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PUBLIC LIBRARIES

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RFID: More Worrisome Than You Think

The serious threats to patron privacy posed by use of Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology are understated, and many other serious RFID problems are not mentioned at all, in Daniel L. Walters' column ("From the President RFID, Biometrics, and Privacy Issues," Sept./Oct. 2005, 253–58).

RFID's fundamental privacy threat comes from the fact that the tags reveal their information to any compatible reader—without doing what the author says libraries had become adept at: "requiring a subpoena or court order for access to circulation records." Portable or doorway readers can be obtained by virtually anyone. Someone who reads a book's unique number as stored in the RFID tag can potentially figure out the book's title without necessarily accessing the library's database (for example, by finding a book's number by reading it on the library shelf). And there is another privacy threat: tracking where a tagged book goes and when. Tracking a tag's presence at selected points, and the presumably associated person, can be accomplished using existing portable or doorway readers without knowing the title of the book. Connecting the book number with a borrower can be accomplished in a variety of ways, such as visual recognition, and certainly by government entities legally able to access library databases.

The only specific privacy threat mentioned in the column—twice—is potential inclusion of personally identifiable patron information on the tag. While it is correct to recognize this as a serious privacy threat, it is clearly not by any means the only one. A technology that cannot be prevented from disclosing information is inherently dangerous to privacy, even if it discloses only book numbers.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California (ACLU-NC), Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF), my organization (Library Users Association), and many others have strongly opposed RFID use in patron materials in San Francisco for more than two years, and have successfully worked to prevent implementation at San Francisco Public Library (SFPL). The city's board of supervisors, of which I am a member, has rejected the library's funding request for 2005–06. In addition, the Library Citizens Advisory Committee (LCAC), which was created by the city's board of supervisors, voted unanimously in May 2005, to recommend to the board "that no money should be allocated for RFID until SFPL satisfies health, privacy, workability of RFID, and cost-benefit analysis concerns to the satisfactions of LCAC."

There are numerous other RFID problems that should seriously concern libraries. As Richard Boss noted in "RFID Technology for Libraries," a TechNote on the Public Library Association Web site, ordinary aluminum foil can block the RFID signal. That means the theft prevention function is pretty easily bypassed, exposing collections that use RFID for security to potentially significant losses—completely undetected by RFID. There are potential health risks posed by radio frequency radiation, and studies on the subject have been reported by the San Francisco Neighborhood Antenna Free Union. Lack of hard evidence on cost effectiveness and claims of supposed reductions in repetitive stress injuries are additional problems, along with very high costs compared to bar code and magnetic strip systems now widely—and successfully—in use.

ACLU-NC and EFF have expressed concerns that each RFID implementation helps to advance a surveillance society that is harmful to the intellectual freedom that libraries have traditionally worked so hard to preserve and foster. RFID should not be used in library books and materials because of its numerous problems, above all multiple threats that cannot be overcome by a technology whose indiscriminate responding to anyone's reader cannot be safely controlled. Some of those threats will only increase as time goes by.—Peter Warfield, executive director, Library Users Association, San Francisco

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I have a confession to make. I was thinking about leaving librarianship. My daughter turned one in February and with every passing month, she was becoming more active—and sleeping less. It was getting difficult to carve out the quiet time I needed to devote to *Public Libraries*, and I was having trouble concentrating in the brief snatches of time that I had to work (during Lucy's naps). I decided it was time to hand over the reins to someone else, and resigned from my position as features editor in April, effective at the end of this publication year.

The plan was to become a stay-at-home mom. I figured I would take care of Lucy full-time until she reached school age, if we didn't decide to home-school her, and use that time to determine my life direction. I even took a course titled "Finding and Following Your Life Purpose."

Although I still loved libraries, I felt like I had done it all. I had been a children's librarian, a young adult librarian, and a librarian serving people with disabilities. I had served the public at the circulation desk, the reference desk, and in the children's and young adult departments, and had supervised technical services. I had worked as a department head and an assistant director. I had worked in small, medium, and large libraries in New England, the Midwest, and the Northwest. I had written books and articles, presented workshops across the country, and edited professional books and a national library journal.

The only public library position that still appealed to me was the one that drew me into librarianship in the first place. I had always wanted to be the director of a small library in a small town. Nann Blaine Hilyard's Perspectives column on small libraries ("Small Is Beautiful," May/June 2005) rekindled my interest in that kind of work, but I figured it wasn't meant to be. I have fallen in love with the small town where I live in Montana's Bitterroot Valley, and the only small library

Finding Myself at Home

Renée Vaillancourt McGrath
Features Editor



within a thirty-mile radius had been led by the same director for seventeen years.

And then she retired. After much waffling about this being the "right opportunity at the wrong time," I decided to apply for the job, even though I wasn't at all sure that I was ready to go back to work full-time while my daughter was still so young. As it turned out, the interview went very well, I got a good impression of the library board and staff, and they agreed to allow me to work part-time so that I could continue to be the primary influence on my daughter's life as she grows up. I am tremendously grateful for the board's flexibility, and started my new job as director of the North Valley Public Library on July 1.

This will be my last column as features editor of *Public Libraries*. When I took over from the previous editor in 2000, she stated that the best thing about working on the journal was all of the people she'd met as a

result of her work with *Public Libraries*. At the time I couldn't understand how she could have gotten to know people while mostly working electronically with dozens of authors at a time. Yet, that is exactly what has happened to me as well, and some of those online correspondences have actually developed into deep friendships.

The people that I have worked most closely with, over the longest period of time, are the contributing editors to *Public Libraries* columns and the staff at PLA. I feel fortunate to have had a top-notch team of columnists who have stayed with the publication for extended periods in spite of the large amount of work it requires to meet regular deadlines and the lack of pay. GraceAnne DeCandido, Rochelle Hartman, Paula Wilson, Stephanie Gerding, Brendan Dowling, Kathleen Hughes, and Carrie Russell have helped create new columns

continued on page 316

Goodbye to Renee

With this issue, the Public Library Association (PLA) Board, the staff of PLA, and the staff of *Public Libraries* say a reluctant goodbye and thank you to outgoing *Public Libraries* features editor, Renee Vaillancourt McGrath. McGrath, who has served as features editor since 2000, resigned effective with the completion of this issue. (See her Editor's Note on page 312 to find out more about what she'll be doing post-*Public Libraries*.) She has been a great editor, infusing the journal with energy and excitement, instituting several new columns, and even establishing an annual award for public librarians who write for *Public Libraries*. Renee also has been a stellar contributor, providing our readers with savvy editorials and perspectives in her Editor's Note column. She has helped *Public Libraries* grow and evolve in many ways; we will miss her terribly as an editor, but hope

she will always remain a friend and an emeritus member of the *Public Libraries* team.

Next issue will see some changes to *Public Libraries*. After having served as managing editor of the journal for the past ten years, I will become its editor. We're also saying goodbye and thanks to one of our regular contributors Paula Wilson (TechTalk), and welcoming a new columnist, Michael Farrelly, whose regular column Passing Notes aims to discuss various young adult issues in public libraries. So, thanks to Renee and Paula, and welcome aboard Michael! In addition to these personnel changes, *Public Libraries* will have a new look starting with the next issue. We hope you like it!

Kathleen Hughes
Editor, Public Libraries

Proposed Guidelines May Discourage RFID

Daniel L. Walters



In my last column, I outlined how some technologies that we have implemented in our libraries over the years have had the potential to undermine patron privacy, including Radio Frequency Identification (RFID). I reported on the PLA board's review at its 2005 annual meeting of two draft documents provided by ALA's Intellectual Freedom Committee (IFC), the draft "Resolution on the Use of Biometric Technologies in Libraries" and a "Draft Guidelines for Implementing RFID Technologies in Libraries." The committee is now calling for comments on its proposed "Guidelines for Implementing RFID Technologies in Libraries: Privacy and Intellectual Freedom Concerns."¹ This document has been distributed for review and written comment to the ALA Executive Board and Council, division presidents, and committee and round table chairs. RFID industry representatives however, have not been included in the distribution. The committee has also scheduled an open hearing for further review on Saturday, January 21, 1:30–3:30 P.M., at the Midwinter Meeting in San Antonio, Texas.

When the PLA board discussed the committee's draft guidelines, the board agreed without question that there are critical privacy issues that must be addressed when libraries consider implementing RFID to expedite circulation, improve inventory control, and experience other potential benefits such as limiting repetitive physical work that may be harmful to employees. We have a critical responsibility to be vigilant in assuring patron privacy as a fundamental principle in all aspects of our services, and mindful of how a new technology may inadvertently undermine our efforts to assure that patron privacy remains essentially inviolate. But after review and discussion, the board voted unanimously to oppose adoption because members felt the guidelines prematurely prohibit specific technology applications related to RFID deployment.

The board further regretted that the proposed guidelines understate the important benefits of RFID to solve time-consuming and harmful repetitious work associated with circulation at a time when library staffing budgets are declining and library use is as high as ever in many areas of the country. Board members also regretted that the tone of the document appears to juxtapose principles of patron privacy and the deployment of RFID in a manner that suggests the two are virtually incompatible. The guidelines seem to suggest grudgingly that RFID should only be deployed under the limited conditions outlined in the document, as if to suggest by implication that RFID is a technology that should be handled only when librarians are wearing their radiation-protection suits, and that we should continually warn our patrons of the dangers of this pernicious technology.

The guidelines include a Policy Issues section regarding a library's obligation to update policies and procedures to protect patron privacy. For those libraries that have already adopted a privacy policy according to ALA guidelines and considering deploying RFID, their policy no doubt requires the library to address many of the policy issues in the guidelines.² This is not

new ground as this section of the document repeats the Resolution and Privacy Principles adopted by Council at the 2005 Midwinter Meeting.³

The Technology Issues section in the proposed guidelines is less useful. Some of these issues are so fundamental that they do not merit inclusion and imply that libraries may otherwise disregard taking implicit steps to assure protection of their patrons' privacy. A library is to "affirm and reinforce (its) obligation to secure (its) bibliographic and patron database from unauthorized entry" and to "protect (its) RFID databases in the same way that (it) ensure(s) the security of the circulation and other functions of integrated library systems (ILS)."⁴ Further, a library is advised to "not grant individuals the ability to search the library's catalog by barcode number . . ." and "staff should be trained to not release information about the barcode in response to blind or casual inquiries."⁵

Additional issues go too far in suggesting hypothetical problems with RFID deployment that may unnecessarily exaggerate concern about possible, but not probable, privacy problems. For example, the document states that:

Due to the potential for eavesdropping, libraries should use hardwire connections and not wireless connections for all communications between RFID systems and the ILS involving personally identifiable information . . . limit the information stored on the tag to the item's barcode . . .⁶

Furthermore, it asserts that:

Libraries utilizing 'smart cards' should use an 'opt-in' system that allows (the) library user to choose between 'smart cards' and barcode-enabled cards in order to accommodate users who do not wish to utilize or carry an RFID-enabled device.⁷

This latter dictum is asserted without any reference or justification other than "Technology to accommodate a hybrid card system is available from vendors without significant additional expense," again without reference.⁸

The document fails to recognize that in order to assure patron privacy libraries do not routinely permit users to search the ILS database by barcode, and that wireless networks are routinely enabled to encrypt communications in most business and thoughtful applications for the home. It is unfortunate that the document goes so far in its specific assertions about how a library should use smart cards, and advises that a library's implementation should accommodate users who do not want to use an RFID system, regardless of the library's budgeting and staffing resources. Prohibiting wireless network communication between RFID and ILS systems is no small matter for a library without sufficient funds to implement hardwire networks in all areas of all buildings.

The document cites "independent researchers (who) have concluded that current RFID technology cannot preserve user

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Upwelling

Getting Those Great Ideas from the Bottom Up

Peter Lisker

On hot summer days when the air temperature is in the nineties, water temperatures in areas of Lake Ontario can be in the refreshing sixties. This process of cool water rising from the bottom is called upwelling. Likewise, libraries need nutrient-rich ideas rising from our staff members who order, process, and maintain our collections and deal with the day-to-day pleasures and problems of public service.

Commonly referred to as bottom-up management, “this highly empowered style of running a business gives the responsibility for making significant decisions to people who would otherwise wield little influence in a business,” commented Mark Henricks, a writer specializing in business topics in the May 2000 issue of *Entrepreneur Magazine*.¹ Henricks offered the following as “a perfect example of bottom-up management.”² Needing to add to her staff, Lois Melbourne, chief executive officer (CEO) of TimeVision, assigned two existing salespeople with the task of creating job specifications and postings, reviewing résumés, interviewing, and making final recommendations. Management was not involved in the process until salary negotiations, and Melbourne did not meet with the new hire until that person’s first day of work. Upwelling, similarly, takes the best of bottom-up management and uses it in the context of public librarianship.

Good Times, Bad Times

Everything is going great—why change? Things are falling apart—how could we possibly change in the middle of a crisis? Futurist Joel Barker observed, “When a paradigm shifts everyone goes back to zero.”³ Whether change is the result of internal, external, voluntary, or uncontrollable factors, it represents Barker’s paradigm shift. Staff members endlessly talk about what’s going on. That energy can be channeled into something positive.

Reality Check

Getting people on board with any new idea, program, or proposal requires initiative, effort, and salesmanship. Upwelling

addresses the old adage that if you’re not part of the solution, you’re part of the problem. Empowering staff members to become part of the solution requires administrators and staff members to work together, possibly in ways never done before.

Administrators must exhibit greater tolerance, allow individuals to try new things, forgive experiments that do not work out, and recognize the importance of internal entrepreneurs—people who are creative by nature. Administrators must also be prepared to relinquish some power, accept that collaborative decisions require more time, and encourage staff members to question the status quo. Managers must share as much information as possible and create an environment in which all opinions are given equal consideration.

Staff member empowerment and control brings greater accountability and responsibility. In my experience, most people are thrilled to be part of the decision-making process, gaining control over their position responsibilities, and sharing opinions on issues. These staff members will embrace accountability and appreciate praise and positive feedback. Those who abhor making decisions recognize early on that they are now far more accountable for their actions. Managers must work with these individuals, offering encouragement and closely monitoring actions.

