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Cafe Bertrand: a cafe in the Bertrand Library

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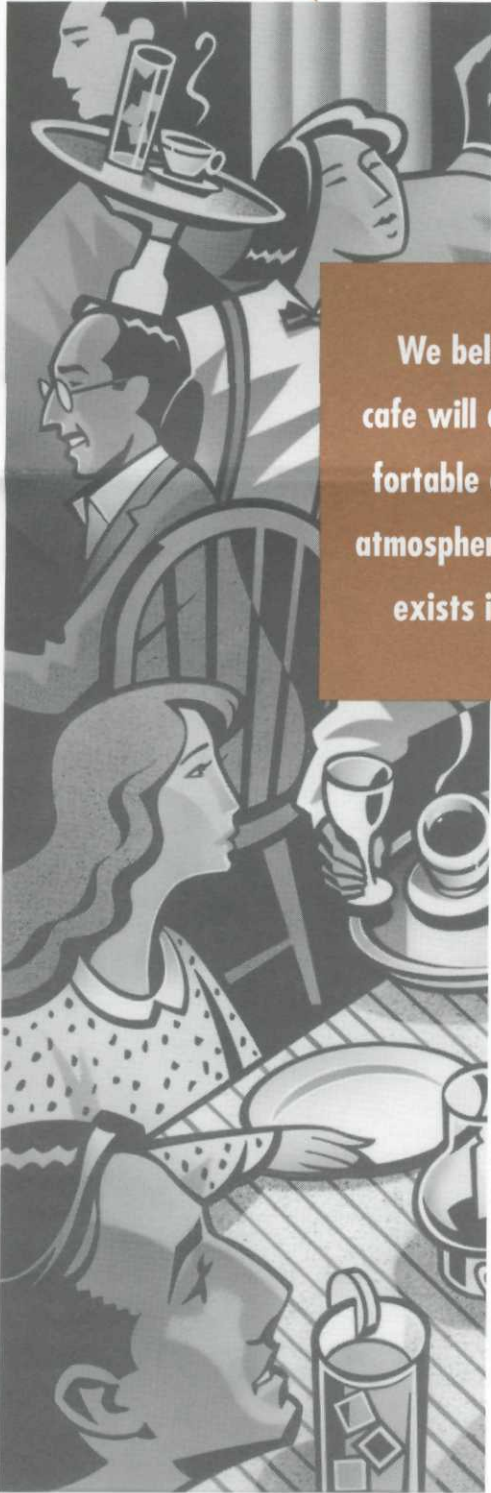
INFORMATION SERVICES & RESOURCES

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Café Bertrand ... A Café in the Bertrand Library

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Following months (indeed years) of planning, discussion, and negotiations, Gene Spencer, the Associate Vice President for Information Services and Resources, was recently able to make the following announcement to the campus community:



We believe that the cafe will add to the comfortable and welcoming atmosphere that currently exists in the library.

Members of the Bucknell community,

We are pleased to announce that a new cafe facility will soon be opened on the first floor of the Bertrand Library, as a partnership between ISR and Dining Services. The facility will feature a service area between the Circulation Desk and the Technology Desk where you may purchase drinks and prepackaged food items. In addition, we will provide limited cafe seating in the back section of the first floor of the library for your convenience.

For those interested in the details, here's the long story. For the past five years, ISR staff have been talking about the possibility of adding a cafe to our library. Many academic libraries nationwide have installed such a facility for a variety of reasons. Our library obviously serves as a place to store and use a wealth of information resources. More importantly, it also serves as a wonderful place where people come to explore, learn, work together, meet with our expert staff and engage in a variety of intellectual pursuits. We believe that the cafe will add to the comfortable and welcoming atmosphere that currently exists in the library. The more people want to use the building, the more valuable it is to the community.

The cafe notion emerged as a high priority within ISR's strategic plan as a result of our conversations with various parts of the campus community. The University Library Committee endorsed the concept and recommended that we place the facility in the main section of the library (rather than in the 24 hour access computer lab).

