How many of you have heard of the action-adventure character **Modesty Blaise**? The exceptionally talented Modesty is a former crime boss who continues to have adventures, but of a more virtuous kind, after early retirement proves too boring for her. I had never heard of her until I happened to read an appreciative essay about her in *The Atlantic* earlier this year. The character is immensely popular in many countries the world over, especially in her native Great Britain, and has had a long, successful career. Peter O’Donnell created the character in 1963 and wrote a daily comic strip featuring her for the next thirty-nine years (totaling ninety-five stories in over ten thousand strips) along with eleven novels and two short story collections. I have now read twenty-five of those strip stories and two novels and have yet to get bored. As I keep reading great story after great story, I wonder why Modesty Blaise is not as famous as James Bond, Jason Bourne, or any other such character.

O’Donnell had been writing for various comic strips when the *Evening Standard* gave him the opportunity to create his own strip in 1963. He thought it was about time for a female action hero who could match or outmatch any man, and he reached back to an experience from his days serving in the British army during the Second World War to give his character what he felt was the necessary backstory. In 1942 O’Donnell was in Persia (present-day Iran) when a young girl wandered near his company’s camp. She wore only a tattered shirt and, tied around her neck like a perverted piece of jewelry, an improvised weapon—a nail attached to a piece of wood. Though O’Donnell and his comrades gestured to her with smiles and enticements of food, the girl kept her distance. She accepted the food only when it was placed at some distance away from the camp and after O’Donnell backed away.

O’Donnell surmised that the girl was around twelve years old and a refugee hardened by the necessities of survival in a hostile world. And yet she carried herself with a dignity beyond her years. After she ate, she washed the dishes in a nearby stream, bowed in gratitude, and walked away “like a princess.” When creating Modesty Blaise, O’Donnell envisioned a character who had to have more than just a set of skills but
also a steely poise that could only have come from a personal history marked by adversity. So, like the girl O’Donnell met in the war, Modesty begins as a refugee who never knew her parents and who doesn’t even know her name or age. She is tutored by a Romanian professor she meets in displaced persons’ camp and for whom she provides protection. It is he who names her Modesty, a deliberately ironic choice, and she herself chooses the last name Blaise, after Merlin’s tutor in the Arthurian tales she hears from the professor.

When Modesty comes of age, she gets a job working in a casino that is a front for a criminal organization. She eventually becomes the head of this organization, which she names The Network. In her criminal life, she develops the skills one might expect of an action hero. She’s an expert in many forms of hand-to-hand combat, a crack shot and adept with a sword, and a master strategist able to stay two steps ahead of her adversaries. After amassing a fortune of millions of dollars, she retires from her life in crime and settles in London.

It is at this point that we meet Modesty Blaise in the first strip story, “La Machine.” She is called out of retirement by Sir Gerald Tarrant, a minister of British Intelligence, who engages her to investigate and destroy La Machine, a murder-for-hire organization. Though Tarrant is a recurring character and Modesty does do work for British Intelligence from time to time, she is not officially a professional spy. Most of her adventures (or “capers” as she calls them) are the results of coincidences that occur as she travels the world, living the life of a sophisticated woman of independent means. She has a knack for attracting trouble and stumbling upon crimes. This feature of the plotting is one for which the reader has to suspend disbelief in order to enjoy. As I have said, I have now read many Modesty Blaise stories, and part of their undiminished pleasure is the ingenuity of their scenarios. Indeed, this ingenuity goes hand in hand with Modesty not being a professional spy. Her motivation for engaging in an adventure is just as important as the adventure itself. In one story, she rebuffs a British inspector’s attempts to hire her by saying, “I’m not Batman, crusading against crime.” She is most often motivated to help her friends, including Tarrant, or to help innocent victims, and she has a special distaste for vice crime—drug and sex trafficking. Even when she was head of The Network, she had strict standards for what crimes she would and would not commit.

