

REFERENCE NOTES

A program of the Minnesota Higher Education Services Office (HESO) at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities

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Jean and Beth on the Road

During the month of March, Jean and Beth traveled throughout Minnesota to meet with several participating reference nodes. They also made stops in North Dakota, at UND and NDSU, to conduct

OCLC FirstSearch information sessions.

During their trip they visited with Ginny Clark of Great River Regional Library, Candy Herbert of Viking Library System, Laurie Radde of Lake Agassiz Regional Library, Barbara



Lunsetter of Northwest Regional Library, Happy Micheau of Kitchigami Regional Library, and Jane Engh and JoAnne Griebel of the Traverse des Sioux Library System. One common theme throughout the visits was the fact that within the next 2 years most libraries will be moving to larger quarters.

INFORMATION BITS

Revised MORE Manual

A committee has been created to update and revise the 1994 edition of the Minnesota Opportunities for Reference Excellence (MORE) manual. The committee is still seeking volunteers to assist in the writing, revising, and editing of the manual. Please contact Mary Parker at 612-624-1024 or 800-462-5348 for more information.

Conferences in Minnesota

June 5-10: Special Library Association Annual Conference, Minneapolis Convention Center. Please see their web site for more information: www.sla.org/conf/99conf/index.shtml

MINITEX Office Closed

The MINITEX Office will be closed on Monday, May 31, for Memorial Day.

Since Jean and Beth are both fairly new to MINITEX Reference this was a great opportunity for them to talk with other reference librarians in the state about upcoming projects and new resources. Everyone they spoke with agreed that with the resources available on the World Wide Web, the questions being referred to the reference nodes are more difficult to answer than in the past.

Jean and Beth were both very impressed with each library they visited. All of the libraries seem to be doing a superb job of meeting the needs of their regional libraries. Out of the six systems they visited, all but a couple of the smaller branch or member libraries have Internet access. Most of the libraries had some sort of sign-up program and time limitation for patrons accessing the Internet. Internet workstations at all the libraries were in use when they visited.

A couple of unique features of the libraries we visited include the life jacket lending program at the Pine River Library, headquarters for the Kitchigami Regional Library System. The "Hello Homework" web site produced by the Traverse des Sioux Library System has a collection of web sites for students arranged by subject. You may visit the site at www.tds.msus.edu.

The St. Cloud Public Library, headquarters for the Great River Regional Library System, has an inviting children's room with lots of comfortable areas for children to play and read. The morning Jean and Beth visited, the library had just become home to a very scared rat (domestic) that had appeared in the book drop that day! It was being acclimated to its new surroundings in a cage in an office, soon to be moved into the children's area to join cages of hamsters for the children to enjoy.

Jean and Beth are looking forward to visiting more reference nodes in the near future.

NEW ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

OCLC FirstSearch Databases

On a recent trip to Duluth Public Library, MINITEX Reference was asked which FirstSearch databases other midsize public libraries were offering their patrons. We contacted OCLC and, even though they don't keep statistics on this topic, they felt that public libraries tend to choose general, consumer, and business databases such as *Wilson Index*, *Wilson Select*, *SIRS*, *Books in Print*, *Article First*, *EthnicNewsWatch*, the *IAC Health* database. It also depends quite a bit on what type of CD ROMs the library has.

The following are some databases we thought might be particularly useful in a public library setting.

WilsonSelect Information

WilsonSelect Information database is entirely **full-text!** It contains indexed and abstracted articles from over 800 periodicals, all with ASCII full text online. The database includes records from five different H.W. Wilson databases including *Readers' Guide Abstracts*, *Social Sciences Abstracts*, *Humanities Abstracts*, *General Science Abstracts*, and *Wilson Business Abstracts*. *WilsonSelect Information* includes information from 1994 to the present and it is updated weekly.

