Later that night, the building was under the jurisdiction of the Fire Marshal so he had complete control over everything. University officials had to report to him, the police had to report to him, everyone reported to the Fire Marshal’s office, so it was a matter of him knowing we wanted to at least know what was going on, could we at least take a look? And he permitted us to do this. We just went in far enough to where we could take a look, we didn’t actually go into the areas. We just looked down; it was dark, there were no lights because all the power had been shut down. The smell was really strong and there was water everywhere from the fire. It was a mess. That was kind of wrenching and discouraging. But at that point you’re in a recovery mode and you’re thinking, “What do we have to do now?” You’ve got this problem and you have to react, start reacting in a positive way as much as you can.

Nancy Dennis
Assistant Dean

Those of us who were on DRAT, which is the Disaster Recovery Assistance Team, were to report at 8:00 a.m. Monday morning over at Centennial Science and Engineering Library [CSEL]. At that point Fran didn’t know the extent of the fire, although she did say it was a pretty serious fire and she hadn’t been into the building yet but it was a three-alarm fire. It was significant. We got off the phone and I’m thinking, “Holy Moly.”

By Tuesday we knew we needed to get information tents up out front of Zimmerman. People were coming to the doors not even aware there had been a fire, even though there was caution tape with Do Not Enter/Closed signs. So a lot of library folks stepped up and we got the SUB set up. Interlibrary Loan [ILL] was up and running in three days. The library machine started working—what can we do to help students get through finals?—that sort of thing.

Nancy Dennis
Assistant Dean
Barbara Aragon
Physical Plant Custodian, Zimmerman Library

Deborah Cole: Did you just wait until you came to work to find out what to do?
Barbara: I was wondering what was going to happen to me, because I work here at the library and I was thinking, “Oh-oh. I don’t know where I’m going.” I assumed that the library had burned, but I didn’t really comprehend how bad it was. I thought it was just a little corner someplace.

On Tuesday, I did my morning shifts and then I came over here to Zimmerman and the yellow caution tape was all around the library. I walked up and asked the security guard what was happening and if I could come in. And he told me the library had burned and was closed. And I thought, “Okay,” and went back to my boss. He assigned me to another area until the library administration decided to move back in.

Pat B.
Receptionist, Office of the Dean, University Libraries

Pat: Linda Skye kept in touch with me. At first I monitored and forwarded the messages on the administrative offices’ phone line. I was doing that from home, which was o.k. I felt useful.

Deborah Cole: How long did that go on?

Pat: At least a week, maybe two? The Office of the Dean was moved temporarily to Bruce Neville’s office in Centennial.

Deborah Cole: And what was that like?

Pat: It was very different. We had strict orders to go in, go up the stairs and go directly into the office. We weren’t allowed to walk around the library anymore. So basically we just went to our offices, the restrooms and out the north doors. That was it.

Deborah Cole: What was it like working in the building when just you all were there?

Pat: It was a problem. Most people’s phones didn’t. Mine worked well for a couple of days. I didn’t have any problems. Then I was sitting at my desk, not using my phone, and all of a sudden it went “crackle, crackle, crackle!” and then it was dead.

(Shocked) The other phone in the reception area still worked, so we got an extension line and ran that phone to my desk and taped the cord to the floor so we wouldn’t trip over it. And then everyone whose phone didn’t work didn’t work in Budget and Cost Management (BCM) and the administration offices—whoever needed a phone—had to come to my desk to use it. I think there were a couple other phones that worked, but most people didn’t.

D: Was Johann also in his office down the hall toward the West Wing?

Pat: No, I don’t think so. I think it was just BCM and us. I think they did that because everything the Dean’s staff and BCM needed to answer questions was up there—payroll and files and such—so it was either that or move all the computers and files and phone numbers to another building, which I think was going to be a problem.
control of Zimmerman to UL on a limited basis, fire watch required

