Alumni returning to campus for their first reunion often remark on the changes that have occurred on campus and around the town of Davidson. Imagine how the Class of 1959 must have felt as they returned for their 5th reunion in 1964. We’re not referring to any of the major culture shifts of the 1960s, but rather a change that might have been noticeable from the air for those who were returning by plane—the creation of Lake Norman.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of Duke Power’s damming of the Catawba River, which flooded the area that is now Lake Norman. This act forever altered the landscape of the areas around Davidson and, of course, led to the creation of the beloved “Lake Campus.” Prior to the lake’s creation there were farms, villages, homes, roads, mills, churches, and other structures on the lands now covered by the lake’s waters. In celebration of the 50th anniversary, and in keeping with our ongoing outreach to the Lake Norman area community, the College Archives (http://sites.davidson.edu/archives/) has implemented a crowdsourcing-based project entitled “Under Lake Norman.” The practice of crowdsourcing involves asking the public for information related to the project, rather than the archives staff conducting all of the research.

Archivist, Jan Blodgett, and her team have created a geographic information system-based (GIS) map to present photos and information on sites that are now under the lake. Individuals who are interested in the Under Lake Norman project can visit our Web site (http://sites.davidson.edu/archives/community/under-lkn) to find an interactive map, Web forms, and other contact information. Visitors to the site can use these Web tools to share their own stories, information, and photos that relate to the project. The information is then curated by the archives staff and posted back to the Web site and map to create the exhibit. Contributors who grant permission are acknowledged on the site. To date, more than 25 historic sites have been identified, including battle sites, plantations, mills, and cemeteries.

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In the Spring 2011 issue of *Columns* we announced Davidson’s pioneering implementation of a new cloud-based integrated library management system, OCLC’s Web-Scale Management Services (WMS). Davidson has been using the system, which has subsequently been renamed WorldShare Management Services (also WMS), since June of 2011, with the most obvious change to readers being the transition of the online catalog to Davidson Worldcat Local (http://davidson.worldcat.org/).

WMS is coming out of its infancy, having just had its 100th library go live, but there is still significant product development by the vendor and education of the system’s users that is necessary to maximize the usefulness of the product.

One of the hallmarks of academic librarianship is cooperation across institutions, as we try to most effectively use our systems and combine our voices to influence how the vendors who sell these systems continue to develop them. Creating a user group is a common way of doing this. Loosely defined, a user group consists of system users who interact with each other as well as representatives from the system vendor. By participating in the user group, these individuals can learn from each other and provide feedback on enhancements they would like to see implemented and problems they would like to have solved with the system.

Being a relatively new application, WMS doesn’t yet have a formalized user group. However, this March, Davidson hosted the first-ever, user-organized WMS gathering. Librarians from Davidson College, High Point University, and UNC Greensboro organized the event with assistance from OCLC. Donations of space by Davidson’s Center for Teaching and Learning, and refreshments provided by OCLC and Davidson College allowed representatives from 15 institutions and five states to gather with no cost beyond travel for participants. Over the course of a very full day, attendees listened to presentations from colleagues using the system (including our own Susan Kerr, Systems Librarian), heard updates on development from OCLC product managers, provided feedback on those plans, and put faces to names, making new connections to colleagues with the same interests as their own.

Overall attendee feedback judged the day a great success. Everyone learned a great deal and made the kind of personal connections that can only help us learn more from each other and enhance the services we provide to our institutions. Representatives from our vendor indicated that, based on our feedback, they are already addressing some of the points raised. Furthermore, we had a chance to showcase Davidson’s wonderful campus. Users in other geographic regions are already emulating our model and are planning their own gatherings, and in the spirit of collaboration we have been able to share the feedback we received so they can perhaps improve on what we did. Next year, hopefully, we will be able to learn from them and continue the improvement cycle.
Helping Students Polish their Information Literacy Skills

Many first-year students arrive at Davidson feeling confident in their abilities to find information, especially information on the Web. This confidence doesn’t always translate into good research skills, however. These students grew up with the Web and live in a sea of information; they know that it is easy to find information on just about any topic. Finding “some” information on a topic isn’t enough at Davidson, though. Faculty members expect students to find good, authoritative sources. Students soon discover that research requires evaluation skills, time, and more effort than they expect.

To help first-years acquire essential information literacy skills, we asked incoming students to complete a nationally normed survey called the HEDS Research Practices Survey. Students completed the first round of this survey last summer, before classes started, and we used the findings to determine where their information literacy skills were (continued on next page)
Follow our New Blog

If you enjoy reading this newsletter and are interested in what is going on in the E. H. Little Library, you might want to receive more frequent updates by following the new library blog (http://sites.davidson.edu/littlereflexions/), “Little Reflections.” Blog entries are submitted by several different library employees and address a wide range of topics. Because the blog is updated at least once a week, you can learn about projects and issues “in real time” without having to wait several months for the next edition of Columns.

One of the more recent posts describes our visit to the new Hunt Library at N.C. State University, perhaps the most state-of-the-art academic library in North Carolina. You can see photos of the new facility, along with musings about the future of libraries. Another post promotes the library’s outdoor classroom to faculty who might be looking for an open air destination for their spring classes. This facility has a chalkboard and seating, and is semi-secluded because it is surrounded by shrubbery and brick walls. Still another post describes the range of services offered by our Interlibrary Loan (ILL) staff. In addition to requesting resources from other libraries, ILL staff members also digitize print items from our collection for students and faculty.

Visit our blog today and keep current on library news. From the top level page, you will find links to lots of other interesting resources and filters that allow you to sort for information that is of the most interest to you. And, if there’s a topic about which you would like additional information, send us an e-mail; we’ll address that in future posts.

Information Literacy continued

lacking. We then refined the learning outcomes for the library sessions for Writing 101 classes and focused on those skills.

This spring, we are surveying the first-year students again, with the same instrument, to see where their skills have improved and where they are still lacking. We’ll use this information to refine our learning outcomes for upper-level classes.

As an incentive to take the spring survey, we offered a free pizza party to every first-year residence hall with 100 percent participation. The women of fourth Cannon mobilized quickly and claimed the first grand prize, plus the bonus of home-made dessert!

Through these efforts, we are trying to meet students where they are and design information literacy sessions, tutorials, guides, and other learning tools to help them polish their skills and navigate the sea of information more effectively.