Consumers Index

Most libraries have great sections in their libraries for consumers to research listings of products and their ratings by testing organizations. *Consumers Index* does this in an electronic format. It indexes the usual rating literature as well as "alerts, warnings, and recalls of specific products, services and facilities." It covers 241 periodical titles from *American Health* to *Yachting*, some dating back to 1986. It provides links to free, direct access to full text journals if they are available, and web links to commercial producer sites.

A recent search for articles about lawn mowers resulted in nearly 105 citations. Most were from June 1998, *Horticulture* and had links to the web sites for many commercial manufacturers of lawn mowers. A search for "lawn mowers" and "ratings" retrieved 5 citations to recent articles in *Consumer Reports*.

Biography Index

Biography Index is another database that can be particularly useful in a public library setting. *Biography Index* covers 2,700 periodical titles back to 1984, books and juvenile materials. Almost 1,800 titles are added each year including autobiographies, bibliographies, critical studies, etc. For those students who are doing school reports it can be a valuable tool. Using the advanced search option in this database allows the searcher to limit the search to juvenile materials, helping younger students find materials more suited to their ability.

WEB SITE HITS

The spotlight this month is on gardening information on the Internet. With everyone's thoughts turning to outside activities now that the weather is gracing us with warm, sunny days, we thought a few hints about gardening resources on the web would be just the ticket!

"Plant Information Online" www.plantinfo.umn.edu

This award-winning site was produced by staff at the Andersen Horticultural Library and Magrath Library (formerly St. Paul Campus Central Library) at the University of Minnesota. This is a subscription web database with the very reasonable subscription price of \$59.95 for institutions and \$39.95 for individuals. The site features

- mail order sources in North America for over 60,000 plants
- 150,000 citations/references in current horticultural/botanical literature to approximately 75,000 plants
- directory information to over 1,000 North American nursery and seed catalog companies with a direct link to their web sites

"Yahoo Directory" [www.dir.yahoo.com/Recreation/Home and Garden/Gardening/](http://www.dir.yahoo.com/Recreation/Home%20and%20Garden/Gardening/)

The Yahoo directory leads to 349 web sites in 28 subcategories from bonsai to xeriscape. One of the currently featured web sites is:

"Virtual Garden" www.vg.com/

This site features access to the *Time Life Plant Encyclopedia* which can be searched by plant name or attribute. Other features of this site are a zone finder, a gardeners' forum and guides to gardening products.

"Garden Solutions" www.gardensolutions.com/

Garden Solutions offers online shopping, free catalogs, and InfoDigger. InfoDigger, sponsored by Garden Solutions and the National Gardening Association, offers 10,000+ garden tips, articles, and answers to frequently asked questions.

"U of MN Extension – Gardening and Commercial Horticulture" www.extension.umn.edu/Hort/

Developed at the University of Minnesota, this site is geared towards the Minnesota gardener. The site features information about gardening, landscaping, lawn and turf care, tree and shrub care, flowers, vegetables, pest control and yard waste. It includes information about training, seminars, and short courses for Minnesota fruit and veg-

etable growers, nursery crop producers, floriculture producers, etc. It also provides information about the Master Gardener program available through many county extension offices in Minnesota.

More Sheet Music web sites:

A special thanks to **Mary Rae Oxborrow** of Plum Creek Library System who shared the following web site with MINITEX Reference:

“Sheet Music Direct” www.smda.com/

Sheet Music Direct is a resource for music that can be downloaded for a small fee. When we checked recently the site was under construction and temporarily unavailable. We are looking forward to checking it out when it’s back online.

SEARCHING THE WEB

The following searching hints might make it easier for you to search the web and find the site you are looking for. Let us know if you find a winner!

Truncate:

If you are not sure of the spelling of your search term, such as an artist’s name or the name of a town, truncate it. AltaVista uses an asterisk (*) as the wildcard. It must be at least three characters from the start of the word.

Basic search:

Use (+) to include or (-) to exclude words in your search. If you get quite a few hits, exclude words that produce unwanted hits. For example, if you are looking for biographical information on an author and get quite a few hits for his book on amazon.com, exclude “amazon.”