Library managers evaluate Parish as a relocation area for Zimmerman employees

Maloy Construction, Inc. begins demolition of Zimmerman basement

May 6
Zimmerman Reserves moves to Centennial

May 8
Final exam week begins

Fran had to ask the Fire Marshal for permission for Ed and me to enter the building to get all of our budget files. Bruce Neville was very kind in setting Kitty and me up in an office in the basement of CSEL. The office had a computer, but no printer available. We needed our printer and some office supplies, which Louie and Bonifacio [Louie Perez and Bonifacio Anglada, Facilities Services] were able to get for us. The computer did not have the software we needed to prepare the budgets. We had to ask permission to download the required software onto the computer we were borrowing. John Benedetto was very kind in downloading what we needed and setting up our printing. We were able to check out one of the laptops on loan, so that Kitty and I could both be on the computers although only one had printing capability. Kitty was able to print all of the budgets for Fran’s signature and turn them in to the Provost by our deadline. I would like to express my thanks to the Fire Marshal, Fran, Bruce, George, John, Ed, Louise, Bonifacio, and Kitty in helping BCM meet the Provost’s budget deadline.

Behind the scenes, each of the more than 4,000 requests resulted in a library worker, in hard hat, mask and gloves, searching with a flashlight to locate a particular book.

Oh Payroll is DUE!

May 1st wake up call
Phone tree starts for all
Timesheets are due
Approval is granted only for you
An escort and you may go
Fifteen minutes given to and fro
Sara took over to complete
The deadlines we did meet
No fire will hinder our pay
Thanks to Sara and Connie... HOORAY!

Oh Budgets are DUE!

It’s BUDGET time of year
But have no fear
Even if Juanita and Kitty are displaced
Oh, the challenges they faced
They shared an office in the basement of Centennial
The software on the computer was not compatible
No printing available on the laptop on loan
All we could do was moan and groan
Finally printing capability was fixed by John
Signatures were received by Fran
Budgets were turned into the Provost
To Kitty, I offer a TOAST!

Juanita Trujillo
Business Manager, University Libraries

I received a very early wake up call from Fran on May 1, 2006, to begin the phone tree for Budget and Cost Management. When I called the BCM Staff, Sara informed me that timesheets were due. I called Fran, who said she would have to receive approval from the Fire Marshal. Fran called me back and said that the Fire Marshal would only allow me to enter to retrieve the timesheets. I was scheduled for annual leave on Monday and Tuesday but reported to work both days. Fran asked Nancy Dennis to meet me at the north doors. I informed Sara to meet us at the north doors as well. Sara told us where to find all of the timesheets on her desk. I was given fifteen minutes to retrieve what I needed with Ed as an escort. We were given dust masks to wear. Ed and I grabbed everything we thought Sara would need and returned prior to our allotted time. Sara and I took the timesheets to Parish Memorial Library [PML] where Sue Awe let us use a classroom and some office supplies. Connie came to help Sara and me to retrieve the files, so that I could leave since I was scheduled for annual leave. All the timesheets were hand-carried and the deadlines were met. Everyone was paid with no delay thanks to the efforts of the Fire Marshal, Nancy, Sue, Ed, Juanita, Sara and Connie.
Russ Cole
Nighttime Shelving Supervisor, Zimmerman Library

Deborah Cole: Were you able to sleep much Sunday night?

Russ: Well, when I got home I did think about the fire but went to sleep at some point.

D: Did you get a call the next day?

R: I got an e-mail when I got up but I’m sure I talked to Ava sometime early in the morning. I can’t remember exactly. I think Ava was calling everybody at 3 in the morning. I’m not sure. It was clear to me even at home afterwards that staff were communicating at that point. So then the question was, “Where do I go in the morning?” I figured I’d just call Ava in the morning and find out.

D: What was it like when you finally went back into the library?

R: I have to say, curiosity was right up there because we knew by that point, of course, that the building survived and that the damage to the materials, though very sad, wasn’t as bad as it could have been. So I had a little bit more uplifted feelings about it, so it was almost exciting to be back there and see that we could start again.

D: How about doing the night shift again?

R: For me it was weird because, it being finals week that week, there had to be some place open late and because it couldn’t be Zimmerman anymore, it was changed to Centennial. So the very next night I found myself being the only staff member to close out Centennial and I was unfamiliar with closing there. So I did think about that a bit that night and of course, I wondered, “How did the fire start?” And you see the same people, who you know aren’t students, who used to come to Zimmerman. So I was really careful there, watching every little corner and just running around all night making damn sure nothing happened there. I had a sense of total confusion and displacement. But the students there were so great. Still, there was just a sense of responsibility that you really don’t want to think too much about. You’ve got to do it but you don’t want to think about it a lot.