But perhaps the most engaging element of the Modesty Blaise stories is her relationship with her right-hand man, Willie Garvin. Modesty discovered this small-time criminal during the days of The Network and saw great potential.
in him. After joining The Network, Willie eventually became Modesty’s most trusted aide. After years of working together and being tested in numerous life-or-death situations, Modesty and Willie are incredibly close. They trust each other completely, intuit each other’s thoughts, and anticipate each other’s actions. She calls him “Willie love,” and he calls her “Princess.” Their relationship is just about everything but romantic. They often have to explain their relationship to bewildered others, though their explanations are never really adequate, just as mine are not. Like any great relationship, theirs must be seen in its continuing unfolding through life as lived.

Or, rather, in stories told. One story comes close to encapsulating their relationship. In “The Hell-Makers,” Willie is kidnapped and given mind-altering drugs that induce horrific hallucinations. The kidnappers hope to coerce Modesty with Willie’s suffering. Modesty finding the villains and foiling their plot is barely half the story. The greater half is how she manages to save Willie from the brink of madness. The kidnappers’ hideout is at the top of the mountain, and to escape Modesty and Willie have to climb down it. But Willie is still struggling with the effects of the drugs and so in poor condition to make the descent. Counting on Willie’s devotion to her, Modesty fakes a serious wound and knocks herself unconscious. As she expects, Willie concentrates all of his energy and focus to keep his mind clear and his body alert in order to save her. He transports her down the mountain with her strapped to his back, and the effort clears his mind and thus saves him. Modesty and Willie bring out the best in each other, and they can rely on their respective good qualities coming to the fore, even to the point of putting their lives in each other’s hands.

Starting in 2004, Titan books began collecting and republishing the comic strips in individual volumes that contain three or four complete stories. The entire run has now been published in thirty volumes. The novels and short stories have been kept continuously in print by the Souvenir Press. Unfortunately, our library has not collected any Modesty Blaise books, and some of the strip collections have already gone out of print. But if you’re interested, the Louisville Free Public Library has the first ten volumes and a few of the novels. They have kept me happily busy for most of the year so far.

Many thanks to those who contributed to this column. There’s plenty of good suggestions here to help you stay inside and beat the heat of this already brutal summer. I don’t know about you, but I’m already looking forward to winter. See you then.

James Adler, Kornhauser Library

I’ll offer a few reading selections, namely, a couple from George Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier*, and *Homage to Catalonia*. The former is both a memoir of Orwell’s time spent among the mining folk of Northern England and his attempt to explain why socialism tends not to be accepted by those who would perhaps most benefit from it. To get Orwell’s perspective, you’ll have to read the book yourself, if you’re interested, but the following sums up part of it: “Sometimes I look at a Socialist—the intellectual, tract-writing type of Socialist, with his pullover, his fuzzy hair, and his Marxian quotation—and wonder what the devil his motive really is. It is often difficult to believe that it is a love of anybody, especially of the working class, from whom he is of all people the furthest removed.” To put it another way, they perhaps “love the poor less than they hate the rich.”

The latter book is a reflection on Orwell’s experience fighting in the Spanish Civil War. I’m still working
on that one, but my impression is that Orwell found it a disillusioning experience. “To prevent us from shooting each other in the darkness white armlets would be worn. At this moment a messenger arrived to say that there were no white armlets.” The book is full of little bits of dark humor like this. I look forward to finishing it.

While exploring my upstairs bookshelves, I came across a copy of the *Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, once belonging to my late father in law, a great reader of biographies. Seeing as I have never read this one, and given that I was rather a fan of Ben Franklin many, many years ago, I’m going to pull this off the shelf.

**Scott Campbell, Law Library**
The only recently published book I’ve finished this year is *Manhattan Beach* by Jennifer Egan. A mystery that isn’t really a mystery, *Manhattan Beach* is the story of a young woman who gets a job at the Brooklyn Naval Yard during World War II. The novel follows her as she tries to advance in the Yard while butting up against sexism and resentment. She is also trying to recover from the mysterious disappearance of her father many years earlier. While out at a nightclub one night she meets a gangster who may know something about her father. While the story of the main character’s search for her father is the main hook of the novel’s plot, it is only one of the book’s attractions. The characters are all clearly drawn and interesting, and Egan does a great job of evoking what New York City was like in a time that is becoming the distant past.