Organizations that function in the environment of the directive must create open channels of communication and accept the issue of “freedom to fail.”⁴ Freedom to fail is accepting that when staff members are empowered to make decisions and implement changes, it may not work out perfectly. Despite our best intentions, it is inevitable that incorrect decisions will occur. Administration must be open to these risks and provide reflection, assessment, and corrective action where necessary.

Preparations for Implementation

Before beginning the program, the following fundamental issues require serious contemplation and consideration:

- learning to listen;
- sharing information;
- decision-making techniques;
- accountability;
- training and teaching; and
- freedom to fail.

Participants in upwelling groups, including facilitators and administrators, must place the greatest emphasis on listening before reacting. It is human nature that as a person speaks we formulate our response. This natural tendency must consciously be addressed: listen, understand, and acknowledge what is being said before reacting. The power to listen carefully and thoughtfully and only then frame a response is essential to the success of any empowerment program. People have two ears and one mouth, so listen twice, speak once!

Communication can be a positive force—informative, educational, challenging. It can also be a means to exercise power. What we choose not to communicate can be far more crucial than what we do. It is an important responsibility of managers to share information and experiences with staff members to create an environment in which open communication results in appropriate decision-making. It’s easy to teach our newest staff members the mechanics of their jobs, but far more difficult to teach good decision-making skills. Experience is a great teacher,

but requires time, communication, and knowledge. Do you learn more from your successes or your mistakes? Candidly discussing errors lets staff members know we are admitting our fallibility, accepting responsibility for actions, and are open to discussing both good and bad.

Financial incentives, promotions, and job security are basics of accountability in the private sector. Holding staff members accountable in the public sector takes a bit more creativity from managers and senior staff:

- freely and regularly hand out praise for jobs well done;
- use every reason imaginable to praise staff members, celebrate every accomplishment, and acknowledge every achievement;
- move carefully when dealing with problems;
- address issues in as open a manner as possible, include all participants, and use the time to evaluate and instruct;
- disciplinary action and poor performance evaluations are to be used only in worst-case scenarios; and
- use accountability as a learning and teaching tool.

The most important concept is freedom to fail. We cannot expect staff members to try new things while fearing repercussions. I was fortunate to have a supervisor who recognized that failures became opportunities to critique and correct actions. If something fails, figure out what went wrong, fix it, and try again.

Plan of Action

Creating an environment of empowered staff members requires a plan of action and goals. A plan of action might include a timeline for communicating and implementing the concept to managers and other key staff members, identifying individuals likely to be open to the concept, and brainstorming sessions to determine tasks appropriate to the model. A goal might read:

To create an environment in which all staff members are encouraged—not required—to participate in the decision-making process, contribute to the creation and implementation of policies and procedures, and inspire all staff members to excel.

Initially, participation should be optional. Encourage as many staff members as possible to participate and recognize that change—especially with greater accountability—may be challenging for some staff members. Let time and outcome work its magic! As the plan falls into place, recruit and encourage a cross-section of personality types to join the process. Enthusiastic participants bring energy and commitment; cautious staff members bring grounding and reality.

Address this goal by establishing teams:

- an **implementation team** charged with inviting participation, developing lists of tasks, and areas of concern;
- a **suggestion team** to solicit and screen suggestions, offer implementation solutions, and referral to appropriate administrators;
- an **action team** to monitor activities and procedures that would benefit more than the initiating service area;
- a **policy team** to work with administration to periodically review and update policies, procedures, and mission statements; and

- a **communications team** to design a communications structure to keep all staff members informed.

Everyone hopefully will find a team that suits their personality and interests.

Transition

Transitioning to the upwelling concept begins with selecting a task formerly assigned to one person, establishing a team, defining procedures, and following through to completion. Appoint a facilitator and charge that person with keeping the group focused, teaching members listening skills, assuming responsibility for note taking, and producing the final report and recommendations. Choose people that do not normally wield power but are directly involved with the task.

Former General Electric CEO Jack Welch, a leading proponent of bottom-up management, suggested in his memoir, *Winning*, that “you can get input from anywhere . . . but setting the mission is top management’s responsibility.”⁵ Behaviors are the *how* of the mission. Welch’s examples of this include “don’t forget to say thank you, eliminate bureaucracy, cut waste relentlessly and value each other’s time.”⁶ Participation in developing behaviors gives employees a strong accomplishment incentive and a sense of ownership. Can we really expect staff members to get excited about missions and goals when they had no say in what is to be accomplished?

Exploring the Model

Exploring the model can be as simple as informally presenting a problem to staff members, soliciting opinions, and implementing the favored proposal. A more formal process of vision and mission statements, timelines, goals, and objectives may be a better option for your organization. Whichever you use, get people thinking about all the tasks conducive to this decision-making process. Possible tasks might include collection development, customer service, programming, and hiring.

Circulation and reference desk staff members observe the materials most in demand on a daily basis. Working together to set collection development policies will ensure a dynamic collection that meets customer needs.

Staying on top of customer service issues is critical in maintaining excellent relationships with our users. Frontline public service staff members have the day-to-day knowledge and experience best suited to developing policies and procedures, teaching new staff members, addressing complaints, and monitoring compliance.

Programming is another task in which staff member input is critical. Program providers are often most comfortable presenting programs they have created based upon knowledge of the target audience, available resources, and subject matter. It comes down to control, ownership, and accountability.

When you’re prepared for a radical change and ready to take on one of the library industry’s greatest challenges, consider Henrick’s perfect bottom-down management example—the interviewing and hiring process. If the human resources administrator and director have been the sole interviewers for new employees, consider assembling a team of staff members comprised of those who will be responsible for training and working with the new employees. The group works together to establish a set of job-related questions prior to the interview. Include the

human resources administrator to ensure that appropriate legal considerations are taken into account, particularly with regard to what is—and what is not—appropriate to ask in the interview process. The facilitator writes the final report, based upon group input and approval. The group would make candidate recommendations with specific justifications, clearly listing the positive and negative characteristics of each candidate interview. A final interview with the director and human resources director would conclude the process.

Sharing Control

How do you feel when you take your car in for repairs, interview a contractor for a home repair, or deal with a sick relative in the hospital? A lot of people feel out of control—and you don't want your staff to feel that way. Sharing control and decision-making responsibilities creates an environment in which everyone explores solutions together, problem-solving becomes a regular activity, and supervisors and administrators are communicating trust in their staff members.

New staff members join us from the community or library graduate programs with fire and drive to change the world. Those of us with a few years under our belts offer encouragement, grounding, and guidance for translating great ideas into workable solutions. What a wonderful combination! If you calculate the cumulative years of experience that you can tap into

from your staff members, you'll probably be surprised by the wealth of available experience. That knowledge and experience is untapped potential until it is channeled into productivity. Soliciting and utilizing staff input on a regular basis will give your staff members ownership and pride in the organization and a genuine sense of belonging. ■

Peter Lisker is a branch manager with the Department of Extension Services, Buffalo and Erie County (N.Y.) Public Library; Liskerp@buffalolib.org. He is currently reading *The Human Equation: Building Profits by Putting People First* by Jeffrey Pfeffer, *Winning* by Jack Welch, and *Disney War* by James B. Stewart.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

during my tenure, and Janet Foster, Don Sager, Robert Rohlf, Diane Boulerice Lyons, Natalie Ziarnik, Jennifer Ries-Taggart, Vicki Nesting, Steven Cohen, Jennifer Schatz, Skip Auld, Nann Blaine Hilyard, and Julie Elliot have all breathed new life into existing columns. I am also grateful to Jennifer Schatz and Linda Braun, who filled in as features editors during my maternity leave in 2004.

Ellie Barta-Moran, Kevin Heubusch, Karen Sheets, Angie Hanshaw, and Stephanie Kuenn have served as our contacts at ALA Production Services, and Troy Linker has also helped out with *Public Libraries* on several occasions.

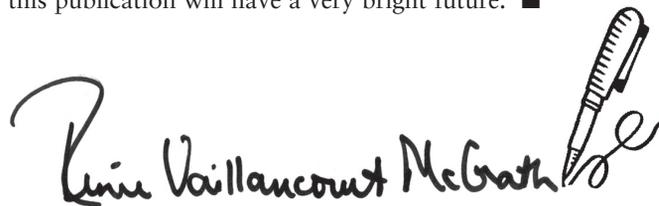
There isn't enough room in this column to mention the names of all of the people who have served on the *Public Libraries* Advisory Committee during the past six years, but its members have been consistently outstanding, supportive, and innovative. They are responsible for many of the changes in the look of the journal, as well as determining the winners of each year's best article contest and the annual theme issue.

Themes we've addressed in these special issues include public libraries build sustainable communities, international librarianship, serving people with disabilities, literacy, and readers advisory. We also published a supplemental issue on e-libraries in 2001.

I have written thirty-six Editor's Notes during the past six years. I've had the honor of working with seven PLA presidents and 291 authors during this time. (So don't feel bad if I

don't recognize your name right away when I run into you at a convention!)

Kathleen Hughes, former communications manager for PLA and managing editor of *Public Libraries*, invited me to apply for the position of features editor of *Public Libraries* in 2000, and she has always been my primary contact at PLA. I can't think of anyone who knows the ins and outs of this journal better than she does. I was very pleased to learn that PLA has decided to restructure her position to allow her to serve as its new publications director, incorporating my responsibilities as features editor of *Public Libraries*. I know that under Kathleen's leadership, and with all of the talented and dedicated people working on it, this publication will have a very bright future. ■



Written August 2005. Renée Vaillancourt McGrath is currently reading *The Tipping Point* by Malcolm Gladwell and *Confessions of a Slacker Mom* by Muffy Mead-Ferro. She is also working her way through a stack of professional books, published by ALA Editions and PLA.

privacy in the library” and includes one documented reference consisting of one article as the research basis for this conclusion, in addition to a number of Vendor Issues for RFID Technologies.⁹ The *potential* vulnerabilities of the technology included in this article may be accurate, but do they represent real, viable threats that are sufficient for this unprecedented action by the IFC to issue guidelines regarding a library’s implementation of a new technology? In addition to technical content intended for the RFID industry, the cited article posits that the current technology’s shortcomings pose considerable threats to privacy because someone may invent or manufacture a RFID-capable device or reader that can intercept RFID communications in the library or read a RFID tag after a patron has borrowed an item. The possibility of such individual or organized surveillance and other malevolent abuses and motives for eavesdropping or profiling library users appears to be the basis of the “concerns” about RFID deployment.

If it is indeed hypothetically possible for someone to manufacture a RFID reader to read an unsuspecting library patron’s RFID tag (the current guidelines unfortunately limit such data to the barcode), it is not clear why this possibility is viewed at this juncture by the IFC as a highly *probable* occurrence that merits the tone of caution and borderline apprehension inherent in these proposed guidelines. The guidelines fail to consider that future developments may mitigate or eliminate some of the current concerns as this new technology matures. In addition, they are not flexible in establishing that there may be future uses for RFID tagging including data other than a barcode.

I am grateful that IFC has led ALA’s efforts to enable public libraries to respond effectively to such legislation as the USA PATRIOT Act that so severely undermines patron privacy. The Council’s action affirming privacy principles regarding RFID implementation is a thoughtful and appropriate reminder of our profession’s commitment to recognize that deployment of a new technology should always be undertaken with the recognition of its impact on our core values that begin with our commitment to patron privacy.

A library that is intending to undertake deployment of RFID in order to relieve its staff from repetitious and potentially harmful work as well as to realize cost-effective benefits in other areas will confront many daunting challenges. Such a deployment will require a significant capital investment, and there will be many technical issues with its ILS and RFID vendors. The challenges will begin with the important and critical dialog with the library’s community regarding RFID, the reasons behind the investment and steps the library will take to assure that the critical privacy principles adopted by the Council are addressed.

IFC’s proposed guidelines are well intended, but they are not the right solution for a technology that is moving so quickly. The Council’s Resolution and Privacy Principles provide a thorough context for a library evaluating implementation options. The proposed IFC guidelines however, will most likely have a chilling effect on many libraries’ well founded and

carefully undertaken steps to implement RFID, even in spite of a history of rigorous and long standing practices protecting their patrons’ privacy. ■

Daniel L. Walters is Executive Director of the Las Vegas-Clark County Library District, 833 Las Vegas Blvd. N., Las Vegas, NV 89101; waltersd@lvccld.org. He recommends his most recent reads, *Until I Find You* by John Irving and *Arthur and George*, by Julian Barnes.

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2006

January 20–25
ALA Midwinter Meeting
San Antonio

March 21–25
PLA National Conference
Boston

June 22–28
ALA Annual Conference
New Orleans



TALES FROM THE FRONT

Earliest Published American Ship Registers Available Online

With the help of The Mariners' Museum, the Maine Maritime Museum, the Peabody Essex Museum, the Library of Congress, and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Mystic Seaport: The Museum of America and the Sea and the G. W. Blunt White Library in Mystic Seaport, Connecticut, has put together a virtual run of the earliest published American ship registers. The collection begins with the *New York Marine Register* (published in 1857) and continues through the *Record of American and Foreign Shipping for 1900*, with intervening years represented by *American Lloyd's* registers. Fifty-five volumes representing approximately fifty thousand pages and one million records can now be browsed or searched by vessel or captain name.

Ship registers play a key role in the study of maritime history. Produced for shipping companies and insurance firms, merchant ship registers document vessels' names, sizes, captains' and owners' names, home ports, types, dates and places of construction, materials used in building, and other

vital information needed in studying their history. Funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation as part of a larger project that contains scans and transcripts of both primary and published materials pertaining to American maritime history, this collection of registers will be extremely useful to maritime scholars, genealogists, and others.

In addition to the ship registers, the library has begun adding yacht registers published in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This list will continue to grow and will also be searchable in the near future.

The registers can be viewed at **Mystic Seaport's Ship and Yacht Register List** (www.mysticseaport.org/library/initiative/ShipRegisterList.cfm); other maritime materials can be found by visiting **Mystic Seaport's library site** (www.mysticseaport.org/library/home.cfm). For more information, write library_email@mysticseaport.org.

Unique Wedding Web site to Benefit St. Paul Public Library

Have you run out of inspiration for the perfect wedding gift? Are you tired of buying toasters

and blenders? A St. Paul couple has created a unique solution for their upcoming nuptials. They created a wedding Web site registry that makes gift-giving easy and contributes to their community at the same time. Passionate about books, literacy, and their community, Pat Harris and Laura Offerdahl developed an **online wedding gift registry** (www.thefriends.org/patharris) for purchase of much-needed books for the collections of the St. Paul (Minn.) Public Library (SPPL).