Sarah Stohr
Library Resident, University Libraries

I was in Lexington, Kentucky and scheduled for a phone interview on May 5. So I was trying to keep up with my UNM news. On May 2, I was reading the Santa Fe New Mexican online and I read “Zimmerman Library Fire.” And I thought [laughter], “That’s interesting.” But there was no specific information at all. Big fire? Little fire? Campfire? I had no idea.

I like to think, though, that’s why I got my job, because I knew that the fire had happened and during my phone interview I asked about it. [Laughter]

Pat B.
Receptionist, Office of the Dean

Deborah Cole: Did it feel good when those of you in the University Libraries administration were able to return to Zimmerman soon after the fire?

Pat: Yes. Lots of teams were broken up. Some were spread between Centennial and Parish or Fine Arts and Parish. Some were just wandering around with a cell phone and couldn’t do any work for some time. We had a purpose that we could work on right away and actually had a place to do it. There were people working in the SUB at reference desks.

D: And Centennial is ALL basement.

Pat: Yeah. And it looks real simple, but you start walking through it with an eye toward; “Have I checked every corner possible?” and then all these new corners and halls appear.
didn’t have seniority. So there was that question going on for a while, whether or not I would continue to be employed.

D: Some students have talked about that. I doubt any other staff had that concern, but since you were such a new hire, you didn’t know what to think.

P: But I did keep my job! And I seemed to stay busy. There was always something I could do, you know, “Here, can you go do this?” And that’s great, because I was helping. I was contributing. It can really feel bad not to be needed. I don’t like that feeling. I want to be productive. I want to be a part of the team. When something is wrong, I want to help fix it.

Consuelo and AJ. Labelle
Student Employees, Print Resources, University Libraries

Consuelo: I thought, “Oh my god, I wonder how bad it is?” Would we go in the next day and have no work? And Kathy Gienger, our supervisor, had left for the first three days of that week, so we were hanging around, walking around.

Deborah Cole: You didn’t know who to talk to or where anyone was?

AJ: Yeah.

C: We contacted Sever [Sever Bordeianu, Head, Print Resources] and he was the one who set us up at the information tables.

AJ: We told him we didn’t have a job. And he told us we could do the information tables until the books started coming through again because we had first priority to get positions. The information table was fun. A piece of cardboard could have done my job.

D: What did you do? What was it like?

C: “You can turn your books in at Centennial [points left] or Parish [points right]. There’s where they are.”

AJ: “Here’s a map.” We just had to tell the students that we knew nothing about the fire and they’d have to find that out later.

D: Which tables did you staff?

AJ: I did both, the one in the front of Zimmerman and the one in the back, but I spent most of my time at the one in the back, on the north side. It was nice; it was under the trees.

Kathy sent us an e-mail telling us we were famous because we were on the front page of a newspaper, at the table in front of the library. We did that for a couple of weeks.

Ellee Cushing-Cruver
Student Employee, Center for Academic Program Support (CAPS)

Deborah Cole: Did you reach anyone after you first heard about the fire?

Ellee: I don’t think I ended up getting a hold of anyone. I left messages saying I wouldn’t bother coming to work because I didn’t think I could get in and then by 7:30 a.m. we had work e-mails going out to all the student employees. So by that time the staff had gotten together and decided we’d be closed that day and figure it out.

D: At what point did you get back to doing something?

E: Gosh, by noon Monday we had found a place to tutor, so the staff was frantically shooting out e-mails, “Come to work if you can! Nobody will get in trouble if you can’t, but if you’re on campus, come to work.” We’d found space in the Student Union Building [SUB] and in Centennial. So by that time the staff had gotten together and decided we’d be closed that day and figure it out.

“I’ve worked in Zimmerman Library for over 20 years. When I learned about the fire, my heart sank and my mind raced. What did we lose? I couldn’t go in to check on the collections, and I felt so helpless. I thought I appreciated it, but now I realize how much that building, its WPA furnishings and the historical documents, mean to me.”

