

# University of St. Thomas's Interlibrary Loan Department Moves and Merges!

*By Faith Bonitz*

On May 23, 2014, the Interlibrary Loan Department at the University of St. Thomas' O'Shaughnessy-Frey Library in St. Paul, MN, moved to a new space. We had occupied our old space on a half level of the library since the department was created in September 1993. It was a hidden-away private spot, but equipped with cast-off furniture, low ceilings, and a well-worn tile floor. It definitely had a "cluttered basement" look and feel.



At least we had ground level windows that opened! But our view was a small parking lot with a huge trash receptacle.



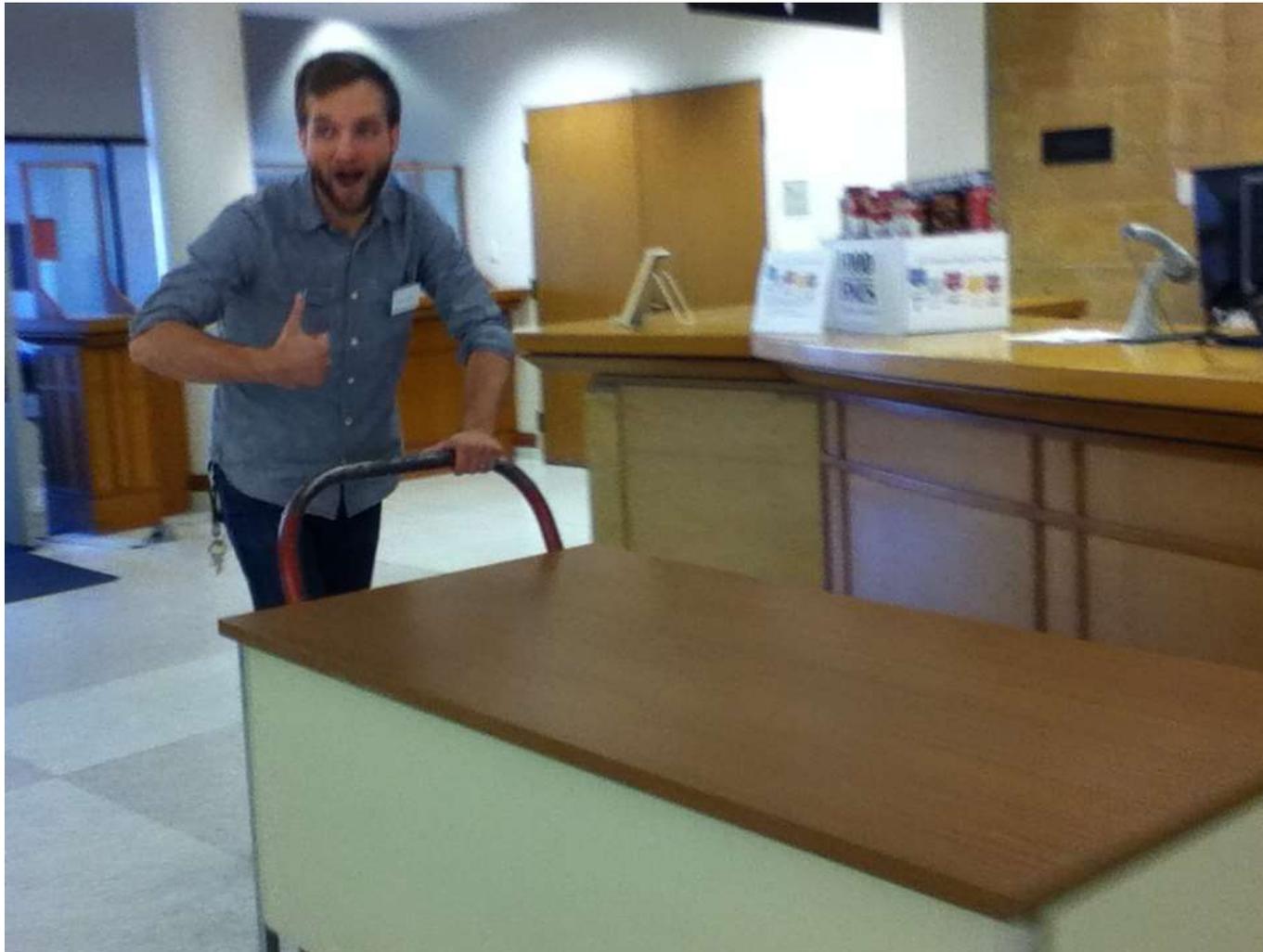
This area served us well for over 20 years, in spite of its dingy appearance. But when our library's media center moved its DVD/VHS collection out from the workroom behind the Circulation Desk to a newly constructed Media Resource Center, they left a large space vacant. This opened up the opportunity for ILL to move to a more visually appealing area and also the opportunity for the ILL department to merge with Circulation, with the hope of optimizing staff and workflows.

Here is a peek at the Media Resource Center's new space:



This space has finally allowed the MRC to have a visible, easy-to-find, and welcoming presence in the library.

Back to our move! We are very proud of the fact that our ILL operation did not really have any downtime (well, maybe part of an afternoon). The biggest issue was getting our computers and phone lines moved. Our campus IRT (the tech people) took care of that for us on the afternoon of May 23<sup>rd</sup>. Only one new piece of furniture was needed: a desk for the circulation staff person we were displacing in our new space. Otherwise, we brought up a few, select pieces and were able to use the modular desks already in the area for our regular ILL staff people, Lindsey and Faith. Our friend, Nathan, of the Circulation Department lent a hand, and just about single-handedly brought up our biggest furniture. Before the move, we spent a lot of time discarding old paper files and deciding what furniture NOT to take with us. Our goal was to have a “lean, clean, uncluttered” office.



So here are some photos of our new space. Notice the high ceilings, the freshly painted walls, the carpet, and the beautiful windows featuring the stained glass art medallions that are found throughout the building.



The patchwork of multi-colored paper on the board at the right are notes from libraries around the country thanking us for ILL service!

We had some concern that our scanner would not work optimally in such a well-lighted space, but we haven't experienced any problems with the quality of our scans because of this. We keep most of our packaging material in the tall cabinets. We're glad it can be stored behind doors – to keep a potential eyesore hidden!



Our focus now is on cross-training Circulation staff and student assistants in many ILL tasks. Currently we have only one student assistant dedicated to ILL, but Circ students have proven to be very interested in learning new skills. It did help that three former ILL students were hired by Circulation this summer. As the fall semester begins, we will face the big challenge of training even more new student assistants and dealing with the heavier volume of work that the academic year brings. We hope that our turnaround time will decrease, as we plan to utilize circulation workers during evening and weekend hours when regular ILL staff are not there.

Regular ILL staff are Faith Bonitz, the ILL Coordinator and Lindsey Loree, the ILL Assistant. Lindsey did an amazing job in planning all the details of our move. She is also the mastermind behind our cross-training effort, and has been in charge of updating our procedure manuals. We hope you have enjoyed the story of our ILL move and merge.

*The ILL staff at the University of St. Thomas, Faith Bonitz (left) and Lindsey Loree (right)*