The registry, created in partnership with The Friends of SPPL, allows gift-givers to select specific books needed by SPPL or make a general donation for purchase of materials. More than 140 books and other materials, chosen by library staff as needed in their collection, are listed on the Web site. The books are arranged in categories ranging from American literature and Lemony Snicket books to manga cartoons and Minnesota favorites. In addition to helping Pat and Laura make a long-lasting gift to their community, the gifts are tax-deductible—with all of the proceeds benefiting the library. A bookplate acknowledging the gift in celebration of Pat and Laura's wedding will be placed in each of the books chosen for gift donation.

In creating the registry, Pat and Laura commented, "we both realized that we shared a unique bond with each other and with our families and friends. This bond is the commitment we all have to improving our community. When we decided to spend the rest of our lives together, we agreed to offer a unique opportunity for our friends and family to share in our wedding and in the commitment we have made together. We hope that friends and family will consider this preferred registry as a gift that will last forever. We look forward to a life of caring together with all our friends and family!" Their

wedding took place in St. Paul on April 30, 2005.

For information about the Harris/Offerdahl wedding registry or other Friends activities, contact The Friends at (651) 222-3242 or write friends@thefriends.org

Library Keeps the Beat with Live Musical Lunches

The Youth Services Department of the Teton County Library in Jackson, Wyoming, enlivened its summer reading program, "Keepin' the Beat with Books," with five Live Musical Lunches for children and adults. Enthusiasts brought picnic lunches, blankets, and friends to enjoy the lively entertainment held from noon to 1 P.M. on Fridays. The series was free, open to the public, and sponsored by the Teton County Library Foundation.

"This summer the library provided a fun venue for all ages," said Debbie Schlinger, youth services supervisor. "The concerts highlighted several talented, local musicians and students who showcased a variety of unique musical styles. The musical lunches were a fantastic opportunity to get kids and adult listeners interacting with live performers. It was truly toe-tapping, finger-snapping fun!"

For more information about Live Musical Lunches or the Summer Reading program, "Keepin' the Beat with Books," contact Youth Services at (307) 733-2164, ext. 103, or visit online at the **Youth Services Web site** (www.TCLib.org/kids).

Toledo-Lucas County Public Library Welcomes New Bookmobile to Fleet

A new bookmobile was unveiled in front of the Main Toledo-



"Tales from the Front" is a collection of news items and innovative ideas from libraries nationwide. Send submissions to the contributing editor, **Jennifer T. Ries-Taggart**, Director, Chili Public Library, 3333 Chili Ave., Rochester, NY 14624; jtaggart@libraryweb.org.

Jennifer Ries-Taggart is currently reading *Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince*, by J. K.

Rowling and *The Italian Secretary: A Further Adventure of Sherlock Holmes* by Caleb Carr.



New Toledo-Lucas County Public Library bookmobile

Lucas County (Ohio) Public Library, ensuring library service to all county residents.

The bookmobile has a custom-made interior and exterior to maximize usage and visibility. It features satellite Internet access, a state-of-the-art sound system to address patrons inside and outside the vehicle, a retractable awning for outdoor story times, and a one-of-a-kind Peek-A-Book interactive reading system for children. It is equipped with a wheelchair ramp and a hydraulic system, raising and lowering the vehicle for easy access. The bookmobile holds approximately twenty-five hundred materials. The 2004 Ford was purchased for \$179,665.

"Since 1937, bookmobile service has ensured this access to the furthest reaches of this county," said library director Clyde Scoles. "The addition of this new bookmobile will enable us to deliver information, education, and inspiration to every resident in every corner of this county."

Coordinated through the Outreach Services Department, the bookmobile makes approximately twelve hundred stops annually to childcare facilities, senior centers, and homes of patrons who are homebound or reside in rural areas.

It replaces a vehicle that had been in service for

eleven years and joins the recently added bookhauler (see "Tales from the Front," May/June 2005) to the fleet of rolling public library service. For more information, contact Chris Kozak, media relations officer, at (419) 259-5381.

Library Accepts Online Debit and Credit Card Payments

Cuyahoga County Public Library in Parma, Ohio, will now allow cardholders to make electronic payments for overdue fines and fees on its Web site (www.cuyahogalibrary.org). Cardholders should click on "My Account," type in their library card number and personal identification number (PIN). A message box will inform the viewer of overdue fines and fees showing on his or her account. If there are any, cardholders can click on "Pay Online" and pay by debit or credit card just as they might on any other secure Internet site.

Cuyahoga County Public Library has more than 555,000 cardholders who borrowed more than 13 million items last year, making it one of the nation's busiest library systems. This new service brings the

library close to home and offers additional services through the Web. For more information, contact Madeline Brookshire, marketing director, at (216) 749-9496 or write mbrookshire@cuyahoga.lib.oh.us.

NASA @ your library®

Queens Library's Central Library Gallery in Jamaica, New York, hosted NASA @ your library® for five weeks last spring. This national traveling exhibit, organized by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), ALA, and the Association for Library Service to Children, a division of ALA, opened April 19, 2005. The exhibit raised awareness and interest in science and encouraged young people to pursue careers in science.

The United States space program is much more than cool rockets and photos of Mars. Participants learned how the space program contributes practical applications to health care, agriculture, and commerce through the exhibit's interactive display featuring a light tower, audio dome, and a plasma touch-screen Apple computer that played continuously.

The exhibit not only brought science into daily life for visitors, but everyone also discovered how astronauts explore the universe. Display topics included the space shuttle and living and working on board the International Space Station.

For information about the NASA @ your library® project, e-mail nasa-alsc@ala.org. ■

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Serving the Library Market Since 1975



Library Services in Low-Income Urban Communities

Hampton (Skip) Auld

The writings assembled here discuss how urban public libraries provide services to low-income communities. Though I worked at the Main Library in downtown Charlotte, North Carolina, for nearly a decade, much of my career has been in more suburban or even rural communities. It has always struck me that library services are very different for poor people than they are for middle class or affluent people.

In June, I challenged librarians with the following questions: what are you and your library doing to meet the needs of impoverished citizens? Does a public library by its very nature meet different needs from those of the poor? Are the poor saddled with trying to meet food, shelter, and safety needs to the exclusion of learning to read? Are they coming to your libraries for computers, DVDs, and music instead of books, magazines, and newspapers? Do you find yourself stereotyping users based on their clothes and grooming? Do you feel helpless to meet their needs and inclined to pass them along to the social services department? On the other hand, have you developed partnerships with social services, mental health, literacy, housing, health, transportation, or other agencies in your community? Does your library provide outreach services to meet the needs of low-income communities? If you don't work in outreach, do you even understand these services?

Cathy Williams of the Columbus (Ohio) Metropolitan Library understands exactly what is needed in low-income communities and how to inspire the staff in her branch library to create and deliver appropriate services. What Williams says to new staff at her library reminds me of a comment by Joey Rodger, former executive director of PLA, the Urban Libraries Council, and Pendle Hill Peace Network: "We do not try to solve library problems, okay? The phrase I often use is that the Chicago Public Library understands it's in the Chicago business, not just the library business." This spirit animates Williams's own approach, attitude, and ethic of service in the community her library serves. How wonderful it would be if this spirit animated us all.



Serving Urban Populations

Cathy Williams

Children's Specialist and Manager, Linden Branch, Columbus (Ohio) Metropolitan Library; cwilliams@columbuslibrary.org

I tell staff, "when you come to work here, you have to understand that it's not about making everyone into a book person. What we are trying to do is serve our customers, help them to feel welcome and comfortable, and give them a positive experience at the library. We're here to make a difference in the lives of individuals. We are here to try to break the cycle of illiteracy in this neighborhood."

I manage the Linden Branch of the Columbus Metropolitan Library in Ohio. Our neighborhood has high crime rates and very low incomes. Approximately 80 percent of the people who live in our neighborhood are at or below the level of poverty. Approximately 75 percent of the children in our local schools are performing below grade level each year. Some might ask, "How can a library survive in this kind of community?" My question is, "What would the community do without us?"

Like most public libraries, ours is a place of learning. We have all the usual library materials, story times, and book discussion groups. We also provide General Equivalency Diploma (GED) tutoring, computer basics, help with small businesses, and a homework help center. What makes us unique is not what we give; it's how we give it.

Ruby K. Payne points out in her book, *A Framework for Understanding Poverty*, that people in poverty value relationships above all else. We have taken that insight to heart and created relationships throughout our community. We are involved with the local area commission, we're meeting with local business owners and local church leaders, and we're working with local agencies to provide free GED tutoring and adult reading classes. We are out there making connections so that we can multiply our efforts. Let me tell you a few stories.

Ramona

One day late in fall 2004, six-year-old Ramona came running through the library, singing to herself. After she zoomed past the information desk, her mother came walking by at a more leisurely pace. She stopped to tell us how great it was to see Ramona so excited. "How often do you see a kid excited to do her homework? That's why we come here, because she just won't do it at home. It takes her hours when we're in our kitchen, but she loves to do it here." Ramona is one of many children who take advantage of our staffed homework help center.

Election Day

I'm sure many other libraries across the country were busy on Election Day, November 2, 2004. There were some problems in this county because of the unexpectedly large turnout. Not only did I wait in line for two hours to cast my vote . . . but also, by noon there were more than two hundred people waiting to vote in a long line at our library. It circumnavigated the interior of the building, doubled back, and headed out the front door. It was raining, but the voters all crowded into our library most

of the time. The wait was purported to be the longest in the state, up to five hours for some. What did we do? We moved all the available chairs in the building out into the line area so folks could sit. We bustled around with armloads of books for adults and picture books for their children, sitting on the floor to read to kids and encouraging parents to do the same. We made frequent announcements about our programs. We shook hands, met people, and encouraged people to get library cards. We heard lots of stories about long-overdue items and large fines, and were able to tell them about the Reading Off Fines program, where they read for an hour and get money taken off their record. We did everything we could to promote reading and literacy, get to know our neighbors, and make them welcome as they crowded into our building that day.

Summer Lunch

During the summer, we often see kids who spend their entire day at the library. A few years ago, we contacted Children's Hunger Alliance and started offering free lunches. We now serve at capacity every day, giving away sixty lunches. Many of these kids won't find nutritious food at home, but we smile, engage the families in conversation, and get to know them, so they realize this is not a place that turns away people with needs. We have one family that comes to story time now that started out just coming for lunch. I talked to the mother, told her what story time was like, and explained how valuable and fun it could be for her kids. She'll tell her neighbors, and this will grow. For this family, it was all about taking away the mystique of what happens at the library.

Spontaneous Reading

We spend most of our time in the public area so that we'll have time to grab a good book and say, "anyone want to read with me?" We now have children who come to us and say, "Can you read me a book?" Staff at all levels and in all areas of our library read to kids, finding a couch or just sitting on the floor. We help parents get some free time to use the Internet by reading to their children or encouraging them to use the puppets or other toys. We provide a model for the families on how to engage in dialog with kids about books and other things to help foster their children's vocabulary skills.

Computers and Résumés

We help people make résumés and learn basic computer skills every day. One particular customer will be hard to forget. He's a middle-aged man who was out of work. My staff helped him learn to use the computer, get a free e-mail account, and put together his first résumé. After a few weeks of helping him do all this and search online job postings, he got a job. Where is he working? At the library branch up the road from us!

Those Unruly Kids

We kick kids out for being rowdy every day we are open. We operate with a "broken window" philosophy—if we take care of the little things immediately, the big problems won't develop.

Sometimes their parents get angry, but we let the parents know that we're on their side. We want their kids to use this community space responsibly. About a year ago, an elderly gentleman came in and thanked me for helping with his grandson. He mandated that his grandson apologize to our security officer, and he told us all that he is proud to have this library, and that his grandson should respect this gift in the community. That happens more often than not now, because we've built a reputation for caring about people.

Serving urban populations is about understanding the values of people who live in poverty. By reaching out to individuals, learning their names, and building relationships, we are positioning ourselves to be able to make a difference in the community and possibly help them break the cycle of illiteracy and poverty.

The Poor and the Public Library

John Bernardi

Manager, Charles B. Washington Branch, Omaha (Neb.)
Public Library; jbernardi@omaha.lib.ne.us

Let's set the record straight! Public library service in poor inner-city areas is just not the same as the service in affluent suburbs. Inner city people depend upon their branch library for a lot of other things that they need in their lives. Those of us who started our careers in suburban libraries and came to the inner city suddenly realized that we must design programs and services we never dreamed about before. The services we learned to provide in library school just aren't enough.

The branch library that I manage is in the inner city of Omaha, Nebraska. This is an area of high unemployment and low income. Crime is always around the corner, and drive-by shootings happen regularly. The library means something very different for the people in this neighborhood.

The people in our community consider the public library to be a secure place, a place where they can be safe from crime, gangs, and drugs. The library is a place where people are comfortable sending their children. We have a high number of unattended children and latchkey children who come to the library after school because there is no adult at home. This is simply the reality of life here.

We are fortunate that our local police precinct captain has a strong commitment to outreach to young people. We have invited her on different occasions to come to our library and visit with young people or anybody in the library for that matter. We have called these visits A Talk with the Captain. We have invited the county sheriff to visit our library as a part of a series of programs whereby people could meet and talk with different public officials. In the past, the city councilman from this district was available weekly in the library to hear citizen concerns.

It is important that library staff have good contacts and communication with business people and other community leaders concerning safety issues. We have all met together with the police at our local precinct. These meetings were an opportunity to share information about crime and safety matters. It was encouraging that all of us could be a part of a crime watch network and help each other out.

Because we have so many latchkey children in our library after school, we have had to provide a lot of afterschool activities

for them. It means scheduling staff so that they are available to assist and monitor the children in the library.

Our patrons use the library for our computers and technology more than they do for books and reading. Most of our patrons do not own computers at home because they cannot afford them. Our small, inner-city branch has one of the highest per capita computer users in the Omaha Public Library system. Our library's computers are a vital community resource. Adults rely on them throughout the day, and young people depend on them to do homework.