Terry Gugliotta, Albuquerque Tribune, May 10, 2006

“The thing about the fire is that school was still going on. People still needed their resources.”

AVA KARGACIN
Zimmerman Library

“A piece of cardboard could have done my job.”

“... that communication aspect, both public relations and for people within the library, was a crucial function to get going.”

MARY ELLEN HANSON
RMBA

The first thing when I walked in there, was just this whole pile of badly burned books stacked up next to the government information and reference desk and it just sucked the breath out of me.

Dan Barkley, UNM Today, May 1, 2007

The story of the Zimmerman Library fire is a testament to the resilience of the University of New Mexico and its community. Under the leadership of Director Rebecca D. Hall and the dedicated staff, the library continued to operate, despite the devastating loss of its collection. The community rallied around the library, and the staff worked tirelessly to ensure that students and faculty had the resources they needed. The story of the fire is a reminder of the importance of libraries in education and research, and of the essential role they play in our society.

Ellee Cushing-Cruver
Student Employee, Center for Academic Program Support (CAPS)
D: What was it like when students started coming?

E: It was like a community and we were all suffering and this big thing had just happened. The only people who came at first were our regular users. They sought us out and found us. It was a community feeling, like “We have to get through this week.” I don’t remember getting too many irate, angry people. They just dealt with it.

Lee Byrne
Technical Services and Online Tutoring, CAPS

On that Monday, May 1, I couldn’t do anything but talk to Karen Olson, our director; she and Michele Steiner were out in Smith Plaza trying to figure out what to do. They did an excellent job of pulling people together, getting people to give them space. They were working from the plaza and then from an office in the Arts and Sciences advisement center. They were calling in everything they could. At noon they had space in the SUB for the tutors and a space in Centennial worked out with the UL administration. It was just amazing.

I don’t remember if it was Monday or Tuesday that the computer issue arose. Both of our file servers are up on the 3rd floor of Zimmerman. There was an issue about being able to connect to them. I think they were able to connect for a little while and then lost connection. The power went down and must have come back up. Oh, I know, Ed Padilla came up and started one of our servers. I talked to him on the phone, telling him how to start it. It was Wednesday or Thursday that the ethernet connections went and we were no longer able to connect.

So I was trying to deal with these problems from home. From my point of view, I thought I might as well stay home to deal with them because no one was going to let me in the building to get the computers or the file servers or anything else, so I talked to and e-mailed people from home. It was crazy.

“Zimmerman is more than a place to study; it is a collection of materials crucial for research for students and faculty.”

REED DASENBROCK
UNM Provost

5/1/2006 1:56 PM

ZIM circ staff will be redeployed to CSEL and Parish. Dave H. and Vanessa from Parish will be working on this.

The expectations for staff for the next few days will be to provide desk coverage. We are setting up a ref desk at the SUB beginning tomorrow morning at 10:00 a.m.

For those of you who do not have e-mail access at home, I will be making telephone calls to let you know if you are expected to come in to work the desk tomorrow.

Thanks for your patience as we find our way.

5/1/2006 2:44 PM

... it does not appear that Zimmerman will open any time this week. Employees who work in Zimmerman Library should not report to work until they have been contacted by their supervisor with information on when and where to report. Camila will call an all-library meeting as soon as we have enough information to make it useful.

We are working on a plan to redeploy student employees so that they can be employed at least throughout the end of the semester.

5/2/2006 1:02 PM

Some members of the Library Disaster team will be doing a walk through of Zimmerman this afternoon at 1:00 p.m. and then will be meeting with the Fire Marshal, Physical Plant, Risk Management and contractors to determine the next steps. Also, a small group of people were able to get in this morning to retrieve some essentials.

Camila is calling an all-library meeting on Thursday afternoon in the SUB Ballroom A.

In addition to the reference desk set up in the SUB, we have arranged to have information tables set up outdoors on both sides of Zimmerman in order to provide information to students and direct them to other libraries for services.

5/1/2006 4:10 PM

Dan and I have developed a reference schedule for this week. We have secured a space at the SUB on the 1st Floor outside of the Ballrooms to provide reference services until we can move back into Zimmerman.

We appreciate your patience and flexibility as we attempt to maintain a consistent level of public service.

