**Report to the Chief Collections Development Officers**

**Smithsonian Libraries**

**June 2017 –May 2018.**

**Collections:**

**Space:** For the Smithsonian Libraries, space issues are a recurring concern. Smithsonian Libraries are generally located one per museum except for the larger museums (i.e. Natural History and American History). In these two cases, there are a number of small sub-locations that house specific materials relevant to the local research divisions of the museum. As museums are renovated, library space is often seen as an opportunity to repurpose. SIL is working with each museum to define the research needs of the local research community and tailor on-site collections and services to meet this need. Each museum faces some kind of renovation project or over-all space concerns; with some worse than others. Among them - planning for the National Air and Space Museum Library’s move to the Udvar Hazy Center in the summer of 2018 has been a challenge as we face the significant distance that will exist between the collection and its user-base (34 miles). We have not yet sorted out this logistical issue. The National Air and Space Museum is undergoing a major renovation that will include relocating the NASM Library permanently. During the six-plus years life of this project, NASM Curatorial and Library staff will be relocated to “swing space” in a building adjacent to the National Mall. This new space will be available for occupancy in June, 2018 however, the NASM Library will be relocated to space in the Udvar hazy Center in Chantilly, Virginia – 34 miles from the researchers who rely heavily on the Library collection to support their curatorial research. The Library of the National Museum of American History has had eleven “sub-locations” housed within the curatorial divisions in order to place much-needed library materials within a quick reach of the curatorial staff. In the last year, five of these locations have been closed and the collections materials reabsorbed by the main NMAH Library, transferred off-site, or withdrawn. This trend will continue until all but one of these collections has been returned.

The Libraries’ twenty-one branches are in the midst of an effort to review the collection development polices and re-cast them as “collecting plans” following on similar efforts within the museum units of the Smithsonian. These collecting plans will guide efforts of our staff in developing and managing branch library collections for the next decade.

**Digitization:** Several major digital initiatives are underway. The Libraries continues to build the ***Cultural Heritage Library*** (**CHL**) to include works in History, Art, and Culture; social sciences and anthropology. Work in the current year includes materials on Native American languages (bibles, dictionaries, &c.) and World War I. Partnerships and funding continue to be sought for the CHL each year because Federal funds are insufficient to support this project.

**Budgets:** The ongoing debate in Congress over the FY 2018 Federal budget dragged on well into FY 2018, only being settled on March 22nd. Because the government was funded for just over half of FY 2018 on what is known as a “continuing resolution”, we were unable to make any material budgetary changes or do serious planning because we had no enacted appropriation until late March. Work on the FY 2019 budget has only just begun. SIL is conducting its annual serials review as we plan for FY 2019. Collections and Branch Library staff are reviewing holdings and using Counter, ILL, and other data to evaluate e-serials and e-resources as well as having discussions with stake-holders about what materials we need to support the research mission of the various museums and research institutes of the Smithsonian. SIL began accessioning e-books in the fall of 2017. The Libraries empaneled a working group of staff to work with Smithsonian researchers and curatorial staff to elicit responses on what types of e-books would support on-going research at the Institution. A pilot project enabled a series of e-books for each department (Art, History and Culture, and Natural and Physical Sciences). The effort was successful and e-books are fully a part of our milieu of research tools offered to our researchers. The Smithsonian Libraries has been able to increase support for collection growth due to funds raised in the Smithsonian Capital Campaign and modest increases in Federal Funding. Because endowment funds are continuing to payout at nearly 5%, most monographs are purchased with endowment payouts and purchasing has remained level. The Libraries was a full participant in the first (and now completed) SI wide capital campaign and we exceeded our goal handily. We are happy that so many of our donors still find books and library support rewarding. Of course, the need to find funds to support much of the work of the Smithsonian Libraries means that our fund raising work will continue a-pace!

**Staffing:** SIL’s newly opened branch, The *Library of the National Museum of African American History and Culture*; is located in a new Museum on the National Mall. This new library also features a genealogical program, a family history center, and an archives. While most staff for this new Library are in place, we will finish the remaining recruits this summer. In general, the Smithsonian Libraries’ staff has grown modestly, some of this growth is attributable to funds that have come in as part of the recently-concluded Smithsonian Capital Campaign that supports specific projects such as BHL and other digitization efforts. Staffing in our branch libraries remains static but in all surveys of SI’s research community; the appreciation of SIL’s staff and their support of the Smithsonian’s Museums and Research Institutes remains very high.

**Other:** SIL is celebrating its 50th anniversary as a unified system. The Smithsonian has had library collections from its inception in 1846 as curatorial and research staff built collections in the pursuit of their work. Over the decades, these collections grew or merged with other similar collections as staff retired and/or donated their materials to the Institution. In 1968, then-Secretary S. Dillon Ripley, merged all of these small libraries to create a streamlined, unified library system noting that libraries were fundamental to the Institution’s research effort. Thus was born the Smithsonian Libraries. Please visit us at <http://library.si.edu/> for an overview of our plans to celebrate this milestone.