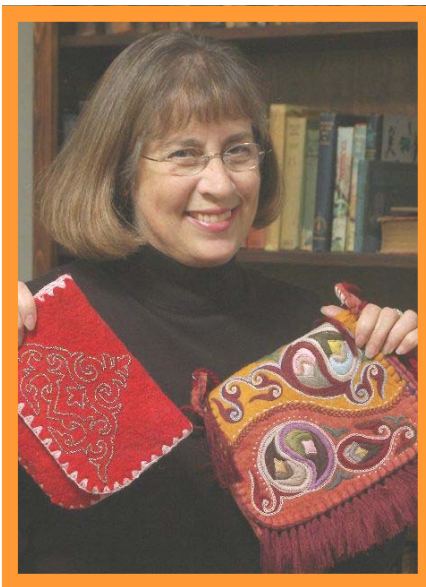
setts and work at the Jones Library again, I grabbed it.

You're pretty proud of the Jones Library. Why?

We have one of the major Robert Frost collections in the country—the poems and letters, first editions, photographs, wood-cut illustrations, and much more. We also have a great collection of Amherst archives from the period of Emily Dickinson's lifetime.

What would you say is the main connection between who you are as a person and the work you do?

I'm a puzzle solver. I do needlework; I like to put quilts together. To knit and see pieces come together, to see a plan come together. A lot of what a director does is puzzle solving, you know. And from my mother I absorbed a sense of [the importance of] community service. From my father, I developed a work ethic and initiative. It doesn't feel right if I'm not working on something.



Bonnie Isman, with bags purchased in Kyrgyzstan

What's something you're professionally passionate about?

Making the library a community center. Because that's what libraries are for! They should be connected to their communities. The biggest challenge to this happens when there's a population shift in a community. Like Holyoke has become primarily Spanish speaking. But many libraries don't have staff for new ethnic groups.

Tell me more about libraries as community centers.

The Americans with Disabilities Act has been a tremendous, positive force for opening up library buildings and services. Also when you have many languages and ethnic groups in a community, you have many opportunities for new cultural experiences, and that means libraries, too. Our local history collections should honor military service organizations as well as churches in ethnic

neighborhoods, because that's all part of their community. The new phrase for this is "creating social capital," but in the 1970s we called it "libraries for the people."

What's been the biggest lesson you've learned in life?

No matter what happens today, you get another chance tomorrow. That's the Midwestern optimist speaking. Like when we were trying to get the addition built at the Jones Library in 1987. Our first proposal was turned down, then it was accepted but the money got frozen. It took three years and several tries at getting it funded before we actually broke ground. But we did it.

What advice do you have for people just entering the profession?

Don't take no for an answer. If they tell you that there's no money for your project, start looking for alternatives.

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Snapshot

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Any personal or professional aspirations?

I'm open to a career change in retirement. I keep thinking about Julia Child, who started her cooking show in her 50s.

Has there ever been a pivotal experience in your life, something that changed your life?

Travel! My first trip was to Mexico City when I was in high school. Recently, I had the opportunity to meet librarians and to visit their libraries in Kyrgyzstan. It was a wonderful trip that taught me a lot about Islamic diversity.

Let's say you believe in former lives. Who or what were you?

Probably a Morgan horse. I grew up with horses, and my mother said that I turned into a horse for a few of my pre-teen years.

If you weren't doing what you do now, what would you do?

I'd be an ambassador overseas. Or perhaps write an exposé on all the lurid things that people do in public libraries.

Professional aspirations?

I'm developing ideas for a Melvil Dewey event and exhibit in Amherst to highlight the western Massachusetts connection to the Dewey Decimal System.

Do you have a motto?

"Never let them see you sweat."

If you could have a totally different career, what would you choose?

It would be great to have my own gallery for international hand-crafts, or a studio for knitting/weaving.

Is there a possession of yours that you particularly cherish?

One of my favorite objects is my grandmother's scissors. She went from a childhood in a little sod farm house in Oklahoma, to a career as a legal secretary at the Kansas statehouse. When I knew her, she owned her own brick house and seemed to be very self-sufficient. Among other things, she was an accomplished seamstress and did amazing crochet and tatting. Whenever I think of my own difficulties, I tell myself that if she could do that, so can I.