On a related front, the Bucknell Student Government has been working for some time with Student Activities and Dining Services on a proposal for a new uphill facility where people could more conveniently purchase food and drink. Most notably, this project sponsored the trailer that sat along the east side of the library last spring. As the "uphill eatery" project moved forward and the library cafe project emerged within our strategic plan, the simple conclusion was to solve both needs with a single facility located within the library sooner rather than later.

For those of you who might worry about food and drink causing problems in the library, we had already relaxed our food and drink guidelines more than a decade ago. We simply ask that drinks be covered and that food be limited to less messy items. Rarely do

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ISR VITAL STATISTICS

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We all heave a sigh of relief when the doctor says that all of our vital signs look fine. It's good to hear that all of our systems are functioning harmoniously. ISR has its own version of vital signs that we conscientiously collect, record and analyze. We use the data for much the same reasons that health professionals collect our medical data; to ensure that all programs and services are functioning well and are properly staffed to meet the needs of the Bucknell community.

Some of the data tells us how we're doing in comparison to our peer institutions. Some of it helps us determine staffing needs. Some of it tells us if we've got the right systems in place so that people can do their jobs.

When we look at the number of unique services ISR provides, the variety and pervasiveness is astonishing....*Phone, network, books, videos, classroom support, technical support, circulation services, reference, computers, digital cameras, technical and library instruction, technology tutors, one-to-one instruction, resources to other universities, library online catalog, interlibrary loan, computer labs, desktop computers, ResNet, wireless, special collections and university archives, Banner, ECST, newspapers and journals, online resources and databases, software services clinic, web development....*and that's just a partial list!

What is more significant and revealing is the depth and breadth of these services that we offer to the Bucknell community each year. As we check the pulse of ISR services, here are some of the data:

In a typical year ISR staff members:

- Borrow and lend over 15,000 Interlibrary Loan materials
- Circulate over 92,000 items
- Add around 15,000 new book titles to the collection
- Offer over 250 library instructional sessions.
- Conduct over 8,000 reference transactions
- Support close to 5,000 computers on campus
- Offer close to 200 one-on-one technology training sessions
- Solve over 12,000 computer problems for our Bucknell users
- Develop the ISR web site, which includes over 2,000 web pages, to guide our users to information services and resources

I think we could all agree that those are some healthy numbers!

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we find any problem within the current restrictions, and we're sure that the Bucknell community will work to minimize any problems with the new cafe.

Where do we go from here? Shortly before Spring Break, we cleared the area in which the cafe service counter is to be installed. A local vendor delivered a prototype "cafe front" for us to review and critique. We quickly learned a lot from the community about what was and wasn't appropriate there, and we're working with the vendor to create something that more closely fits the library atmosphere. We are delighted with the plans that have emerged. Over the course of the next few weeks, the cafe front will be delivered and the necessary utilities will be installed.

Discussions about the list of menu items are still underway. Obviously, we will pay close attention to concerns over noises, smells and unnecessary messes (we feel good about the partnership that we are developing to resolve these issues). The hours of operation are also under consideration. Dining Services will staff the facility and expect it to be self-sustaining. Thus its hours of operation will be limited to times of expected high use.

A lot will happen over the next few weeks. Many thanks to everyone in the BSG, Student Activities, Facilities, Dining Services and ISR who have contributed to this effort.

**Gene Spencer (ISR) and
Tim Tenon (Dining Services)**

This developing project has received a great deal of attention on campus. Faculty have commented through their email listserv, some expressing reservations over placing books and food in proximity, others endorsing the idea of "enriching" the Library as a "living / learning environment."

A lengthy article starting on the front page of the March 28, 2003 Bucknellian explores the history of this project, and offers additional details concerning the hours, seating arrangement, and potential menu offerings of the new Café. Student feedback to the Café plan is uniformly positive.