

Welcome to the February 2012 issue of *C&RL News*. The coming of the new year means the return of students to campus. A new term can mean a perfect opportunity to evaluate services and spaces to better serve your community. At Norwich University in Vermont, the desire to make students more comfortable asking for assistance with research projects led to development of “The approachable reference desk.” Deborah Ahlers and Heidi Steiner outline the theory and practice of re-designing their desk in this month’s issue.

The increase in digital items such as archival photographs can mean a boon for special collections departments. But making items searchable for users can be a major undertaking. In their article “MetaWHAT?” Kristy L. Dixon and Lisa T. Nickel of the University of North Carolina-Charlotte describe a collaborative project to train access services staff in the creation of metadata for special collections materials.

Archival images and collections can play a role in improving physical spaces, as well.

The University of the Pacific used their unique collections to improve library aesthetics, as Shan C. Sutton and Robin Imhof outline in their article “John Muir in the study commons.”

In this month’s Scholarly Communication column, Heather Joseph of SPARC provides reflections on the recent Berlin 9 Open Access Conference and examines “The impact of open access on research and scholarship.”

With voting in the ALA/ACRL elections scheduled to begin March 19, Trevor A. Dawes and Debbie Malone, the candidates for ACRL vice-president/president-elect, share their plans for the association to help you cast an informed ballot.

Make sure to check out the other features and columns this month, including Internet Resources on financial literacy, an essay on the connections between working as a reference librarian and in a 911 call center, and the new ACRL Visual Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education.

Thanks as always for reading the *News*.

—David Free, editor-in-chief
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