I have also started Ron Chernow’s biography *Grant*. Not counting the bibliography, endnotes, and index, the book is still over 950 pages long, so I’ll probably still be reading it when the Winter Readers’ Picks comes out. But I’m enjoying it a lot so far. I love stories of underdogs who are looked down upon by everyone until they rise to the occasion in an hour of need, and the story of Ulysses S. Grant is certainly that. I have just made it to the end of the Civil War and have been putting off reading more as I’m not quite as curious about Grant’s terms as president. However, Chernow has dropped hints that Grant’s presidency was not as disastrous as it has traditionally been portrayed. I’m curious to see if he is right.

**Rob Detmering, Ekstrom Library**
*Paperbacks from Hell: The Twisted History of ’70s and ’80s Horror Fiction* by Grady Hendrix
This book traces the massive wave of cheap horror paperbacks that followed the success of books like *Rosemary’s Baby* and *The Exorcist*. The plots of many of these books are just wonderfully off-the-charts absurd, and the author does an okay job of connecting the books to many of the social and political trends of the time. But the best part is that Hendrix includes numerous (beautiful and often insane) book covers from the era and profiles some of the key artists involved in creating them.

**Mark Dickson, Music Library**
My reading list this year has been highly influenced by the sci-fi tv shows to which I am committed.
**Caliban’s War** (The Expanse # 2) by James S.A. Corey
This second novel in The Expanse series was a delight. The authors, who have worked with George R.R. Martin, have included delicious details not in the tv series, and each chapter is told by a single character just like … wait for it … William Faulkner. Although much easier to follow.

**Altered Carbon** (Takeshi Kovacs #1) by Richard K. Morgan
This is dystopic cyberpunk hosting a crime investigation. It meditates on the meaning of self in a future where some people can cheat death by having their stored brain downloaded into a new body, known as a sleeve. Any sleeve. Of any sex, race, or age.

**Erin Gow, Law Library**
I recently read two amazing collections of short stories. *What It Means When a Man Falls from the Sky* by Lesley Nneka Arimah was truly unique, with stories in a surprising range of styles. The stories were all well written, and often unexpectedly haunting. If you’re not prepared to commit to the whole book, I suggest listening to the title story on the Levar Burton Reads podcast, episode 5 ([http://www.levarburtonpodcast.com/](http://www.levarburtonpodcast.com/)). His narration does the story justice and is a quick way to determine if you like the author’s style.

*The Refugees* by Viet Thanh Nguyen is another strong short story collection that I found difficult to put down. The stories tie together around central themes of immigration and Vietnamese life, but they also remain varied and interesting. I don’t think you need to have experience as an immigrant to find this book moving, although it might help, but I certainly found the characters convincingly drawn and engaging.

**Robin Harris, Law Library**

*Dark Money: The Hidden History of the Billionaires Behind the Rise of the Radical Right* by Jane Mayer
If you are not already scared by what is going on in our country these days, you need to read this book. And if you are scared, you need to read this book, which chronicles the rise of a network of very rich libertarians, who used their great wealth to change the political system in America. The Koch brothers are the main focus of this detailed and well-researched book (almost 400 pages long, without the footnotes and index) but others appear as well. The frightening part is that this vast network funded many of its efforts through tax-deductible “philanthropy” that includes academic institutions and think tanks. Billions of dollars bought these people influence over political figures in Congress and even members of the judiciary. And although their libertarian views on regulation and taxes are at odds with those of most Americans, just take a look at America’s state governments to see the incredible success this small but scheming group has had.

Interestingly, Mayer begins her story on January 20, 2009, on President Barack Obama’s Inauguration Day. “But on the other side of the country during the last weekend in January 2009, another kind of gathering was under way, of a group of activists who aimed to do all they could to nullify the results of the recent election.”
We Were Eight Years in Power: An American Tragedy by Ta-Nehisi Coates
This is a collection of articles that the lightning-rod black intellectual Ta-Nehisi Coates wrote for The Atlantic from 2008 through 2016, along with new material from Coates. Each article starts with a new essay that links the articles. The reader gets insight into what Coates was thinking when he wrote the article that follows it. Coates’ two previous books, The Beautiful Struggle and Between the World and Me, deal with race in America in a straightforward and quite painful way. His newest book brought out the same feelings for me. His comments on the eight years that President Obama was in power seem particularly cogent today.

