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## New Head Librarian Prepares to Meet Old Challenges

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## New head Librarian prepares to meet old challenges

Scott Pease  
Staff Writer

Stephen Bloom, the new director of the USM Libraries, is optimistic about the challenges ahead.

Even though Bloom has only been on the job since Sept. 8, he realizes his top priority, to improve the libraries' state of acquisitions, is only possible through increased funding.

So far, he is impressed with the administration's commitment to improving the library. "Look, I wouldn't have come here without a commitment from the Provost. I feel this is a good situation I'm coming into. I could have stayed in Philadelphia, but I chose to come to USM," he said.

Bloom left the University of the Arts located in Philadelphia where he has been for the past nine years. During his tenure Bloom helped build a library that was very specific in its mission—the teaching of the arts. His task at USM is much broader.

The problems that face the USM library are the same problems that face almost every other university library in the nation. Bloom divides them into four main areas of concern: 1. keeping up with information and making it available; 2. acquisitions costs are going up at double digit rates annually; 3. computers are the future and the electronic medium comes with a hefty price tag; and 4. funding.

Bloom knows that funding, combined with intelligent spending makes everything possible. He plans to be aggressive in his pursuit of funding from both public and private sources.

Despite a strong desire to increase acquisitions, the library will continue to rely heavily on the Interlibrary Loan system (ILL). Bloom said, "No library can be all things to all people; ILL is just a fact of life."

In today's information age Bloom stated, "no library can stand alone. In order for USM to house everything being published today we would need four more bakeries," (a reference to the Portland library building's prior function).

The University's inter library loan program is one of the oldest and

best-run programs in the country. According to Bloom, it is the model that the Big Ten used when starting their loner system.

He will look for ways to help the system improve its delivery time from one campus to another. Bloom feels the success of the system benefits all the schools in the program, not just USM.

Another area of concern for

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—Stephen Bloom

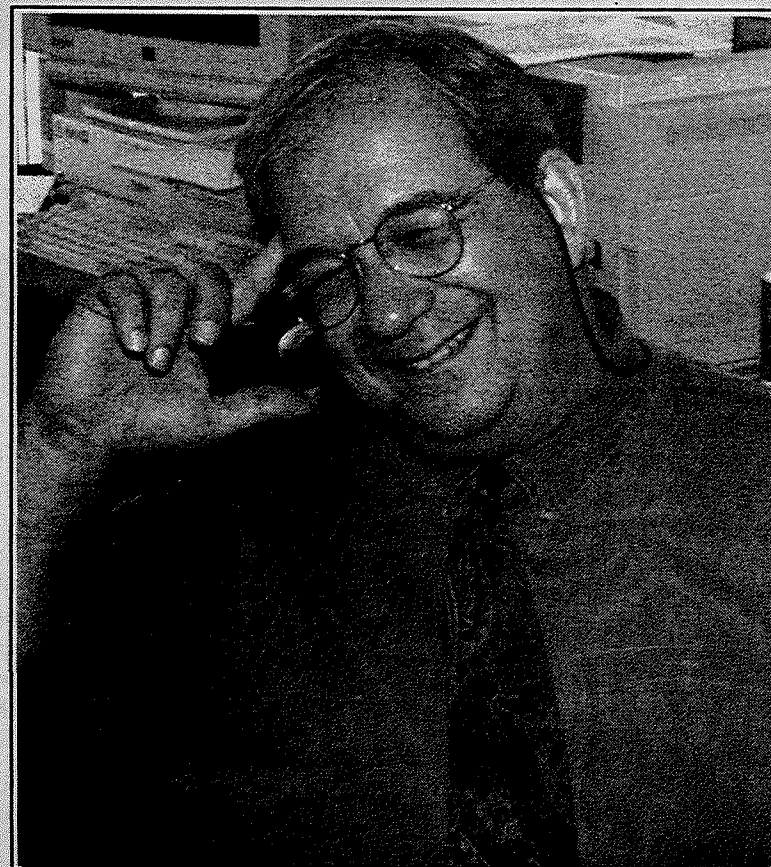
Bloom is the rising costs of publication. Over the last few years the costs of journal and magazine subscrip-

tions have been going up at a double digit rate. Bloom stated that if this trend continues, subscriptions will eat up the entire acquisitions budget within several years.

More of the library's budget will be going to electronic properties the library will not own, which leaves less for money for adding to the collection.

With all the above drains on the budget Bloom knows an increase in funding is the main solution. Bloom said he will fight aggressively for USM's fair share of the state funding. He will also seek private donations such as the recent Glickman gift that will go towards finishing off the top three floors of the library.

Bloom said he is looking forward to working with the administration, library staff, faculty and students to help "create a mission and instill a sense of purpose for the library."



Kelly N. Gillespie

*Steve Bloom, head librarian for USM, has been picking his brain for new ways to improve the stacks.*