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REED DASENBROCK
UNM Provost

to the Elks Bldg.

∆ BMS CAT awarded contract for cleanup of building, books, and HVAC

∆ BMS CAT pack-out of salvageable materials begins May 11

Warehouse on 1st and Lomas leased for UL

D: What was it like when students started coming?
E: It was like a community and we were all suffering and this big thing had just happened. The only people who came at first were our regular users. They sought us out and found us. It was a community feeling, like “We have to get through this week.” I don’t remember getting too many irate, angry people. They just dealt with it.

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Evangel Oates
Library Researder, University Libraries

As the temporary reference desks some people would get angry because we didn’t have details about the fire. “Well, we don’t know.” And they’d say, “Well, how is it that you don’t know?” “Because we don’t.” Some people wanted details about the fire and we couldn’t provide them. Other people would be angry because certain things wouldn’t be available. You can understand that, but at a certain point you want to say, “Well, be angry at the person who set the fire, or whatever ‘suspicious thing’ caused it.” For the most part people were just curious. Some people were satisfied with our answers and some weren’t.

A.J. LaBelle
Student Employee, Print Resources

We have a friend named Melinda who was in her last year, just about to graduate and finishing up classwork at the time of the fire, so she was going bonkers. Instead of just going into the library and getting what she needed quickly, she had to fill out and submit requests and then wait. She said it was so terrible and slowed things down so much. Well, she graduated so I guess it turned out good. [Laughter] She was very studious, very determined.

Joe Lane and Kathryn Wood
Interlibrary Loan, University Libraries

Deborah Cole: What equipment did you have to get ready?
Joe: Just the computers set up to print right, to download articles and request forms for patrons. And we had to say “No” to everything, of course, because they weren’t letting us into Zimmerman.
Kathryn: We were up and running within three days. I think we were running on that Wednesday. I was amazed at how fast we got going.

“AJ VANCE
First outbound shipment

of periodicals (to be cleaned and stored) trucked to BMS CAT, Ft. Worth, TX
May 12
Sever Bordeianu and Kathy Gienger begin to sort unsalvageable journals.

HEROES
RESCUES

Randall Moorehead
Interlibrary Loan, e-mail, May 4, 2006

“We ordered 432 items today (and are currently caught up). 76 electronic articles were already received and delivered to patrons (even though these were only requested this morning). In addition, 106 books already in the pipeline were received, processed, delivered to CSEL circulation, and patrons were notified. The 80 returned books recovered from Zimmerman circulation were processed and sent to the mail room.”

Rik Burkard
Supervisor, Marking/Bindery, Print Resources

THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN

The only beings to live through the fire that occurred on April 30, 2006, were my fish. Though the Marking/Bindery area in the basement of Zimmerman Library (where my office used to be) is just a few walls and offices away from the origin of the fire, those fish survived. The Pink Convicts (African Cichlids) actually did well in the murky, ash-darkened water for the two weeks it took before I could retrieve them. Ed and Louie fed them whenever they were allowed into that part of the building.

When I finally had my 15 minutes to get what I needed from my office space, I grabbed all the work-related items then put the fish tank on a cart and took the elevator up to the Dean’s Conference Room. Patricia Campbell had agreed to watch over them. Since seven fish had survived, I dubbed them “The Magnificent Seven.” Unfortunately, shortly after they were relocated one fish committed suicide by leaping from the tank. Another tried the same a few days later but was rescued by the administrative staff. A coffee mug now weights the top of the tank to keep the fish from jumping out.

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The only beings to live through the fire that occurred on April 30, 2006, were my fish. Though the Marking/Bindery area in the basement of Zimmerman Library (where my office used to be) is just a few walls and offices away from the origin of the fire, those fish survived. The Pink Convicts (African Cichlids) actually did well in the murky, ash-darkened water for the two weeks it took before I could retrieve them. Ed and Louie fed them whenever they were allowed into that part of the building.

When I finally had my 15 minutes to get what I needed from my office space, I grabbed all the work-related items then put the fish tank on a cart and took the elevator up to the Dean’s Conference Room. Patricia Campbell had agreed to watch over them. Since seven fish had survived, I dubbed them “The Magnificent Seven.” Unfortunately, shortly after they were relocated one fish committed suicide by leaping from the tank. Another tried the same a few days later but was rescued by the administrative staff. A coffee mug now weights the top of the tank to keep the fish from jumping out.