Why do our patrons use the library's computers? Of course, most people nowadays want to use e-mail, especially the Web-based e-mail providers. Besides homework, young people want to listen to music, go to chat rooms, and surf the Web. These are typical activities that one would see in any suburban library. Adults buy things, check their bank accounts, or pay bills. But the main reason people come to use our computers is to find jobs.

Our adult and teenage patrons depend on our computers to do online job searches, apply for jobs online, and prepare resumes. Our staff devotes a great deal of time teaching and assisting people with these things. We teach regular classes on writing resumes and using Internet employment sites. We have a bookmark for *CareerLink* (www.careerlink.com) on our public computers. A few times each year we invite staff from Nebraska Job Workforce Development to spend a day helping people to find jobs with our computers.

Because helping people find information about jobs is one of our biggest reference duties and because our patrons want contact with local employers, our staff decided that one of the best

It is important for people in an inner-city neighborhood to take pride in their history and culture. They expect their library to offer programs and services that support this ethnic history and culture.

things we could give our community was a job fair. We surveyed our patrons to find out what kinds of jobs they were trying to find. Since we anticipated a large crowd, we chose to have this fair in the library's parking lot. We rented a large tent and called it The Library's Job Fair Under the Tent. The first year we sponsored the outside fair, we attracted twenty-five employers and more than eight hundred job seekers for a one-day event. Such large employers as Union Pacific Railroad and United Parcel Service participated. This has become one of the largest job fairs in north Omaha, and we have repeated it for three years.

Employers enjoy being so close to the library because they can refer people inside to apply online and prepare resumes. We work closely with the circulation managers of *The Employment Guide* and *JobDig*, local employment publications. They have been very helpful in planning the job fair and promoting it in their papers. Because a job fair is an unusual public library event, the local media has given us excellent coverage and promotion. People throughout the community have come to expect this annual event.

Key Library Roles in the Inner City

John Bernardi, Omaha Public Library

- Use of technology and computers
- The library as safe place and for child care
- The library as a source of information from nonprofits and service organizations
- Information on jobs and careers
- The library as heart of the community
- The library as an ethnic and cultural center (music, Kwanzaa, Juneteenth, Black History Month)
- A center for teens and young people

Our job fair has given us a political advantage locally and even in our state legislature. It is a very visible example of what libraries are doing to help their communities. The idea is spreading. Other organizations have started sponsoring job fairs in north Omaha. The library system's teen librarians are planning a career fair in a suburban branch for young people that is modeled after our own.

It's not surprising that our patrons are always asking us for information about government and nonprofit social programs. For example, they might want information about food stamps, unemployment insurance, entitlement programs, or health care. Obviously, we cannot give them all the information they need, and we have to refer them to appropriate agencies. But they come to us *first* for help! We give them as much information as we can before referring them elsewhere.

One important thing we can do to help the public get information from these governmental and nonprofit agencies is to bring these agencies to the library to do programs. We sponsor monthly brown bag lunch programs at our branch; these are a great opportunity to bring the public into contact with these agencies. We have invited the Nebraska Department of Corrections to do a program on integrating ex-convicts back into the community. Staff from the Creighton University Health Sciences Library has done several programs on minority health issues. These programs are well-publicized and well-attended.

We sponsor an annual outdoor June Family Fair, with a variety of amusements and activities for all ages to celebrate the African American holiday of Juneteenth. We also invite nonprofits and government agencies to have booths at our fairs. A local homeless shelter called the Open Door Mission is a regular exhibitor. Other exhibitors providing opportunities for the public to get firsthand information include such agencies as Habitat for Humanity, Lutheran Family Services, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, and the YMCA.

It is important for people in an inner-city neighborhood to take pride in their history and culture. They expect their library to offer programs and services that support this ethnic history and culture. Because most of our patrons are African Americans, we emphasize this heritage in everything we do. Our annual Kwanzaa celebration attracts people from throughout north Omaha and even people from the suburbs. Black History Month in February, of course, means appropriate programs and activities. Although books and reading may not be the primary attraction in our library, our public does expect to find books by African American authors and books with African American themes.

Library service in a poor inner-city neighborhood has a very different flavor from the suburbs. This is a world where

people look to the library for safety, jobs, information about services, and cultural heritage.

What Every Community Wishes It Had: Quality Out-of-School-Time Teen Programming

Maureen O'Connor

Director of Library Services, Queens Borough (N.Y.) Public Library; maureen.t.oconnor@queenslibrary.org

The myth in public library service is that we provide equitable service to all our customers. While we attempt to provide the same service, all of our customers don't receive the same service. The variables at work in people's lives create barriers between our potential to serve and the ability of customers to access what we have to offer: hours of service, language, mobility, education, history of library use, access to technology, and level of technological literacy are a few.

Queens Library has developed watershed programs that completely flip the way we reach out to and serve young adults in low-income neighborhoods. We hope that it will eventually become the model for young adult services borough-wide.

Queens Library is the first, and we believe only, public library to be a lead agency in the federally funded Weed & Seed program. Weed & Seed is a program of the Department of Justice.¹ Its premise is that law enforcement is not enough to create safer neighborhoods; in order to be successful, the community has to address quality of life issues, support education, and promote economic development.

The Far Rockaway community is home to several subsidized housing projects, plenty of drugs, gangs, and crime. There are three library branches in the area, all of which experienced their share of mischief and rowdy kids after school, but not more than most other branches. The library was loath to "shush and shoo" them. We accept and promote our responsibility as the most stable, positive presence in that community—no matter what else goes on, the library has been there and the library will remain there.

The first collaborations with law enforcement came about when the library reached out to the police precinct and offered to partner to provide positive programs for teens. New York Police Department's (NYPD) Community Relations Office identified several kids as at-risk. They were bussed to the central library once a week to participate in such workshops as how to use a computer, how to interview for a first job, raising self-esteem, using library resources to help with homework, and so on. The program was successful, but transporting the teens around was not efficient. Further, dealing with a few teens at a time was not enough. We needed to bring services to a larger number, right on their own doorsteps.

Today, Queens Library coordinates the Weed & Seed project for the community, which points to our stability and centrality in the neighborhood. The library is also responsible for the educational component of the program. We provide online and in-person tutoring and mentoring to students ages seven to fifteen at the library; there is an art program, a drama club, a poetry club, a reading club, and other teen-centric programming.

We are conscious that the teens we are trying to engage are commonly parents themselves. In converting them into library users, we are bringing the next generation into a culture of literacy. A long-standing program, Toddler Learning Centers, is a multisession, double-pronged approach. Toddlers have age-appropriate stories and games while the parents have a speaker on child development, nutrition, child safety, emergent literacy, and other parenting topics. It is given on a rotating basis in various branches, even though it would be filled to capacity if scheduled many times in each branch.

A particular challenge to providing services in a low-income community is the corresponding low-literacy rate. The community doesn't get its information from the written communication devices we traditionally rely on. They don't respond to flyers in the library branch, ads, or notices in the local newspapers. Through a Twenty-first Century Community Learning Center grant in the same community, supported by federal funds and awarded through the New York State Education Department, we are able to leverage the services of a project coordinator who "hand-sells" the library programs for teens face to face, from school to school, and from hair salon to house of worship. It works. It takes a lot of time and a lot of patience. In other words, it takes a lot more money per contact than we are usually able to expend to attract library customers in general.

Libraries-as-community-centers need funding in different ways than the old model did. Quality out-of-school time, especially for teens, needs to be a core part of library service and not a frill. It is only sound public policy that we concentrate scarce resources in communities that need them the most.

Phoenix's Harmon Branch Extends a Helping Hand

Pattie Fransen and Sabrena Adams

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Harmon Branch Library is the oldest library in the Phoenix Public Library system. Located in south central Phoenix, Harmon serves a population comprised largely of low-income Hispanic families. The branch also serves a significant homeless population, characteristic of many large metropolitan areas. Through a variety of innovative programs and joint ventures with community organizations, Harmon Branch has revitalized its service program to better respond to the needs of this community.

Harmon first opened its doors to the public on September 12, 1950. The facility is adjacent to a local housing project occupied by low-income families. The library fulfills the more traditional role of information destination by providing a collection of popular books, graphic novels, and DVDs. However, the branch also serves as a community gathering place, offering access to the Internet, computer classes, English as a Second Language (ESL) and GED classes, information about area social services, programming, and a community garden.

The branch was recently remodeled, resulting in a vibrantly colored exterior with improved landscaping and a refreshed interior.² Evoking a fiesta, the walls explode with

color, including chartreuse, magenta, school bus yellow, and eggplant. The circulation counter lights up with the power of fiber optics and a brightly colored terrazzo floor with big bold circles leading to an orange wall that separates the teen space from the main floor. New furniture for the public and a remodel of the staff workspace completed the two-year renovation.

Community residents maintain Harmon Garden, a vegetable garden on a small piece of property adjacent to the library patio. Begun through a partnership with Phoenix Revitalization Corporation, residents grow produce for sale at a local farmers' market. The garden is a beautiful addition to the library patio and gives inner-city children a chance to watch the seasonal growth of flowers and vegetables.

At Harmon, the Phoenix Public Library successfully partnered with the City of Phoenix Housing Department and

... the Harmon Branch of the Phoenix Public Library serves as a refuge and gathering place for its neighbors.

Phoenix Community College to create Harmon Institute. The institute encompasses two rooms at the branch, which house twenty-five computers. It is open four days per week from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. Local residents participate in a variety of introductory computer-related classes, including basic word-processing and résumé writing. Because these are college-level courses, students are eligible to receive credit through the community college. In addition, the Institute provides open lab time so that patrons can get immediate help with a word-processing problem or stop by to practice their computer skills. Recently, institute instructors have begun to offer ESL classes on the computer as well.

Programs for families include Family Place, a free series of five-week workshops for parents and caregivers offered several times each year. Parents meet informally with experts in speech, play, child behavior, nutrition, and physical fitness. They also spend time with their children, exploring a variety of educational toys, puzzles, and books, and creating art while learning more about library programs and services. Originally funded through a grant from Libraries for the Future, the library continued the program due to its success. The branch also offers Baby Time in Spanish. Designed for children from birth to three years of age and their caregivers, the staff models for adults a variety of activities that encourage infant brain development and support early literacy.

Outreach is a priority for branch staff, including librarians, circulation attendants, pages, and security guards. A high percentage of the staff speaks Spanish. Librarians conduct early literacy workshops in Spanish for parents of Head Start students. They also visit neighborhood schools during the school day to promote library programming and services and on Parent Night to meet community families.

Every Friday morning, Harmon opens its meeting room to neighborhood residents for coffee. We call it Café Harmon, sponsored by our chapter of the Friends of the Phoenix Public Library. Newspapers and magazines are scattered on tables throughout the room. Each September, the library hosts a *Mercado* in celebration of Mexican Independence Day. During this event, the library is filled with music, food, and fun.

Beyond these programs and services, library staff and administration strive to offer the highest quality customer service and collection of materials in a facility that rivals that of any neighborhood elsewhere in the city. Combining a willingness to embrace community partners and a non-traditional approach, the Harmon Branch of the Phoenix Public Library serves as a refuge and gathering place for its neighbors.

Serving Differently

Sharon Smith

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The Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library (IMCPL) meets the needs of low-income communities with a lot of humor, compassion, and community involvement. My first management position was at the East Washington Library, a 1909 Carnegie building in a low-income community in Indianapolis, Indiana. For five years, it provided the most exciting, challenging, and emotionally draining experiences of my career. I vividly remember the initial discussion about what my duties would include and what limits I had on providing library service: "You can try anything except painting the front door red." The challenge is to consistently look for opportunities to bring library service into a community faced with basic survival needs of food, housing, health, daycare, and jobs.

IMCPL serves a total population of 782,000 with twenty-two branches and two bookmobile routes. Seven of those branches are in predominantly inner-city, low-income areas. Service in these areas is much different from that in our more middle-class, suburban areas. This difference is a result of identifying patron needs and how best to provide them. It is not that the resources we provide are much different; we still fill the information and recreation needs of the public. The difference is rather more in the *way* we provide those resources both in the library building and through outreach in the community.

In-Branch Service

The locations of our branches are important. In our low-income areas, IMCPL has branches in a strip mall, a community center, a building with senior housing, near a homeless mission, and next door to a neighborhood center. These branches typically serve residents within a one-mile radius, while our more middle-class community branches serve residents within a two- or three-mile radius and are not always near bus routes.

Perhaps the best way of describing the difference in service is to say that in low-income communities, staff must be more proactive in helping the public. Patrons require more individual service. When you talk with our staff in these branches, they describe the level of service as a need to "hold the patron's hand" while they explore resources and gain confidence in an unfamiliar setting. It generally takes much longer per transaction to help patrons in low-income areas. If 20 percent of patrons in middle-class branches ask for staff assistance other than check out, I would estimate that 80 percent or higher of patrons in our low-income branches need staff assistance.

Many other challenges face those providing library service to low-income patrons including health and social issues, especially those that affect appropriate behavior in the library. This is the most stressful for the staff and the one challenge that causes many to question the validity of traditional library services to low-income communities.

Low-income patrons frequently have more mental and physical health issues that staff must evaluate in order to serve them. These can include how to provide the library experience to a boy in a wheelchair when your library is inaccessible, or how to listen carefully to a patron describing his hallucination about the near miss he had with a laser before he begins to ask his reference question.

Our library also experiences such challenges as high incidences of latchkey children and homeless people wishing to check out materials without an address or identification.

Outreach Service

Outreach is vital to connecting with people in low-income communities, where there are more unserved or underserved patrons than in other areas. While patrons in these areas may not visit the library, they do visit many of the social service agencies and churches.

Libraries must be proactive in seeking opportunities in low-income areas; whereas middle-class libraries may simply need to respond to invitations from organizations in their area. IMCPL has worked closely with the homeless missions to provide their residents with library cards or materials. We gave an InfoPort to one of the missions, providing free reading material and information about the nearest library. One of our libraries has formed a partnership with a clinic that provides a free book to each child. While the parents are waiting to see a doctor, a librarian reads a book to the child, providing a role model for a parent who may not be comfortable reading to the child at home.

Branch staff attend many community functions to market our libraries and make a personal connection with the public. They visit more day cares, community fairs, festivals, and neighborhood meetings than their middle-class counterparts, all in an attempt to reach those who are not typical library users.