Anna Marie Johnson, Ekstrom Library

Home by Marilyn Robinson
Marilyn Robinson is a must read for fans of Wendell Berry. Her pacing is equally as slow, her characters equally as memorable, her writing equally as meditative. She is one of Barack Obama’s favorite writers. I had read two of the other novels in this series (Gilead and Lila) but had somehow missed this one. I’m not all the way through it yet because I’m savoring it. This is essentially the story of the biblical prodigal son, but it tells the story of what happens after he returns home. Like Berry, the books in this series tell parts of the same story from the points of view of different characters. In the case of Home the story is told from the perspective of the prodigal’s older sister, Glory.

Kitchen Confidential by Anthony Bourdain
So, my guilty pleasure when I traveled to conferences and stayed in a hotel was watching Parts Unknown on CNN. I was a latecomer to Anthony Bourdain’s appeal, so after Josh Whitacre and I were lamenting his recent suicide, Josh mentioned this book to me. If you like food and/or eat out, it is worth a read. Bourdain is a great storyteller, and his humor is often reflective and self-deprecating (it’s not for the easily offended, however). He regales with tales of his own misspent youth and provides an unflinching insider’s look at the world of professional cooking.

Merchants of Doubt: How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming by Naomi Oreskes and Erik Conway
This one is a little dense, but I found it to be a page turner nevertheless. I read it in preparation for the honors class that Rob Detmering and I taught on fake news recently, and I was amazed by the depth of research that the authors had compiled. They argue that essentially a small group of scientists have had a hand in sowing the seeds of doubt and confusion about many of the twentieth century’s most controversial scientific debates: strategic defense, acid rain, ozone, secondhand smoke, global warming, and the work of Rachel Carson. What I found most surprising was that they argue that it wasn’t really about money but about ideology. If you are not really into reading a detailed history that references thousands of primary source documents, you might also try the video of the same title, which we showed our class and which the students found deeply disturbing.

How to Think: A Survival Guide for a World at Odds by Alan Jacobs
This little gem of a book is a response to a book that I have not read by Daniel Kahneman called Think-
ing, Fast and Slow, but which my husband recommends! Kahneman’s conclusion is a bit un-optimistic about the possibility of people improving their thinking. Jacobs draws from a wide variety of sources to demonstrate that he believes the situation is more hopeful, but he makes it clear he is not talking about intuitive thinking (fast) but rather the slow kind, what he calls conscious reflection. Jacobs has the more philosophical view. He includes tidbits from Marilynne Robinson (if you haven’t read her, you must) and T.S. Eliot as well as C.S. Lewis, Thomas Hobbes, and David Foster Wallace, among others. Essentially, he argues that part of our problem with thinking is that we don’t understand the group with whom we are disagreeing (the repugnant cultural other or RCO) and that our membership in our group (whatever that is) can impede our thinking, despite the fact that membership in a group is vitally important to our psychologically wellbeing. The book ends with The Thinking Person’s Checklist, which at first dismayed me (not a fan of checklists—ask anyone in RAI), but this one wasn’t simplistic. It includes nuggets such as “Seek out the best and fairest-minded of people whose views you disagree with. Listen to them for a time without responding. Whatever they say, think it over.”

Pam Yeager, Archives & Special Collections
After I submitted my last Pick (Hamilton), Mr. Poché recommended Grant, also by Ron Chernow. So I am currently, sorrowfully, in Shiloh, Mississippi, but finding this book also very well done. Maybe I’ll have it as my Pick in a year or two, as the Washington Post refers to it as “…(Chernow’s) latest brick of a book,” and another reviewer speculates that every word in the English language appears in it. Clearly, I needed something shorter and less somber as a companion read, and so chose Felicia Davin’s The Gardener’s Hand books one and two: Thornfruit and Nightvine. (Book three, Shadebloom, is out electronically, but I’m impatiently waiting for the paper copy, for the beautiful cover art, if nothing else). My kids and their beloveds were all reading these, so I decided to give them a try, too—and have really enjoyed them. World-building/fantasy are not my usual genres, but here they are done so well I could not put them down! Plus, wry, smart and powerful women (oh, and men), love, death, linguistics puzzles, thievery, sea monsters, figurative and actual cliffhangers, and mystery. And science!