Randall Moorehead
Interlibrary Loan, e-mail, May 4, 2006

“We ordered 432 items today (and are currently caught up). 76 electronic articles were already received and delivered to patrons (even though these were only requested this morning). In addition, 106 books already in the pipeline were received, processed, delivered to CSEL circulation, and patrons were notified. The 80 returned books recovered from Zimmerman circulation were processed and sent to the mail room.”

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I was one of the first persons allowed to return to work in my office. My strongest impressions that first day back were strangely not the building's condition and the loss of our journals in areas of strength—that was a reality but could be worked through and may even leave us better off than before the fire. It was feeling alone and disconnected from others, also guilty to be back when others were waiting anxiously at home or trying to be productive in odd corners where space was available.

The lesson I learned? A building, especially a beautiful one such as Zimmerman, is important but essentially loses its personality when the people who make their living and learning there are absent. People inform a place not the other way around.

Susan Magee
Coordinator, Web Services and Customer Studies, University Libraries

My typical work day back in May of 2006? I'd arrive at 7:00 a.m. I'd check Lib Info, PML eRef and FastInfo to see if anybody had asked questions and then I answered those. After the first two or three days we had a FAQ on the UL website. So I would print out the newest version of the FAQ and on the way to the morning DRAT meeting, I would take copies of the FAQ to the various service desks at the SUB and on both sides of Zimmerman. I'd come back from the DRAT meeting two hours later and incorporate anything new into the FAQ. At lunch I took print-outs of the new version of the FAQ to the service desks. In the afternoon I usually did my regular work or I'd be on the reference desk. Then I'd go to the afternoon DRAT meeting and write myself notes about what to change on the FAQ. I'd go back and check Lib Info and FastInfo and PML eRef again for any questions. I went home at 5:00 or 6:00. At 10:00 or 11:00 I'd sign on and start updating again. So I did four updates a day of the FAQ and tweaked other web pages. I had to make changes to anything that was Zimmerman-related, because Zimmerman was “dead,” you know. That May I put in about 60 hours extra.

At the DRAT meetings I was the voice of “This is something we need to tell people.” “We're going to get questions about that. How are we going to answer those questions?”

Kathleen Keating
Reference Coordinator, University Libraries

On May 16 we had those 15 minutes to get into our offices. It was very dark outside our offices. You couldn’t see very much. You could still smell the smoke but we wore those masks. The first thing I did was download my hard drive because I knew that was where everything I needed was and they said that the computer might not make it. I didn’t know if the computer would come on. I have time to do the whole drive, but I did download the main files. I wasn’t so worried about anything else. I grabbed a few things—one picture and a couple of personal things—and left. Everybody was in a big hurry.

Ava Kargacin
Operations Manager, Circulation, Zimmerman Library

Ava: That first day? We realized we were homeless and we were trying to figure out where we could go. And that’s when I discovered the wonderful world of science, because we ended up in the basement down there in Centennial. It was finals. The students didn’t know what was going on.

I spent the first couple of days tracking them down to tell people where they could go. And that’s when I discovered the wonderful world of science, because we ended up in the basement down there in Centennial. It was finals. The students didn’t know what was going on.

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A: Oh, yeah, it got everybody. Some of them didn’t show up. They decided that since there was a fire, school was over; especially students who leave right after finals. It was the ones who worked intersession that were really confused. They just didn’t know what was going on. I don’t think anyone knew what was going on. We weren’t sure.

D: And how did the students keep in contact with you?

A: Oh, yeah, we had nothing set. I call it “the summer of being homeless.” They put us wherever they could. Basically, I just lived out of my backpack. I started at Centennial then walk over to Parish because that’s where Steve Keller and Kate Doremi were doing all the paging. Once we were able to get in to page books. Then we had to move all the reserve books over there. The thing about the fire is that school was still going on. People still needed their resources, so we just had to figure out where to take them and that’s how we ended up taking all the reserve books over to Centennial and the holds over to Parish. We were so busy doing that we just let the grapevine know that we started every day in Centennial, so they’d find me there in the morning. They’d come to Centennial to sign in and then go over to Parish to work. The branches were great, because they extended their hours—Zimmerman is usually open long hours because of finals. They were trying to pick up that lag and so we moved the students back and forth. You never knew where we were doing what or which library would be doing the longest hours.