Service to low-income populations is emotionally draining and creates a large turnover in service and service providers, including library staff. Library branch managers typically stay in these low-income communities for five years, while it is common for managers in higher-income communities to stay ten to twenty years.

Evaluation of Service

One of the biggest challenges for libraries serving the low-income population is how to justify how we spend our resources using the existing tools of evaluation. In these settings, you cannot measure success by how many books were checked out or how many patrons attended programs. You measure success in other ways. A librarian who partnered with a community center for a class on library resources received a letter from a woman who thanked him, stating that it helped her find a well-paying job in another town and she no longer needed public assistance. Another librarian appreciated that her car was the only one in the parking lot that was not egged—because she was the librar-

ian. And sometimes, you measure success at the end of the day by how many hugs you gave and received.

Outreach Services to the Backstretch of Arlington Park Race Track

Joyce Voss

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Beautiful Arlington Park, situated on the west side of Arlington Heights, Illinois, offers thoroughbred racing from mid-May through mid-September. As the prize horses and their owners arrive, so do the hundreds of Backstretch workers. The Backstretch is the nonpublic land area of the track, in which horse barns and living quarters for the stable workers are found. Most stable workers are from rural Mexico and they mostly speak Spanish. Some workers are groomers, the caretakers in the stables who saddle horses, provide rubdowns, exercise the animals, clean stalls, tack up the horses, and so on. Others may be “hot walkers.” A hot walker leads the horse in a circle at a slow walk to cool them after training. Additional workers perform myriad other duties that support owners and their horses. Many of the workers’ families also come. The summer population living in track housing is approximately twelve hundred adults and more than five hundred children.

For more than ten years, the Arlington Heights Memorial Library has provided weekly bookmobile visits to the Backstretch. More recently, we added a weekly visit by a storyteller to the children’s camp, run by the community education department of the local high school district, and bus trips to the library for the Backstretch children during the summer months.

On the bookmobile, a Spanish-speaking volunteer helps three staff members, two of whom also speak Spanish. DVDs, videos, and CDs are popular. Pulling additional DVDs from the main library including those that have an alternate Spanish soundtrack enhanced the bookmobile’s collection. Each patron is limited to a total of three audiovisual items. Spanish, English, and bilingual books are circulated along with basic reading materials in fiction and nonfiction. Fines are not charged, but additional items cannot be checked out by patrons with overdue items still out.

Cards are issued each year and are valid until the end of that year’s racing season. Besides using them on the bookmobile, the cards may be used at the main library. After a child registers and his card is complete, the youngster is given a prize. This year the younger children received hand puppets and the older ones were given funky or fancy pens. By the third week in June, 128 children had collected prizes and more registrations were expected.

Activities for the children are very limited at the Backstretch; often both parents are working. The arrival of the bookmobile is a major event. Many of the same staff return year after year, and a strong level of trust has been established. With increased communication—including a clear explanation of how a library works, personal service, and follow-up at the end of the season to gather materials—problems with losses have been greatly reduced.

Besides giving the children something to do, the aim is to have them connect with books. Recently, a little Spanish-speaking girl boarded the bookmobile and seemed afraid to touch anything or say a word. Jeremy, a staff member, picked a book off the shelf and began to talk to her in Spanish about one of its pictures. After a few minutes of softly speaking about what he saw, she began to talk about the picture, too. Within a few more minutes, she took the book herself and selected a few more. When she found one about a rooster, her eyes lit up, telling us all what a wonderful discovery she had made. While the majority of checkouts for the adults are DVDs and videos, teens like the magazines and CDs. Other Backstretch workers who speak English request materials to help them learn Spanish. Staff gladly take special requests and reserves and try to fill them by the next visit.

The bookmobile visits the Backstretch for two hours at a time, circulating about four hundred items per visit. The literacy specialist is in charge of this Backstretch service. The librarian in charge of world languages assists her. They handle registrations and check outs, and the driver handles check ins. Periodically, staff from other departments accompany the bookmobile to the Backstretch and help deliver this important outreach service.

Once a week in the summer, a library storyteller goes to the children's camp held on the Backstretch. She works with the younger children, sharing books and encouraging them to retell what they might have read. Each week, for the most part, a different staff member fills this assignment. The elementary school specialist organizes the tellers.

This is the fourth year that children from the Backstretch have been brought by bus to the library. Currently, the Friends of the Library finances the trips. For the first trip of the 2005 season, seventy-one children and staff spent two hours participating in activities in the Kids' World department. The very young children participated in a story time, while the third through fifth graders enjoyed doing science experiments. Sixth through eighth graders were eligible to be Junior Library Volunteers (JLV); four chose that role this year. As JLV, they help at various summer reading program stations: craft table, summer games, reading table, and prize distribution.

Through the years of delivering service to this special population, we have refined procedures, forged solid community relationships, helped many children benefit their book experiences, and assisted adults with language and life skills. There have been such challenges as changing personnel at the track and at other agencies providing services, the language barrier, and material losses at the bookmobile. In early spring each year, our library puts the Backstretch Plan into place, making contacts and arranging necessary permissions. Everyone takes a deep breath, as once again the adventure continues.

Four Guiding Principles

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At the Providence Public Library (PPL) system in Rhode Island, four key principles guide us in fulfilling our vision and mission in this urban environment. We serve a population of 173,000 made up primarily of minorities and with almost half of our young children living at or below poverty levels.³

Empowerment, programs, partnerships, and community distinguish our urban library services. Empowerment through our services, which is to say problem-solving at a very high level, is our first guiding principle. This translates into very labor-intensive staff interactions with patrons.

Our second key principle is that our programs not only support that empowerment, but also are a major means for carrying out our mission. They are no longer "hooks" to get folks into the library to use other services. Don't misunderstand; we make every possible effort to connect people to our collections. Nonetheless, programs are on a par with our other services. They exist not to support a service, they *are* the service.

Our third guiding principle is a reliance on partnerships and collaborations. There is very little by either design or necessity that we do totally alone. Partnerships aid in grant funding, private fund-raising, program design, public relations, and evaluation. Because an urban environment has so many agencies and overlapping clienteles, at minimum it requires the cooperation of other organizations, if not actual participation. We've discovered in Providence that we really are more effective together. As of 2005, we have two outstanding examples of how cooperation works. One is a collaboration of early childhood educators and advocates called Ready to Learn Providence; the other is a coalition of after-school providers called Providence After School Alliance. Through these alliances, the library is a key player in early childhood literacy programs and is also poised to play a key role in the formation of neighborhood-based after-school hubs called AfterZones.

Our fourth guiding principle is that the library in an urban environment is unquestionably a community place. In addition to providing meeting space for neighborhood groups, library branches provide a safe haven after school, which is paramount to parents in Providence who recently identified safety as their number one issue regarding children and afterschool programs. That sense of place also contributes to our role in fostering civic participation and developing social capital.

Empowerment, programs, partnerships, and place distinguish our urban library services. Does this mean our patrons read less than suburban or rural patrons? This can be argued, if one only uses circulation as the yardstick. But we know they are using the library not only for checking out books, but also for Internet access and reading in the library. Whether it's e-mail, chat, Web sites for information, or Web sites for their native country's newspapers, it is nonetheless reading. Thus, the use of the library remains high, for library users recognize us as a place with friendly, helpful people who want to assist them in finding the right resources to succeed in whatever ways they define that success.

It is also important *not* to stereotype any particular group as nonreaders. Even those classified as disadvantaged may have come from backgrounds in their native countries that would have been considered educated or upper- and middle-class. They may be victims of debilitating illnesses unrelated to their reading activities. Furthermore, the thirst for both shared and stimulating experiences is a strong one, regardless of economic levels. Recently, we launched a very successful Spanish language book club conducted entirely in Spanish. This club attracts more participants than the English language book group in a branch in the affluent section of Providence.

With the four guiding principles, PPL has designed a wide range of programs to support its residents. Our early childhood programs target those parents who most need assistance in readying their child for reading. The Cradle to Crayons pro-

gram is for children ages one to three and their parents or caregivers. It provides community childhood education experts, as well as library staff (including bilingual) who have been trained to work with parents on early literacy activities and the importance of a language-rich environment. Providence also has many in-home daycare providers who we support through learning and reading kits in English and Spanish. Each kit has a theme and includes a large canvas bag of books, manipulatives, and activity sheets. We also host a biannual conference for providers that awards continuing education credits for attendance.

Our after-school programs center around literacy and technology. Our Library's Enriching After-school Programs (LEAP) program for elementary school age children incorporates books and learning into a fun, enrichment activity. Our youth technology program Whiz Kids allows children and youth to advance their computer skills, as many still do not have computers at home. The Creating Readers program for grades one through three matches youngsters with high school juniors and seniors or adult volunteers and allows the children to practice their reading and writing. A major quality indicator for afterschool programs is the presence of caring adults. Our library staff see many of our young patrons literally every day and strive to create a place where children are welcomed, encouraged, and known by name. The challenge of latchkey children also presents the opportunity to forge amazingly strong and close relationships.

This year our branches are participating in a twenty-first-century community learning center grant. In partnership with the Greater Providence YMCA and a local elementary school, seventy children visit our South Providence branch after school from Monday through Friday for activities focused on science and literacy. This same grant allows a roving children's specialist to work in multiple afterschool care sites.

Urban teens in our city also needed a program tailored to their specific needs. Therefore, we developed a teen employment program called Teen POWER that employs high school students (at more than minimum wage) as computer lab monitors or as book buddies to younger children. Along with this paid employment, they develop workplace skills, explore careers, and discover their ability to help others and be role models for younger children. To an inner-city teen, these are not mere extracurricular activities, but formative ones contributing to their future success.

Our library also provides free computer classes to the general public and to support agency clientele and staff. Topics range from how to use a mouse to using Excel or PowerPoint. Without such free technology education, the vast majority of our population would not have the opportunity to advance their own technology skills.

Our family literacy program provides families with the chance to develop their English language and computer literacy skills through small group interaction and individual instruction under the guidance of paid teachers. Children also participate in a structured activity, often joining their parents at the end of the session for a joint activity. Last year's Family Journey programs, sponsored by MetLife and Libraries for the Future in partnership with local groups, are characteristic of our best programs—providing programming for multiple age groups, offering high levels of social interaction, fostering a sense of community, and wrapped together with culture and literacy.

Our urban library services are very much focused on the needs of a large, disadvantaged population. Yet the basic mission of meeting your patrons' specific needs remains unchanged and is no different from other libraries. It is perhaps in the depth

and breadth of our services, and in the serious consequences of failing that mission, that urban libraries are unique.

Jacksonville Public Library Service to Low-Income Urban Areas

Anita Haller and Keith Hayes

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The Jacksonville Public Library (JPL) system in Florida believes community partnerships are the key to providing services to families, especially children, in low-income areas. We have had exceptional opportunities in the past several years to develop our services for Jacksonville's low-income areas, served by the Main Library downtown and four smaller branches—Graham, Brown-Eastside, Westbrook, and Brentwood. From voters to the mayor's office to the zoo, JPL has looked to community support to find ways to better serve those with limited means. The Better Jacksonville Plan, approved by Jacksonville's voters in September 2000, started JPL on a major building program. A new, showcased Main Library building and substantial improvements to the branches providing services to downtown and inner-city Jacksonville were integral parts of this plan, which is nearing completion.

Part of the difficulty of reaching lower-income families is getting them to the library. The Ride to Read program, established in conjunction with the Jacksonville Transit Authority, is one of our community partnerships. In Jacksonville, any child under seventeen years of age with a library card can receive coupons for free bus rides to and from any Jacksonville library.

Beginning in 2005, more than two thousand children received JPL library cards through a partnership with Mayor John Peyton's Rally Reader program. Rally Reader, administered by the Jacksonville Children's Commission, promotes literacy to all four-year-olds in Jacksonville. Children sign up for the free program and receive several incentives that encourage reading, including a backpack filled with educational goodies and a free Rally Jacksonville book each month. This year, Rally Readers at participating daycare centers were given special library card applications to take home to their parents. Applications collected by the centers were processed by JPL, and library cards were issued to the children.

We also have programs to focus attention into positive educational outlets once young customers are in the library. JPL has established two unique programs in the four branch locations: After School Programs Inspire Reading Enrichment (ASPIRE) Centers and ZooTREK. ASPIRE centers were created in 1991 with help from Pepsi and the Jacksonville Children's Commission. Open to children ages five to twelve from 3 to 5 P.M. daily, the centers feature computers, board games, books, and crafts. Children's librarians and clerical staff manage the centers. One of the useful aspects of the centers is that the librarians are free to establish rules that will encourage reading, games, crafts, and homework in addition to exploring the Internet. This is not possible in the regular service areas of branches, where all ages are served and rules are much more general. Some librarians require thirty minutes of read-

ing before kids can sign up for a computer. Others set aside times when the computers are shut down to encourage kids to complete their homework or participate in crafts and games. Because they see the kids daily, librarians get to know them well in these settings. They can help individuals with particular projects for school or personal use. Also, unlike the computers in the public service areas, the ASPIRE Center computers do not require the use of library cards to sign on, which allows those who do not have cards or who have problems with their cards to gain monitored access to helpful computer services. For example, JPL offers an online database from Tutor.com titled Live Homework Help. With the librarian available in the ASPIRE Center to recommend the service and introduce the children to its use, Live Homework Help has proven to be extremely popular, especially for help with math homework.

Established in 2003, ZooTREK is an outreach partnership with the Jacksonville Zoo. The Zoo wanted a way to reach inner-city children who seldom see wildlife. Operating at the four neighborhood branches, ZooTREK is a weekly club that introduces children to animals they would not normally see, particularly emphasizing Florida's wildlife. The members also learn the observation techniques and disciplined behavior required to work with wild animals. At the end of the year, the children and their families are invited to a field trip at the Jacksonville Zoo.

Seeking to create positive literacy experiences for children who otherwise might have little-to-no contact with JPL, the Main Library has also developed an extensive outreach program to elementary schools, daycares, and such partner organizations as Community Connections and Urban League Head Start. The visits consist of library promotion, stories, songs, fingerplays, puppet shows, and creative art activities. Children are always encouraged to bring their parents or guardians to the library to get library cards and check out the books they have just viewed. The staff of the Main Library's children's department perform thirty to forty outreach visits per month and reach several thousand children.