Interview by Victoria Thatcher

Congratulations to SCoSAA officers for Fall 2005

President : Krista Ferrante

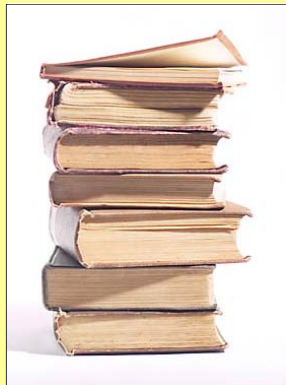
Vice President: Candice Clark Brown

Secretary: Helen Burns

NEA Liaison: Leigh Fought

Webmaster: Heather Soyka

ARMA Liaison: unfilled.



Welcome to New GSLIS Staff



Dixie Blake Foster is the new GSLIS Library Assistant for the GSLIS program at Mount Holyoke College. Before coming to Simmons, she worked for Atex, Inc., a global systems vendor in the newspaper and magazine publishing world, where she worked as an on-site installation engineer, spec writer, and QA engineer. She assists GSLIS West with reserves, requests for books and articles, and technical support. She is based in room L-403 of the Simmons Library, but travels to Mount Holyoke to offer workshops.



Jennifer Adams is the assistant at the GSLIS program at Mount Holyoke College. She earned her B.A. at Mount Holyoke College in history and design. She also worked at the college as a multimedia design and production assistant. Adams, who began attending the GSLIS West program last spring, lives in Northampton and is the mother of 15-month-old Miguel.

Ask Now for online library help

Having trouble finding articles or books for your class assignments? Intimidated by library databases? Interested in learning more about them? If so, you (or your small group) can schedule an appointment with Linda Watkins, the GSLIS librarian, or Bridget Capobianco, the library assistant, to learn about databases such as LISA, Factiva, RefWorks, Lexis Nexis, and others. Just go to the GSLIS Collection Library homepage at <http://my.simmons.edu/libraries/collections/gslis/> and select the "Ask Now" tab. Ask Now offers chat, email, and phone assistance. The online chat service puts you in touch with a live librarian Sunday through Thursday from 1:00 - 11:00 p.m., Friday from 1:00 - 6:00 p.m., and Saturday from 1:00 - 5:00 p.m. For more information, contact Bridget Capobianco at 617-521-2822 or bridget.capobianco@simmons.edu.

Folks on the Move

Adjunct faculty member **Anita Silvey** spoke in October at the annual meeting of the Ohio Library Association, giving lectures for the children's services division and the young adult division. She also gave the fourth Anne Scott McLeod Lecture at the University of Maryland this October, given under the auspices of the College of Library and Information Science at the University of Maryland. Silvey will present the announcement lecture for a new degree in children's literature at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, Nov. 9.

November and December Events

November 18, Friday, Special Libraries Association, Student Chapter (SLA) Meeting, GSLIS Student Lounge, 12:30 p.m.

November 18, Friday, NEASIST Evening Discussion and Networking with Steven Cohen. "Reader's Advisory: A Community Effort," Steven Cohen's recent column in Public Libraries magazine (Jan/Feb 2005), forms the basis for an evening of vision, demonstration and discussion with the author about leveraging the collective knowledge of our constituencies to bring online communities and libraries together. Join Steven and your colleagues for a vision of the next generation of libraries (accompanied by treats and beverages of course!). MIT Room 10-105 (Vannevar Bush Room), Cambridge, MA. \$25 ASIST Members -- \$35 Non-Members -- \$15 Student/Retiree/ Between Jobs (refreshments included). LIMITED SPACE—REGISTER EARLY. Register via the program website: <http://www.neasist.org/pc/programs/20051118.html>

November 21, Monday, Friends of the City of Boston Archives Fall Lecture, Vistas and Visions: Panoramas of the Near East. Father Carney Gavin, president and curator of the Archives for Historical Documentation and vice-president of the Friends of the City of Boston Archives will present photomurals of ancient cityscapes including Constantinople, Jerusalem and Cairo. For directions, visit <http://www.bc.edu/libraries/centers/burns/about/hours/>. Boston College Burns Library. 6:30 p.m.