Advanced Search:

Use the Boolean Operators:

- AND: Finds only documents containing all of the specified words.
- OR: Finds documents containing at least one of the specified words.
- NOT: Excludes documents containing the specified word. NOT must be used with another operator, like AND.
- NEAR: Finds documents containing both specified words within so many words of each other.

Multiple Hits:

If you do get quite a few hits, take a look at a few of them. Many sites have links to other sites on the same topic and one of them might be to the site you are looking for!

NEW PRINT RESOURCES

As a salute to all the gardeners in the MINITEX area, this month our print resources column highlights gardening and landscaping handbooks.

The Brooklyn Botanic Garden's Gardener's Desk Reference, Janet Marinelli, general editor, and Stephen K-M Tim, illustrator (SB450.96 .B76 1998).

The Brooklyn Botanic Garden's Gardener's Desk Reference unlocks the door to a vast assortment of plant knowledge from around the world. The hundreds of indispensable sidebars, graphs, tables, plant lists, maps, and illustrations found throughout the reference make it even more accessible and attractive. All plant lists are organized by region, and every recommended species or cultivar has been chosen by an experienced landscaper tested by years of gardening in the area. This guide is useful for both the experienced and novice gardener.



Get Yard Smart: The Easy Quick-Start Guide to the Workings of Your Property. (SB472.3 .G48x 1998, ISBN: 0762100443)

This guide, part of the *Readers Digest Smart Series*, assists amateurs in the ways of landscape gardening. This guide is great for first time home landscapers who are looking for ways to keep the grass green, the weeds out, and the neighbors hidden.

Reference Notes

MINITEX Library Information Network
University of Minnesota, S-33 Wilson Library
309 19th Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55455-0414
Reference Phone.....612-624-4150, WATS 800-462-5348
Main/Reference Fax.....612-624-4508
Beccone, Jean.....612-626-9843, becco001@tc.umn.edu
Friedmann, Beth.....612-624-7873, fried004@tc.umn.edu
Parker, Mary.....612-624-1024, m-park1@tc.umn.edu
Sackett, Susan.....612-624-4336, sacke008@tc.umn.edu
Woessner, Jeanette.....612-624-5025, woess001@tc.umn.edu
Main Website.....www-minitex.lib.umn.edu
Office Hours.....Mon-Fri., 8:00am-4:30pm

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

Occasionally, MINITEX Reference Services receives a request for a poem, quotation, picture, story or something that cannot be found by checking standard sources. The Reference staff would like to appeal to the collective memory of MINITEX participants for assistance. Please forward any leads on the following questions to Reference Services at: **612-624-4150 or 800-462-5348**. Here is what we are looking for:



The name of the group that performed the 1950s/60s song “Teddy Bears and Hobby Horses.” (959)

The origin of the phrase, “Cast thine eye upon the storied marble.” (912)

Information on the phrase “amber days” which are days when you can forecast the weather. (909)

The poem that begins, “Cradle is a slumber boat.” (900)

We are still looking for:

The music, title, and songwriter for a song that contains the lyrics: “Witches hat, cool black cats, broomstick rider, mice and rats.” (782)

The name of the song that contains the lyrics: “I built a mansion in the valley. I even bought a little band of gold. I thought someday I’d place it on your finger.” (834)

The poem “Oh, What a Beautiful Wash” by Mary Alice Oman. (844)

MINITEX Library Information Network

University of Minnesota

S-33 Wilson Library

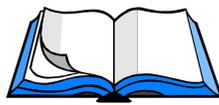
309 19th Avenue South

Minneapolis, MN 55455-0414



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topics you would like addressed

fantastic web sites



spotlight on your
reference library

We would like to know what you would like to see in upcoming *Reference Notes*. Please either call us at 800-462-5348, send us an e-mail (see page 3 for addresses), or fill in your comments below and mail this form to MINITEX Reference.

Terrific web sites, reference books, and other sources you use:

Comments / Suggestions:

Name: (optional) _____

Library: (optional) _____ Phone: (optional) _____