Community Connections offers transitional housing and essential support services to help homeless and low-income women, children, and families become self-sufficient. The homeless families can bring a letter verifying address from their shelter and receive a library card. The Main Library regularly performs in-house preschool library story times and outreach visits for the children in the Community Connections Davis Center's daycare program. Librarians also perform elementary (K-5) outreach for the Davis Center's afterschool program. All Community Connections children participate in JPL's summer reading program.

The Main Library's partnership with Urban League Head Start has become increasingly important. During the school year, the Main Library visits ten to fifteen Head Start centers each month. These centers benefit not only from the literacy promotion, but also receive in-kind money for hosting these programs. Since beginning Head Start outreach, several centers began to schedule regular visits to the library, and plans have been made with Head Start administration to require classes to visit a JPL branch next year.

JPL's Main Library also houses the Center for Adult Learning (CAL). A member of the Northeast Florida Literacy Coalition and other community boards, CAL works within the community to improve adult literacy by targeting apartment complexes and

government-subsidized housing projects in low-income neighborhoods. Through small classes and computer-based literacy instruction, CAL educates individuals with low literacy skills to help them obtain gainful employment and often their GED.

Jacksonville Public Library has found that the most effective way to serve low-income urban populations is to partner with existing organizations. These populations need education on services offered by the public library. Once individuals find the wealth of free programs and materials, they are likely to come back for more.

Conclusion

As I was bringing this column to a close on July 4, 2005, word came of a resolution by the British Library Association's Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) on the role of libraries in eradicating poverty:

Whereas library and information services underpin information, literacy and the learning process; and whereas literacy and learning underpin all our aspirations, locally and globally, for ourselves, our communities and our economies including equality, social justice and the eradication of poverty; therefore be it resolved that this conference declares its support for the Make Poverty History campaign and calls on the UK government to recognise and promote the role of libraries in sustainable economic development.

This resolution was meant as a strong message for participants in the G8 Summit in Perthshire, Scotland, in July and for the World Summit on the Information Society in Tunis, Tunisia, in November. It should also animate discussions of the role of libraries in low-income communities here at home in our cities across North America. ■



Hampton (Skip) Auld is Assistant Director, Chesterfield County Public Library, 9501 Lori Rd., Chesterfield, VA 23832-0297; (804) 748-1767; AuldHM@chesterfield.gov. He is currently reading *The Red Tent* by Anita Diamant, *Persepolis* and *Persepolis 2* by Marjane Satrapi (two autobiographical graphic novels about revolutionary Iran and the author's exile in Paris), the beautiful folio volume titled *Churches* by Judith Dupre, and Satrapi's *Embroideries*, which is hilariously ribald.

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References and Notes

1. Community Capacity Development Office, Office of Justice Programs homepage, U.S. Department of Justice. Accessed July 3, 2005, www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ccdo.
2. For a photo, see www.phoenixpubliclibrary.org/branchinfo.jsp?bid=BHA. Accessed July 4, 2005.
3. By statute, the Providence Public Library also serves the state of Rhode Island with just fewer than 1 million persons and five core urban areas. This essay deals with our services to the city of Providence.



Book Talk provides authors' perspectives on libraries, books, technology, and information.

Appealing to All Age Groups

An Interview with Deborah Noyes

Amy Alessio

Finding the right match of story to audience when writing for any age of reader is difficult; some very gifted writers can appeal to more than one age group. Deborah Noyes has written for children, with picture books including *Hana in the Time of Tulips* and *It's Vladimirl!*; for young adults with her 2004 collection *Gothic! Ten Original Dark Tales*; and now for adults with her new title *Angel and Apostle*. In addition, Noyes edits books for children and young adults at Candlewick, including such projects as the 2004 Printz Honor title *The Earth, My Butt, and Other Big Round Things* by Carolyn Mackler. *Angel and Apostle* is a rich, detailed historical novel about what happened to Pearl, Hester Prynne's daughter, from where she left off in *The Scarlet Letter*. Noyes and her family live in Boston, so historical research was on hand to enjoy and incorporate into the novel.

Public Libraries: Please describe your writing routine. Is your approach different when you are writing for children and adults? How do you find time with working and being a mom?

Deborah Noyes: Right now I work a four-day week acquiring for Candlewick and devote Fridays to writing. Otherwise it's catch as catch can, stirring the spaghetti sauce with a research book in hand, that sort of thing. While I worked on *Angel and Apostle*, I woke at 5 A.M. most days to squeeze in a couple of writing hours before the kids (Clyde, 12, and Michaela, 7) got up for school. My family will attest—I'm a distracted person, always daydreaming, and a terrible housekeeper (more terrible all the time). We don't entertain at home much, and to my great shame, I send Dunkin Munchkins to the school bake sales. Any pretensions I might have had once to a Martha Stewart-enhanced life have gone by the wayside, but I don't *think* my family faults me for this. We all lead full, busy lives. I had a home office once, but I didn't guard it well, and it morphed into storage. I'm a nomad at heart so I hide out these days in coffee shops with my laptop. (I love the accidental intimacy of a coffee shop full of people on their laptops!)

My habits and methods don't differ much when I'm writing for children. I just hear different voices in my head.

PL: Is it hard to be both a writer and an editor? What do you enjoy about each?

DN: For me these roles inform one another constantly. It's sometimes hard to remember which hat I'm wearing—to turn off my writer brain and keep my editorial paws off when it comes to stylistic matters—but in the end both jobs demand sensitivity and empathy, and I learn something either way. It's a privilege to edit other writers, to be of use to them and learn from them. Sitting on both sides of the desk also helps me better appreciate and value my own editors. I know how hard they work. I know what they're up against.

PL: In your new novel *Angel and Apostle*, readers learn what happened to Pearl, Hester Prynne's daughter, while she was growing up. When did you start thinking about her story? Please tell readers about the research process for this book.

DN: I've always been a bit obsessed with Pearl. What would life have been like for this little spitfire, swirling among the Puritans in her red dresses? Near the end of *The Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne writes, "the great scene of grief, in which the wild infant bore a part, had developed all her sympathies." As Pearl weeps over her dying father, we're assured that she will "grow up amid human joy and sorrow, nor for ever do battle with the world, but be a woman in it." I've always found this more tantalizing than satisfying. *The Scarlet Letter* is a symbolic romance, of course, and Pearl serves Hawthorne's allegorical purposes, but for me there was always that nagging question: what sort of woman?

I started imagining her path in life three or four years ago, but I'm sure the book was percolating long before that. Along the way I reread *The Scarlet Letter* several times, and Hawthorne's tales. I read primary sources: autobiographical writings of Margaret Cavendish and Anna Trapnel, the poetry of Anne Bradstreet, the diaries of John Winthrop, John Evelyn, and—most especially—Samuel Pepys. I read about bundling, and Merry Old England, and witch trials, and cabinets of curiosity, and the mercantile trade. I studied seventeenth-century recipe collections and song lyrics. As a Bostonian, I had access to old graveyards with their mossy, tilted stones crowned with grinning angel-skulls and to places like Plymouth Plantation, historic Salem, and the Peabody Museum, where I learned about everything from reed lamps to embroidery samplers.

But I think New England's natural landscapes nourished the story most of all. These have been altered almost beyond recognition, of course, but some few places still feel quiet and timeless enough to hold echoes. I'm bewitched by this vanished New England: in the seventeenth century, flocks of migrating birds blotted out the sun; wolves roamed settlement borders; God and the devil—and witches for that matter—were as real to the colonists as the sun and moon.

Walking my dog at a local Audubon sanctuary, I'd imagine (and sometimes still do) a cloaked Pearl crossing the ice-crusting meadow or peering out with cap askew from behind a spreading beech tree. Vacationing on the National Seashore, I'd look

for her, whispering at the water's edge with Simon, the Atlantic lapping at their legs, or imagine her carving his name in the sand with a stick. And so I did much of my plotting and evoking and mental untangling outdoors, "in the bee-loud air," as Pearl puts it at one point in the book, "where my heart has always lived."

PL: You have written several children's picture books. When did you choose to start an adult work?

DN: I studied fiction writing in the adult MFA program at Vermont College back in the early 1990s and have always written for adults. But though I started many novels, in the end I trashed them. Wisely. Like many novice writers, I think I had taken too literally the old "write what you know" adage. These were contemporary stories, realistic and crafty, the kind of effort workshops were rewarding in those days, smooth and spare and ironic. And around about page 50, they left me cold. Only in the last few years have I figured out that I don't especially like irony unless it's done really, really well. And I'm not the writer for the job.

Not surprisingly, after I graduated and got some distance from those great stylists, writers like Raymond Carver, who just take your breath away when you're starting out, I soon reverted back to the kind of books I grew up on, the sort that had made me fall in love with reading in the first place—high fantasy, folklore and fabulist tales, all things epic, Gothic, and Romantic. I like to think that now it's all this sweet stew in my head, and that my own voice is a steam rising out of that pot.

Finding your voice and a subject to match is a Herculean task for writers. It took me a while, and I'm still a bit unfocused, still straddling a lot of genres, but I definitely see patterns and preferences emerging. I should scorn proclamations (you have to take it one book at a time, page by page and day by day), but I seem to find a focus in history. The past, it turns out, plays on my imagination in a way the present and future don't. I'm haunted by the idea of time, all those layers of human endeavor, suffering, triumph, vanity, by the way things change and the way they stay the same. I seek out this haunted state because it makes me feel connected to the human race in a way that modern life—loud and fast, omnipresent, at times banal—and anxious speculation about the future don't. Like the old Sufism, "This too shall pass," peering into the parallels of long ago brings solace.

So "finding" my way to historical fiction was liberating. At last I had the fuel I needed to keep going and sustain a three-hundred-plus-page narrative. For me, there's give-and-take in this kind of writing. I give what I can, what I *know* emotionally; I listen to what my senses have to say; but when I run out of plot-steam, I can hunker into research and beg, borrow, and steal from long ago and far away. Plot is hard, if you ask me. Character is easy, but plot is hard. I know that's not true for every writer.

As for the children's books, I've had all manner of "second" jobs during the years to support the fiction-writing habit, from bartender and book reviewer to zookeeper and proofreader. I



photo credit: Lisa Goodfellowe Bowe

Deborah Noyes

came to Candlewick in 1997 as their marketing copywriter, a job I held for three years. I had my children around the same time, and my world changed, as worlds do. I fell in love with them and (again) with children's literature, and here I was in the right place at the right time, working for one of the pre-eminent children's book publishers in the country. So I moved from marketing to editorial and began writing for a younger audience. The adult work went on hold for a while, but I think I've found my footing now. I'm blessed in the way things have turned out, in the rich range of projects and perspectives I'm able to take on.

PL: What do you enjoy about writing picture books?

DN: It's exacting in the way that writing a poem is. I'll never *not* need that rigor, that training, and as a picture-book writer, I have much to learn. But what I love best is that it's a visual medium. As a kid I dreamed I'd grow up to draw and paint, but I turned out to be only so-so at it (though I've tried to keep it up in the medium of photography). With picture books I get to indulge that visual sense and work with accomplished artists. There's nothing in the world like getting a peek at an illustrator's first sketches. Making a picture book is a collaborative art. The writer has to relinquish control, but what you get back is immeasurable. It really is a shared vision.

PL: You also edit young adult and children's fiction. Last year, you received acclaim for *Gothic! Ten Original Dark Tales* for young adults. What are some trends you see in young adult fiction? Why did you decide to work on *Gothic!*? What are some trends you see in children's fiction?

DN: I probably don't think about trends as much as I should. Candlewick is an independent and independent-minded press; happily, right now, I don't feel a lot of pressure to perform in that arena, though certainly YA fiction is hot right now, which is propitious because it's the area I love best. I'm very interested in the place where popular and genre and literary intersect, in books that grip you from the first page and keep you thinking after the last. I commissioned *Gothic!* because it was the sort of book I would have liked to read at that age, and the response was gratifying. We have a follow-up in the works now, tentatively called *The Restless Dead*, with a great lineup of contributors including Holly Black, Kelly Link, Chris Wooding, and Annette Curtis-Klause.

I enjoy working with writers like Carolyn Mackler or Cathy Jinks, author of the Pagan series of historical novels, for the same reasons. Genre and industry tags like "horror," "chick lit," or "historical" don't always do these books—and their readers, who are avid and literate—justice. In terms of trends, good writing is just good writing, and that's what I look for. That's what Candlewick looks for.

PL: What advice do you have for someone wanting to write books—for any age group? (Or what mistakes do you see beginning writers making?)

DN: Well, I think you have to be a little compulsive to do it in the first place and persevere to the point of publication, but if you're stubborn and determined enough to endure the "nos" and "not-yets," you'll get there. Don't be disheartened by the time it takes. It's all part of a necessary apprenticeship. One of the first questions beginning writers at conferences seem to ask is, "How do I get an agent?" This is the question you ask last, not first! A violinist wouldn't step on stage without the right training, and yet popular wisdom has it that writers spring from the soil in full bloom. Learn your craft. Read. Don't take too literally the idea of writing "what you know." If you know about love and grief, then you know enough. The rest you can unearth through empathy and research, with varying degrees of success, of course. Make mistakes. As Anne Lamott advises, give yourself permission to write bad first drafts. Don't throw in the towel if an editor rejects you. Editors are just individual people with particular tastes. If you write truly enough, you'll connect with what Hawthorne calls that "heart and mind of perfect sympathy." You'll find your reader.

PL: You edited Carolyn Mackler's *The Earth, My Butt and Other Big Round Things*—a Printz Honor title. What is it about that book that appealed to you when it first came in?

DN: To start, I love an underdog. Virginia's an enormously appealing character, not above making jokes (good ones) at her own expense. She's tough and vulnerable at once, a paradox that speaks to what it means to be an adolescent girl in a culture that demands perfection. The narrative voice in this book is achingly real, sarcastic, hilarious, and Carolyn makes it look easy, which is *extremely* hard to do. Finally, here's a story wherein an overweight girl not only triumphs in the end without reforming or conforming but also, to paraphrase Carolyn, gets the guy. I like that.

PL: What are some upcoming projects that you are editing that you are excited about?