November 22, Tuesday, Library and Information Science Student Association (LISSA) Meeting, GSLIS Student Lounge, 12:30 p.m. Pizza will be served.

November 23, Wednesday - November 27, Sunday, Thanksgiving Break. No Classes.

November 29, Tuesday, History of the Book Lecture, Thomas Broman, University of Wisconsin, Madison: "All the Nouvelles that is Fit to Print: Pierre Bayle and the Circulation of Scholarly News in the Late Seventeenth Century." Room 469, Harvard University's Science Center, Cambridge, MA. 4:00 p.m.

December 1, Thursday, Research Colloquia, presented by Gerald Benoit, Associate Professor. "The Role of Philosophy in Information Systems." P-207, 1:00 - 2:00 p.m.

December 5, Monday, History of the Book Lecture, William Flesch, Brandeis University: "What Shakespeare Thought His Text Was." Harvard University's Barker Center, Room 133, 12 Quincy Street, Cambridge, MA. 6:00 p.m.

December 8, Thursday, History of the Book Lecture, Susan Staves, Brandeis University: "How Did Eighteenth-Century Women Writers Get the Books They Read?" Sponsored by the Seminar on Eighteenth-Century Literature and Culture. Harvard University's Barker Center, Room 112, 12 Quincy Street, Cambridge MA. 8:00 p.m.

December 9, Friday, Dine Around...Boston! Join SLA Boston New Professionals Committee, SLA Boston Student Relations Committee, and SLA Student Chapter @ Simmons for dutch

Attention December GSLIS Graduates R.S.V.P. deadline: December 1

Want to celebrate all the hard work you've done? Attend the LISSA sponsored Graduation Recognition Ceremony. Though not a formal graduation, this event offers graduates a chance to share their success with friends and family. Ceremony begins at 3:00 p.m. with reception to follow. Semiformal dress is requested. Light refreshments will be served. R.S.V.P. by December 1 with the number of guests attending to Beth Crockett at crockete@simmons.edu. Sponsored by LISSA. Third Floor Conference Center, Main College Building, Boston Campus. 3:00 p.m.

TOR due on December 12 at 10 a.m.

Part 2 of the TOR is due on December 12th by 1:00. The Tech Lab is holding several workshops to offer assistance with Part 2. The schedule is as follows:

November 15, 12:30-2:00

November 16, 12:30-2:00 5:30-7:00

November 17, 12:30-2:00

Please go to <http://ptrc.simmons.edu/calendar.asp> to sign up for workshops. If there are less than 3 people signed up for a workshop 24 hours in advance - the workshop will be canceled. Even if you are not a new student or need to complete the TOR - please feel free to sign up for the trainings.

treat dinner in Boston. Meet new people, connect with colleagues, and have a good time! All are welcome to join us, so bring your friends. There is no cost beyond what you eat and drink, and it's a great opportunity to network! R.S.V.P. at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=458781496877> - please fill out this quick, one-minute form to R.S.V.P. so we can get an idea of how many people will be there. (But feel free to drop in that night.) Contact Rebecca Metzger (617-983-2971 or rebecca.metzger@simmons.edu) or Anna Burke (781-239-6407 or aburker@babson.edu) with questions. Menu and directions are available at <http://www.brownsugarcafe.com> or by calling 617-266-2928. Brown Sugar Cafe, 129 Jersey Street (The Fenway), Boston. 6:00 p.m.

InfoLink

InfoLink is the monthly newsletter of the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at Simmons College. Its purpose is to provide school- and career-related information and to foster community among the many diverse people who make up the school.

Staff

Victoria Thatcher, Co-Editor and Writer

Alisa M. Libby, Co-Editor

Em Claire Knowles, Advisor

Jennifer Doyle, Advisor

Elyse Pipitone, Proofreader

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Copy deadline for the December issue is Friday, November 18, 2005.