Amy Purcell, Archives & Special Collections
Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine by Gail Honeyman
I like reading novels written by authors from other countries. I find you get an insight to everyday life but with a twist. Gail Honeyman is Scottish and this story is set in Glasgow. In the beginning the main character, Eleanor, appeared quite odd and a little rude. She was a person without much social grace. Her reasoning and straightforward comments to fellow office workers had me laughing out loud. And although the book continued to be often very funny, gradually you discover she had a traumatic childhood that she is struggling to ignore. At work she meets an ordinary, very decent guy named Raymond. They become friends. Friendship is a new experience for Eleanor and this support helps her to begin to deal with all that has happened to her.

Beartown is set in the author Fredrick Backman’s home country of Sweden. I really enjoyed A Man Called Ove and Britt-Marie Was Here but when I found out Beartown was about hockey, I almost didn’t continue reading it! I’m glad I persevered. While it is about a hockey town, more importantly it is about family and small-town dynamics and working together and a very enjoyable read.
EKSTROM LIBRARY

Office of the Dean

Congratulations Bekki!
Rebecca Morgan has accepted the Clinical Librarian position effective July 1, 2018. She is currently University Hospital Librarian, a position she had held since September 2016. Rebecca received her MLIS from Drexel University and previously worked for the Joint Personnel Recovery Agency Library in Arlington, Virginia.

Assessment Activities
Last Fall, in anticipation of Maurini Strub’s departure, we requested volunteers to help lead the Libraries Student Advisory Board (LSAB) meetings and programming. The volunteers we had were all from Ekstrom Library. As we anticipate that we will continue to use this group for other assessment-related activities, we would like to open up the invitation again and ask whether anyone else (including folks from libraries other than Ekstrom) would like to help in this capacity for the upcoming year. Making sure we are listening and helping serve students is one of our top strategic goals, so please let Melissa Laning know if you are interested in helping.

Diversity & Inclusion
The University of Louisville Libraries has joined the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Diversity Alliance, whose members are committed to increasing opportunities to hire underrepresented ethnic and racial groups. The Libraries’ Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Group led this effort, which demonstrates our ongoing determination to increasing diversity within our workforce.

Office of Libraries Technology

Departmental CardBox
OLT has decided to opt out hosting Department CardBox. It is up to the department heads or group leaders if there are any needs.

New Servers
OHMS (The Oral History Metadata Synchronizer) Server
The production OHMS server for the Archives and Special Collections is now live. OHMS is a web application designed to enhance online access to oral history interviews.

Avalon Server
OLT is working on implementing an Avalon server for the Music Library. Avalon is an open source media system for managing and providing access to large collections of digital audio and video.

Updates on Canon Printing and Copying Service
The equipment is scheduled to be moved by the first week of July to Ekstrom’s AUS for additional testing. Canon expects to have the units in place and ready for student use by the time students return for the fall semester and before the end of the semester everywhere else for faculty and staff throughout Ekstrom, Art, and Music libraries.
Shibboleth Login Interface
IT has implemented a new Web-based authentication interface, Shibboleth, which is applied to all the new Web-based applications that need to use UofL authentication. Shibboleth is an open-source project. With Single Sign-On (SSO) capabilities, Shibboleth provides a more secured way to allow individuals to access protected online resources. This will include the Libraries’ “Connect From Home” feature.

This new interface will be added to the current EZproxy login screen. OLT is also working with OCLC in testing this new interface with WMS. Once we have more information, we will work with related units on an implementation plan.

Research Assistance and Instruction
Welcome, Sarah!
RAI is delighted to welcome Sarah Drerup to the department. Sarah started June 4 as the STEM Librarian and has since made it to most of the Libraries to meet people. Sarah has also been invited to a number of meetings, so hopefully many of you have met her. Sarah hails originally from Ohio and most recently from Seattle, where she was working for FEMA. She is also active as a platoon leader in the Army National Guard in a chemical company. Her MLIS is from the University of Washington and she also has a BA in Human Ecology from College of the Atlantic.

LAW LIBRARY
Ebooks
The Law Library’s collection of ebooks has recently expanded to include several study aids added to our Digital Library and a new collection of Bar exam preparation texts from Wolters Kluwer.