DN: Oddly enough many of the books I'm most excited about are Australian buy-ins, notably a high-fantasy quartet by Australian poet Alison Croggon (*The Naming* and *The Riddle* are out now) as well as two new novels by Sonya Hartnett. Sonya is one of the very first authors I worked with

at Candlewick and one of the most gifted writers I know of. Anywhere. For any age group. These two books couldn't be more different. *Surrender* is vintage Hartnett in the vein of *Sleeping Dogs*, dark and gripping, psychologically complex. *The Silver Donkey* is a poignant, illustrated middle-grade novel with an anti-war theme. This has classic potential and will, I hope, be the book that breaks her out. She's had tremendous critical acclaim internationally, but despite starred reviews here, Sonya hasn't had the recognition in this country that she deserves. Other projects I'm excited about are *The Restless Dead*, of course, and *Tantalize*, a YA dark fantasy with a sexy love triangle at its heart by Cynthia Leitich Smith. I'm also in-house editor of a book of interviews with fantasy authors that Leonard Marcus edited called *The Wand in the Word*. It includes interviews by the likes of Ursula Le Guin, Phillip Pullman, and Terry Pratchett, writers whose work I revere and in some cases have been reading since childhood. So it's a special honor to be involved in this one.

PL: What are you writing now?

DN: I've just completed my one-and-only nonfiction project: a photo-essay about the human-animal bond in myth, history, science, and story called *One Kingdom: Our Lives with Animals* that Houghton will publish in Spring 2006. I'm retelling some American Gothic tales by Poe, Hawthorne, Wharton, and others for a middle-grade/YA audience for Candlewick, to be illustrated by the amazing Max Grafe. And on the adult end, I'm researching a second historical novel. I won't say much, because I don't know much, but it threatens to be a ghostly nineteenth-century love story. ■

Amy Alessio is the Teen Coordinator for the Schaumburg Township District Library in Illinois and the Fiscal Officer for the Young Adult Library Services Association; aalessio@stdl.org. She is currently reading *Bloody Mary* by J. A. Konrath and *Lovesick* by Jake Coburn.

If you have any suggestions of authors you would like to see featured in Book Talk, or if you are interested in volunteering to interview authors, contact the contributing editor: Kathleen Hughes; khughes@ala.org. She is reading *An Unexpected Light: Travels in Afghanistan* by Jason Elliot.

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Internet Spotlight explores Internet and Web topics relevant to librarians in the public library sector.

Your input is welcome.

The Importance of Local News

Steven M. Cohen

In mid-1999 I began contributing to a library and information news blog titled, appropriately, LISNews (www.lisnews.com). At that time, there were few who knew what a blog was and even fewer who could foresee the impact that blogs would have on how news and content is delivered to readership. Fresh into my second semester of library school, I had been reading the blog for a while when Blake Carver, its creator, made a call for contributors. I offered my services and was immediately sucked into the process of researching articles and stories from around the world and sharing them with the growing readership of LISNews. I had never done news-related research before, but took on the challenge with ferocity. After all, I wanted to impress my first Web-related library employer!

At that time, there were fewer than five news resources that I knew of to search for news that wouldn't bring back duplicate results. I remember searching Yahoo! News, Altavista News, Excite News, the World News Network, and Moreover (no Google, and yet we survived!) everyday for news on libraries and librarians and became one of the most frequent contributors to the blog (at that time, there were only a few of us). While performing the searches, I began to see how the Web can be useful in reading news on any topic.

More importantly, stories from local towns and cities started to arrive in my searches. I was reading about bond initiatives that were passing on the local level in libraries across the country. There were stories focusing on programs in children and youth departments that were popular among the library patrons. There were articles about technology programs that had librarians excited about training staff and constituents. Along with these exciting achievements came the depressing stories. Many libraries had to lay off staff as budgets were cut; books were taken off the shelves due to complaints from, in some cases, one letter to the board; men were flashing children after looking at pornography on the public Internet terminals. There were also funny stories: patrons returning books fifty years overdue, funny objects used as bookmarks, stereotypical librarian articles that always seemed to have "Shh" in the title. There were sentimental stories about how important libraries are in our society, news about money bequeathed to a small library that desperately needed the funding. The gamut was run and I was hooked.

After having my own blog for five years, which early on consisted of bringing library news to the forefront and now concentrates on assisting librarians in keeping up with

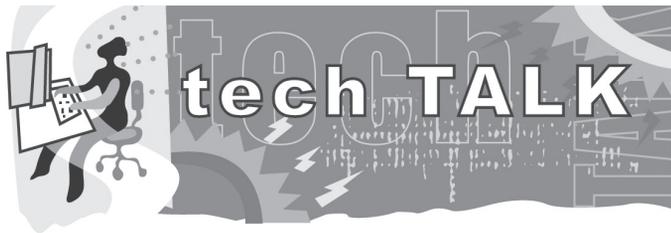
technology and professional development, I have a renewed passion in local news. There are now more tools available to assist in locating the news that really matters to me (and hopefully, many of you): The grassroots content that comes from libraries rarely gets noticed, but could be important in showing how libraries are run and funded, and how our patrons view our services.

There is a phrase that is popular in the blogosphere these days that can help to define the importance of these types of stories, content that is not as popular as those that run on the front page of *The New York Times*. Called "The Long Tail," it is information that may only be important to a subset of people (a specific community or a distinct professional organization, for example), but can have long-lasting effects. The Long Tail contains the information that nobody talks about, but it's not because they don't know it exists. In fact, The Long Tail is written about a lot and is so large that it is impossible for the content to hit the mainstream. Ironically, it could be the most important part of the Web. In the seminal article (www.wired.com/wired/archive/12.10/tail.html) on the topic in the October 2004 issue of *Wired*, editor-in-chief Chris Anderson, who is writing a book about The Long Tail, wrote:

What's really amazing about the Long Tail is the sheer size of it. Combine enough nonhits on the Long Tail and you've got a market bigger than the hits. Take books: The average Barnes & Noble carries 130,000 titles. Yet more than half of Amazon's book sales come from outside its top 130,000 titles. Consider the implication: If the Amazon statistics are any guide, the market for books that are not even sold in the average bookstore is larger than the market for those that are. In other words, the potential book market may be twice as big as it appears to be, if only we can get over the economics of scarcity. Venture capitalist and former music industry consultant Kevin Laws puts it this way: "The biggest money is in the smallest sales."¹

Forget for the moment that our nation's libraries' collections probably make up the longest part of the "print" long tail (this is bound to be a topic of a future Internet Spotlight column). My point in using this quote is that for every popular news provider on the Web (for example, CNN), there are probably fifty that are rarely read by the average user. But why does that make the content more important than information that is not read by a larger audience? In my view, it doesn't and depends on what the individual reader is interested in. Aside from weblogs, I have learned more about what is happening in our profession from local news agencies that report on library programs, initiatives, state and county legislative activities, and censorship issues than I have from traditional sources of library news. On some occasions, I've read articles on the same story in both the local paper and on the national front, and have gotten more information from the local source. Getting to the heart of librarianship means reading about what is happening on the local level, not just the national stage. This niche is where

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Virtual Reference Shakes Hands with the Library Portal

Doing Things a Little Bit Differently

A. Paula Wilson

Amidst a couple of lukewarm articles on the topic and the hesitancy of some libraries to take the virtual reference plunge, my library was preparing to begin a grant year that would offer around-the-clock live help to our Web site visitors. The grant was partially funded with LSTA money administered through the State Library of Arizona with the intention of moving forward on a planning year. Implementing such a service had been a part of my library's strategic plan so we decided to accept the LSTA funds and, while fulfilling the goals of the grant, roll out the service, too.

We spent six months planning and the latter part of the grant year implementing the service. I wondered how our service would fare. In addition to providing our customers on-the-spot customer service, the grant set out to gauge the interest of our local clientele. Would they want and use such a service? A brief Web survey to which more than twelve hundred people

Tech Talk explores issues that public librarians face when they offer electronic services and content. It aims to create a bridge between the practical and theoretical issues related to technology.

responded indicated that 60 percent would use the service. Even more promising was that the 40 percent who indicated they would not use the service completed the rest of the questionnaire (see appendix).

When library staff began discussing the project, we acknowledged that there were plenty of libraries from which we could learn. We networked with other libraries that had successful services and they graciously shared their materials with us. We didn't want to reinvent the wheel, and why should we? There was also a plethora of information available on the topic. There were, however, a few significant differences in how our library would implement the service. How would our virtual reference grant be different from all others?

One of the major differences in our implementation is the integration of our chosen service provider, **QuestionPoint: 24/7 reference services** (www.questionpoint.org), with our library portal system, Polaris Powerpac from **Polaris Library Systems** (www.polarislibrary.com). How do a live chat service and a library portal play together? First you must understand that the Polaris Powerpac is a portal system that serves up not just bibliographic and patron records, but licensed subscriptions and branch information. It manages such customer features as reading logs, saved searches that run automatically, and much more. It is managed through its system administration module. For example, if you want to create links out to your licensed subscriptions you must enter system administrator and enter the subscription name, description, link, and parameters for access. This is much different than creating a link from a static Web page using HTML. Integrating 24/7 Reference with Polaris' Powerpac was accomplished by custom programming. Libraries turn the service on and off by toggling a button in sys admin, not by creating links to the service on every page of the library Web site. Now, in its most recent upgrade (Powerpac 3.2), all customers have the option to choose from either

Tech Talk Kisses its Founder Goodbye

In early 2001, when Janet Foster resigned from her position as editor of the Internet Spotlight column, *Public Libraries* advertised for a new contributing editor. The applications arrived, and we found ourselves with a happy problem: two candidates were highly qualified to take over. After discussing the issue with Steven Cohen and Paula Wilson, it was decided that Cohen would take over the Internet Spotlight column, and Wilson would create a new column, which would become Tech Talk.

Paula Wilson has taken *Public Libraries* readers on many electronic adventures over the past four years, and twenty-six issues after that first column, she is sadly moving on to other opportunities. "Tech Talk has been a passion for me," Wilson states, adding that researching, reading about, and

understanding new technologies well enough to write about them has also been a great challenge. In her work as the Web Services Coordinator at the Maricopa County Library District, she has also had the opportunity to implement many of the technologies she's discussed in her columns.

Although we will know that PLA members will miss Paula's contributions to *Public Libraries*, it will still be possible to read about her views on technology through her occasional blog, **Library Web Sites: Electronic Collections and Services** (www.webliography.org).

The staff of PLA and the *Public Libraries* Advisory committee would like to thank Paula Wilson for her years of service to this journal, and wish her all the best in her future endeavors.

Tutor.com (www.tutor.com) or QuestionPoint as their virtual reference needs.

How Exactly Do the Live Chat Service and the Library Portal Interact?

First, the icon and the link to the service are displayed on every page of the portal. When visitors come up with zero hits in the catalog, they'll see the icon. Last, users that log into their account see a tab labeled "virtual reference" in addition to tabs for requests and renewals. This page invites them to use the service or provides links to full-text transcripts of previous reference transactions. We are not the first customer of Polaris Library Systems to offer such a service. Clinton-Macomb Public Library in Michigan offers this integration with Tutor.com, but we would be the first QuestionPoint customer to create such a utility. Our Information Technology department, alongside programmers at QuestionPoint and Polaris Library Systems made it happen. With both the portal and the live chat service shaking hands, this symbolized that this service was an integral part of what the library does.

Let the Customers Define the Service

As our annual reference survey indicated the number of reference questions declining during the last few years, I questioned whether now was a good time to start the service. Many libraries were hesitant to offer the service and some considered discontinuing or limiting it. With this decrease in statistics I had the following unanswered questions about reference services in general: Are people finding what they need? Hesitant to ask for help? Unaware the library offers such a service? These questions seemed impossible to answer, but based on the results of our market survey I felt positive about moving forward. There are other questions I am seeking answers for, such as how to best streamline the workflow of our e-mail, telephone, and in-person reference services with that of our live chat service. I am quickly learning the strengths of the newly emerged QuestionPoint (OCLC) software, touted more as a business solution than a slick new way to serve up reference.

I am eyes-wide-open to the fact that we are receiving many circulation questions. We have asked the QuestionPoint folks to create a new question completion code. Rather than code all questions "completed," we now have two completed codes—completed-ref and completed-circ. This will improve our statistical reports so we may have a better understanding of our staffing needs and expectations. One thing to know is that our service does not have an explanation stating what questions

we do and do not answer. Shouldn't we serve our customers the way they choose? This mantra also rings true in our libraries that have one point-of-service desk that we call the "customer service desk." Let them ask any questions they want. Offline, however, and in our print promotional materials, we advertised the range of possible questions that a reference service provides. We are combing through questions that can help improve the usability of our Web site ("What is my PIN?"), so we can answer many of the circulation questions before they are asked.

Online Chat Service Is Part of What We Do

Unlike most libraries, we do not have just a few librarians training in online chat. We expect all of our librarians to offer the service. We continue to train newly hired librarians with online chat reference, as all public service librarians dedicate at least one hour per week to the virtual desk. Customer service is a part of what we do, whether online or in the library branches. The knowledge that the librarians have and their Internet skills make them great virtual librarians. At the close of the grant period we will evaluate the service by studying the number of questions that came in, the service by time of day and day of week, and the types of questions received (circulation or reference). From there we will make adjustments accordingly. We continue to tweak and adjust as we learn better ways to operate the service.

We thank the libraries that came before us and paved the way. The information they shared allowed us to concentrate on trying some new things in our implementation, from which we hope other libraries will learn. Most important, is whether our customers like it and continue to use it. During the grant year we created a blog to invite other librarians to learn about our project. You can read it at <http://vreference.blogspot.com>. ■



A. Paula Wilson is the author of *Library Web Sites: Creating Online Collections and Services* (ALA, 2004) and *100 Ready-to-Use Pathfinders for the Web* (Neal-Schuman, 2005). She is also the Web/Outreach Services Coordinator at the Maricopa County Library District, 17811 N. 32nd St., Phoenix, AZ 85032-1201; paulawilson@mcl.d.maricopa.gov. Wilson is currently reading *The*

Dive from Clausen's Pier by Ann Packer and *Hardball for Women: Winning at the Game of Business* by Pat Hein.

The mention of systems and vendors in this column does not constitute an evaluation or an endorsement of the products or services by the Public Library Association or the editors of this magazine. The contributing editor of this column welcomes any comments or questions at the e-mail above.