D: And how did the students keep in contact with you?

A: They did it through my cell phone, which is why I ended up having a huge cell phone bill that first month. Most of my students knew my cell phone and they all started using it. That was the fun thing about everyone realizing they could use my cell phone. I didn’t do that. I wouldn’t answer my cell phone. I’d run to another phone and call them. But most of the students knew how to find me because we just let the grapevine know that we started every day in Centennial so they’d find me there in the morning. They’d come to Centennial to sign in and then go over to Parish to work. The branches were great, because they extended their hours—Zimmerman is usually open long hours because of finals. They were trying to pick up that lag and so we moved the students back and forth. You never knew where we were doing what or which library would be doing the longest hours.

Ava called me very late one evening asking if I would be willing to go back in the building. It was like some kind of Chernobyl-like disaster; you know, “Are you willing to go back in this contaminated environment?” For myself, I don’t have any particular health problems, so I wasn’t worried about the smoke. They said filter masks would be available and they had air purifiers. So I was actually somewhat excited. I felt like part of a vanguard. I really wanted to work in the library.

I ended up working right out of the library didn’t work for her. But students had a really hard time figuring out what to do, especially if they’d left work in the library. Eventually the Provost sent out a notice asking faculty to take things like this into consideration. So it worked out for her. But students were really confused. They just didn’t know what was happening. Once we were able to get in to page books. Then we had to move all the reserve books over there. The thing about the fire is that school was still going on. People still needed their resources, so we just had to figure out where to take them and that’s how we ended up taking all the reserve books over to Centennial and the holds over to Parish. We were so busy doing that organizing the students, I didn’t even think about what the building looked like until they let us in. That was in May. We came in and paged the books then took them to Parish and held them and contacted people.

D: What was it like when you first came into Zimmerman again?

A: It was weird. It was surreal, because people were in Zimmerman cleaning and working. I saw Dan and Anne around. Ed was in there. And we put on our little helmets. I felt like something out of a Saturday Night Live skit. We went up, pulled books, and put them on carts. I saw Dan and Anne around. Ed was in there. And we put on our little helmets. I felt like something out of a Saturday Night Live skit. We went up, pulled books, and put them on carts. I saw Dan and Anne around. Ed was in there. And we put on our little helmets. I felt like something out of a Saturday Night Live skit. We went up, pulled books, and put them on carts. I saw Dan and Anne around. Ed was in there. And we put on our little helmets. I felt like something out of a Saturday Night Live skit. We went up, pulled books, and put them on carts. I saw Dan and Anne around. Ed was in there. And we put on our little helmets. I felt like something out of a Saturday Night Live skit. We went up, pulled books, and put them on carts.

It was always confusing. One morning I’d be paging and then the next hour I’d be on Fire Watch. I felt like something out of a Saturday Night Live skit. We went up, pulled books, and put them on carts.

I checked on the kids who were at the table near the north door to stop people from coming in. They’d see us coming in. People would even walk past the table and try to walk in.

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Twila Firmature
Coordinator, eResources, University Libraries

I have several stories and a few insights related to the fire. The first has to do with paper. As an eResources librarian I always thought I didn’t depend that much on paper. But with the fire I realized that I had been using paper a lot, even though I do back up all my work on a hard drive and do work mostly online. I still had an entire office full of paper. Well, with the fire, and being displaced and away from my office, I went non-paper. I guess you could say I finally went all-E.

As a team, we were, if not up and running as normal, pretty functional by the end of that first week from home and various places. We could do a lot of our work from home. By the second week we were back to “business as usual” in a very unusual way. I am very proud of that. I was really impressed with people’s putting the institution’s needs in front of their own.

Linda Skye
Administrative Coordinator, Office of the Dean

DEAN’S SWEET AND NOT SO SUITE

Monday, May 1, ready for the last push of the semester, almost to intersession where one can take a deep breath and start to see summer.