Archives & Special Collections/Law Library Collaboration
Two completely unique printed books have been added to the collection recently, with the generous return of Louis D. Brandeis’ Law School casebooks from ASC. The volumes are covered in Brandeis’ notes, and provide fascinating insight into his study habits and early legal training. Find out more: https://brandeiswatch.wordpress.com/2018/05/24/two-of-louis-d-brandeiss-law-school-casebooks-come-home/

Thank You!
Carolyn Dowd
Erin Gow
Anna Marie Johnson
Melissa Laning
Weiling Liu
Chris Poché

Andre Jeunet reading, France, 1917.
http://digital.library.louisville.edu/cdm/ref/collection/jeunet/id/139

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Preferred nickname: Normally people call me Sarah D.
UofL position and department: STEM Librarian, RAI
Hometown: London, Ohio
Schools Attended: College of the Atlantic in Bar Harbor, Maine and the University of Washington in Seattle, Washington
Unusual previous positions: Some fun ones I don’t normally include on my CV: Upper Block Clerk at an Auto Auction (That guy that talks really fast, I had to enter in a computer what he was saying so people could bid accordingly), Bartender at a Biker Bar (learned lots of life lessons there), and Running Shoes Salesperson (I really hate running).
Favorite Books: The Things They Carried by Tim O’Brien and Never Have Your Dog Stuffed by Alan Alda
Favorite Quote: “The trouble with this world is that the stupid are cocksure and the intelligent are full of doubt.” – Bertrand Russell
Employee Spotlight

John Burton

UofL position and department: Library Specialist – Ekstrom Library Technical Services, Monographic Collection Development
Year you started in the UofL Libraries: 1986
Hometown: Cincinnati, OH (moved to Louisville at 3 months)
Significant Other/Family Members: Ellen (wife)
Pets: Cats (Kali & Molli)
Hobbies: U.S. history, Bourbon distillery tours
Activities: Mason, Kosair Shriner (Roustabout Unit - circus crew), Red Barn Alumni Association.
Favorite Books: Lord of the Rings Trilogy, The Hobbit
Favorite Movies: Anything Mel Brooks, Monty Python, The Longest Day

Anything else you would like to tell us about yourself: I started in the library working for Ruth Holman, collecting card catalog cards from the Libraries on Belknap Campus for the tape load into NOTIS.

After that I worked in the Acquisitions Department for Hannah Raymond. In 1989 I got a Library Assistant position in the Monographic Acquisitions Department where I placed and received book orders. I also did copy cataloging when I started. As our department has consolidated and evolved I have taken over the processing and tracking of Standing Orders. When Collection Development was reorganized I was given the duty of tracking the monographic funds that are spent making sure that they match University. With our move to WMS, I have become an adept in the acquisitions and analytics modules.
In the Spring volume of The Owl I shared some of my favorite images that were featured in my weekly “Friday Favorites.” Here are some additional Favorites since then!

Our long time student employee Beverly Granger graduated and serendipitously, on her last day we added this photograph to our digital collections. (left)

A large crowd gathered inside the Cherokee Hardware Co. store for a prize drawing. I am fond of the kids in the front plugging their ears. (left)

We added a lot of images of Frontier Nursing Service nurses to the collection. These nurses traveled rural Kentucky on horse-back providing medical care and midwifery. (above)

A circus performer from the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus, the second largest of its time, (the first being Ringling Bros.) and its winter home was in Peru, Indiana, where the current Circus Hall of Fame resides (yes there is such a thing!)

Transport Workers Union demonstration outside of Thompson’s Restaurant. (right)

If you’d like to be added to the Friday Favorites email me at rebecca.pattillo@louisville.edu.
Library Exhibits

Archives & Special Collections

LIVE FROM A DARK ROOM

Louisville Underground Music in Photographs, 1980 - Present
Photographic Archives Gallery

Highlights from the LUMA Collection
including posters, artifacts, letters, zines, etc.
Kain Rare Books Gallery

July 13 - December 20, 2018

Reception: Thursday, July 12, 5 - 8pm

Walter and Jessie Stokes Family Papers

Exhibit Cases
1st Floor West
Ekstrom Library

Through August 2018

About the collection: http://owl.library.louisville.edu/2018/Owl2-418.pdf