Phone rings at 6 a.m., who could that be?

It’s Fran…in overdrive, but somehow very calm too…fire in the library, everyone’s okay, fire’s out but much damage. Come to work at Centennial today, meeting at 8 a.m.

D.R.A.T.—Room full of faces, branch directors, all the deans, folks from UNM, many, many more. Standing room only. Time to get to work!

Move in with Bruce Neville: four new office mates. What a sweetheart—open arms to all. What do you need? No problem, consider it done.

First trip inside the disaster—masks on! Scurry in, scurry out. Grab what you need. (Impossible to do.) Computer files, faculty search files for eventual hiring of Sarah Stohr, ongoing projects. Smoke smell burns the throat, makes your eyes feel itchy, ozone machines on full blast—a wounded Zimmerman.

As word spreads about the fire, we are beginning to get offers of help. We will not know for some time which journals we might need. Some titles were destroyed; others will be sent to a company that will try to repair water/smoke damage. Meanwhile, I will keep records of any offers, but will not be accepting any materials for quite some time. We are very grateful for all the support, and look forward to working with those who want to help us rebuild.”

LINDA K. LEWIS
Collection Development
e-mail, May 7, 2006
As everyone in the UNM community knows, we had a serious fire in Zimmerman Library on Sunday night. Our thanks go out to everyone who responded to the emergency. By the time I got there, UNM Police, the Albuquerque Fire Department and people from the State Fire Marshal’s Office were there and got the fire under control quickly, limiting the damage. Thankfully, no one was hurt.

As everyone also knows, we are close to the end of the semester, a crucial time for library use. For those who use Zimmerman primarily as a place to study, we have already made a number of alternative arrangements. The Centennial Science and Engineering Library and Parish Library are open extra hours. CAPS has relocated to Centennial for tutoring in Math and Physics and to the SUB for all other subjects. The SUB will be open extra hours, and we’ve set aside some quiet zones in the SUB for those studying for finals. These arrangements will continue through exam week, and details will be made available on a daily basis on the home page of the University’s website.

But of course Zimmerman is more than a place to study; it is a collection of materials crucial for research for students and faculty. I regret to say that it will be closed to the general public as well as to students and faculty for some time. We need to make sure that the building is safe before it can be open for general use. However, as expected, by Thursday, we will have a document delivery system in place by which you can make a request at another library for a book. Library staff will go into the stacks and retrieve the book and get it to you at Centennial, Fine Arts or Parish. This will be available only from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and we are still working on how the system will work, so check the website for additional information. This will only cover books in the general stacks, since the periodicals and all other materials stored in the basement will be unreachable for the time being. Since some students will need this service in order to complete research papers for courses this semester, I’d like to ask others to wait until the end of exam week in order to use the system. If Zimmerman has not opened by the beginning of the first summer session, we will continue this in the Summer Sessions. It may be possible to use Interlibrary Loan for other materials, so please consult with ILL and with reference librarians.

Assuming this gets up and running by Thursday, faculty need to understand that students will not have had access to the library for three crucial days of the semester, with limited access thereafter. There will be some courses, particularly in the fields covered by Zimmerman—humanities, social sciences, and education—in which this may cause a delay in students being able to complete assignments. I am therefore asking all faculty to be sensitive to these issues and to be flexible in terms of offering extensions on assignments in cases where access to library materials during these days was crucial for the completion of the assignment. We obviously hope that everyone can complete the semester on time, and I know the community will pull together at this time. The library staff and faculty, led by Dean Camila Alire, will be working long hours to get everything back to normal just as soon as is possible, and I would like to thank Dean Alire and everyone in the Library for their dedication and effort this week and in the weeks to come.

A final word: Sunday’s events remind us that unexpected events do happen. I was disturbed to hear that a few people on Sunday didn’t take the fire alarm seriously and some even tried to evade the security and get back into the building. Please obey the directions of all security personnel, whether they be from the Police, the Fire Department, or Campus Security, not just in the next few days but more generally.

Good luck with the rest of the semester, and I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at Commencement on Saturday, May 13th, or at one of the many other end-of-the-year events.

Please keep checking the UNM homepage for updated information.

Reed Dasenbrock