Appendix. Virtual Reference Survey: Measuring Customer Interest

1. Would anyone in your household use an online chat service that lets you request information, ask questions, and get an immediate response from a librarian? Yes No
2. What hours would you be likely to use this service? Select all that apply.
8 A.M. to 5 P.M.
5 P.M. to 9 P.M.
9 P.M. to Midnight
Midnight to 8 A.M.
3. Would your household most likely use the service to help you (select all that apply):
with school/homework help
to do your job better/work-related
for personal interest and continuing education
4. If you or someone in your household used the service, which topics would your questions mostly likely cover (select all that apply):
Health & Wellness

- Business and Finance
 - Law and Government Information
 - Job Hunting and Careers
 - Consumer Information (automobiles, travel, product evaluations, and so on)
 - Other—please tell us:
5. What would you name this service (select all that apply):
- Information to Go
 - Personalized Information Service
 - 24/7 Live!
 - Ask a Librarian

- Online Research Service
 - Your suggestions for a name:
6. Would you be interested in (select all that apply):
- Accessing electronic books on the library Web site
 - Downloading electronic books to read on a handheld device
 - Downloading audio books to listen to on a CD (in your car or CD player)
 - Downloading audio books to a mp3 Player
7. What is your zip code? (So we know what geographical area we are reaching.)

INTERNET SPOTLIGHT

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the local papers shine and another reason why The Long Tail should be important in any news search.

To prove this point more, I've recently started gathering local library stories from around the Web and posting excerpts on the **PLA Blog** (www.plablog.org/2005/07/july-1st-library-news-round-up.html). The goal that I have set is to post at least twenty stories per week that show library initiatives on the local level and have them noticed by more librarians who work in public libraries. I'm hoping that these stories can inspire others to create exciting programs, develop fund-raising opportunities, and be more conscious of the "heart" of public librarianship: the local public library.

Resources for Searching The Long Tail

I use three general news search engines in my daily quest for local library stories. The first two are very familiar to Web searchers, while the third may not be as well-known.

Writing about **Yahoo! News** (<http://news.yahoo.com>) and **Google News** (<http://news.google.com/>) in 2005 seems a bit silly as they have been around for a long time, but there is one trick that I have used with these engines to obtain the best possible results without getting too much information. First, I use the following keywords: library, libraries, or librarian. This ensures that the resulting articles not only discuss libraries, but also include the librarians that work in these buildings. Second, I have subsequently found that just using these keywords in my query resulted in too many results to effectively utilize. That said, I began to see a pattern in the stories I found useful for the purposes of the PLA Blog. By limiting the search in these two engines to stories with these keywords in the titles, the number of continuous results decreased while the percentage of relevant articles increased. In both Yahoo! and Google, use the "intitle" query builder (for the results of my **Yahoo! search query**, see <http://tinyurl.com/e4yyo> and for the results of the **same query in Google**, visit <http://tinyurl.com/8a33k>).

The third resource that I have found (at times) more valuable than Google News and Yahoo! News is a relatively new resource, called **Topix** (www.topix.net). Topix indexes content from more than ten thousand news resources twenty-four hours a day. Compare this number to the forty-five hundred resources in Google News and seven thousand resources in Yahoo! News. This on-the-fly indexing correlates with placing the stories into more than three hundred thousand topics subject pages.

These subject pages range from any town in the United States and Canada to such nongeographic headings as **Ford Motors** (www.topix.net/com/f) and (of course) **libraries** (www.topix.net/news/libraries), where I retrieve many stories relevant to my goals. Topix is yet another reminder that all information can't be found by just searching one or two databases.

The library community is vast, multinational, multilingual, and all-consuming. There may be more niches in librarianship than in law or medicine. There is no conceivable way to read everything about every aspect of our profession. Attempting to do so is a lesson in certain failure. The Long Tail is too long and far-reaching to wrap our virtual arms around and embrace. That said, librarians should attempt to get as much as possible out of this expansive Web space. The suggestions above will certainly help. If Amazon.com can ride The Long Tail to success, why not our public libraries? ■



Steven M. Cohen is a Librarian with PubSub Concepts in New York and the creator of library-stuff.net, a weblog dedicated to resources for keeping current and professional development. You can reach him at stevenmcohen@gmail.com.

Cohen has read the following books since his last Internet Spotlight column: *My Life* by Bill Clinton, and *Courtroom 302: A Year Behind the Scenes in an American Criminal Courthouse* by Steve Bogira.

Reference and Note

1. Chris Anderson, "The Long Tail," *Wired Magazine* 12, no. 10 (Oct. 2004). Accessed July 4, 2005, www.wired.com/wired/archive/12.10/tail.html. Chris Anderson also maintains a blog on The Long Tail, which can be found at http://longtail.typepad.com/the_long_tail.

Resources

- LISNews—www.lisnews.com
- PLA Blog Library News Round-Up example—www.plablog.org/2005/07/july-1st-library-news-round-up.html
- Yahoo News! library news search—<http://tinyurl.com/e4yyo>
- Google News library news search—<http://tinyurl.com/8a33k>
- Topix.net—www.topix.net
- Topix.net Ford Motors—www.topix.net/com/f
- Topix.net libraries—www.topix.net/news/libraries



Bringing in the Money presents fund-raising strategies for public libraries. Many librarians are turning to alternative funding sources to supplement shrinking budgets. Fund-raising efforts not only boost finances, but also leverage community support and build collaborative strategies.

Ten Terrific Tips for Library Grants

Stephanie K. Gerding

Ready to set your New Year's fund-raising resolutions? How about setting a goal to delve into the world of grant funding and write your first grant proposal? There are many grants available, and success is not as hard to attain as you might think.

One of the most important things to realize is that you should never start grant-seeking by developing a grant proposal. The process should begin long before you are actually writing and submitting a grant application. You must first consider how grant work will fit into your library's current priorities. You may think that you don't have the time for preparation and organizational tasks, but it will actually save you time in the long run and, more importantly, ensure that your grant proposal has a much higher chance of acceptance.

A grant team is often helpful for libraries so that duties can be shared among several people. If you are working at a small library, or even running a one-person library, don't feel as if a grant team is impossible to assemble as there are jobs you can assign to volunteers, such as researching funders, compiling information, or editing the grant proposal.

If you are just starting to write grants, or if you've been struggling with it for a while, here are some useful tips.

1. Verify Organizational Capacity

Is your library capable of not only producing a worthwhile grant proposal but also implementing a successful grant project, from conception through implementation, managing the funds, and evaluating and reporting on the entire process? Organizational capacity is just a term that means an organization is capable and can be trusted. Grants are not just free money. There is work involved, but it isn't any different from many of the tasks we already do in our libraries. Your library will be accountable for spending the funds as specified, and you must have the ability to track the progress and submit reports on time.

Libraries do have an advantage over some nonprofits when applying for grants. We usually have a pretty good reputation and most people know we exist and won't leave town once the check is cashed. Of course, although funders know that there are libraries, that doesn't necessarily mean they know all the services we offer. So first make sure that you know exactly what your library does, what your strengths and weaknesses are, and how you can communicate your mission and services to the funder.

2. Plan the Process

Grant work is an ongoing process that requires a lot of planning. You must plan in order to apply for, receive, implement, and evaluate a grant. All grant projects must be mission-driven, not grant-driven. You should start by examining your library's mission, strategic plan, any plans your community might have, and any needs assessments or community input you have collected.

Then you will want to identify grant projects that will support those plans and needs. If you already have identified activities in your plan, then your possible grant project may already be specified. You should completely plan your grant projects before you write your grant proposal. The grant proposal will take planning as well. Good grant proposals can't be written in a day. Once you find the funder with the grant that is a good match for your project, you should carefully read through the grant guidelines and outline the specific tasks that are required. Make sure you have the resources needed and that you can fulfill any obligations stipulated.

3. Identify the Problem

You must have an identified need to have a reason to even start looking for grant opportunities. The grant project is your answer to a demonstrable, compelling problem that exists in the community your library serves. What problems are facing your community? If your library has already completed a needs assessment as part of a strategic planning process, then this part is done for you. If not, you must take a close look at your community and identify some strategies to find out their needs. This may be as easy to instigate as holding focus groups with community leaders, or even interviewing a few key people that represent and work in your community, such as ministers, directors of service organizations, and other leaders.

It is very important that your grant project isn't based on a whim. There must be a definable and documented need. Funders often state that there is no shortage of fabulous ideas. They see many wonderful projects described in grant proposals. Remember, however, that funders don't exist to give money to great ideas. They have missions of their own that are usually founded in making a positive difference in the world. Don't view a grant proposal as an essay that must be written to pass the money test. Instead, while planning for your grant proposal, think about what it would be like to be on the other side. What

would you look for in a grant proposal? Wouldn't you want to make sure that the funds would be used for a really good purpose? Wouldn't you make sure there was a real problem to be solved and that the money wouldn't be wasted? Finding the need or problem to focus on will also involve identifying a target population. This is the group that your project will serve. This could be teens, single mothers, Baby Boomers, business people, Spanish speakers, or other community members.

4. Envision the Solution

Once you have identified the need, it is now time to focus on the solution. You should develop a vision of what your community will look like when the need is met. Clearly define the grant project goals and objectives—this is how you will find the solution for the identified need. This is often a confusing part for new grantwriters. A goal is very broad, such as “All teens in Happy Town will have access to the services and tools they need in order to attend college.” One grant project may not be able to completely fulfill this goal, but the goal will give direction to the project. An objective is more specific and helps accomplish the goal. More than one objective is usually needed to accomplish a goal. For example:

- By March 2007, Happy Town Library will increase collection development of college-related materials by 20 percent, including testing information, information on specific colleges, and writing applications.
- By December 2007, Happy Town Library will increase circulation of college materials by 25 percent.
- By December 2007, two hundred teenagers in Happy Town will report that they found help applying to college by attending a series of fifteen workshops titled “Applying for College and Living to Tell about It.”

5. Develop the Project

Note that this isn't the first thing you should do! Some people get so excited about a grant project that they jump in without doing the necessary planning. Once you have your vision, goals, and objectives, your project should now be taking form. You will need to completely design the project, including the budget, resources, individuals, specific tasks, and activities that must be in place to implement the project. Funders often prefer new projects, rather than funding something that has already started. Your project should be well-designed and provide real substance. Remember, the project is the specific way you are meeting the identified need.

The best tool for learning more about grant project planning is a free online tutorial developed by the Institute of Museum and Library Services for their National Leadership Grants (NLG). The principles covered apply to all library grant projects. **NLG Project Planning: A Tutorial** (http://e-services.ims.gov/project_planning) will give you a good foundation in project planning that will apply to all library grant projects.

6. Focus on Outcomes and Evaluation

Evaluation is something that needs to be done throughout the grant process. It can't be tacked onto the end of a program,

because that will mean you have no beginning benchmark from which to judge changes. How will you know what you've accomplished if you don't know where you started? Outcome-based evaluation and output-based evaluation are the two major approaches to evaluation. Both should tie directly to your grant objectives.

Outcomes are a change in behavior, knowledge, skill, attitude, status, or life condition. The time to think about evaluation is when you are planning your project, not when the grant report is due. You will need to select the outcomes and indicators that can prove whether the project was successful. And you should want to know this, not just because you want to show the funder you were successful but to *really* know if you are spending staff time, resources, and energies on projects and programs that are truly making a difference and fulfilling the needs of your library's community. You will determine the program's impact on the problem that it was created to address. Were the objectives achieved? Was the target audience changed? What would you do differently? Is this a model project that other libraries should replicate?

Once you have identified the need, it is now time to focus on the solution. You should develop a vision of what your community will look like when the need is met.

There may also be unexpected consequences that have occurred as well. Outcome-based evaluation usually needs to measure the situation at the beginning and end of a project or program. This might mean surveying participants before a series of computer classes and then afterwards to see if their skill and knowledge levels improved. Or if your project involves job placement services, determine how many people actually found a job as a result of the library's services.

Output-based evaluation is a quantifiable measurement of services or products. This could include the number of books circulated, number of participants in a workshop, or number of meetings held. Outputs answer the questions of how many, how often, and over what duration? Libraries are usually more comfortable with this type of evaluation because we already keep so many statistics. Personally, I believe outcome-based evaluation is more useful for measuring true results.

7. Partner for Success

Some funders require applicants to identify partners who will work with them on the grant. If they don't require it, they will still view it as a plus. The more people with expertise, resources, and brains that are all committed to solving the same problem, the more likely your project will be successful and the need will actually be met. Funders don't require partners just to make your life more difficult and give you more work to do. They actually do it because they know that it will be helpful and increase the likelihood of sustainability. No funder wants money spent on a project that won't succeed or that will be brilliant for a month, but then fizzle away. And the more organizations involved, the more your

project will be supported, sustained, and publicized. More volunteers and opportunities will accompany your partnerships. For example, if your library has decided to offer job-seeking classes for single mothers and can partner with a childcare facility that will let mothers drop their children there during your one-hour class, how much more likely is it that you will actually be able to serve those women and have a successful project? Or what if you partner with a nonprofit that addresses domestic violence by providing women with suits for job interviews?

8. Build Relationships with Funders

Funders aren't ATMs; you shouldn't view them just as sources of money. Most proposals will be read by one or several grant reviewers. The sooner you get to know these reviewers, the better. Leveraging your project idea and library to a funder is a journey, not an event. Call your funder and ask to speak or meet with a grant officer to see if your project is viable. They can give you valuable advice.

Finding the right funder is also important. There are many types of funders such as foundations, state and local governments, federal agencies, corporations, and individuals. *The Big Book of Library Grant Money* prepared by the Taft Group for the American Library Association is a good place to start looking for funders. It includes more than twenty-four hundred funders that have either indicated an interest in giving money to libraries or have already done so. You should understand the funder's mission, their funding priorities, and whether they give to specific geographical areas. Local funders are often interested in supporting organizations close to home, and may have easier application processes than other sources.

9. Tell The Story

Writing the grant proposal is a creative process, like writing a story. You need to tell the story of your community and the impact this grant will have on the target audience. Make the need personal. Make it come alive through descriptive examples. From the title of the grant project to the narrative sections that describe what your project will actually entail, engage your readers by involving them in the story. Help them understand why you are excited by this project, why you are passionate about what your library does. A grant reviewer may read your proposal and then have to present it to a larger committee. Make this easy for them to do. Condense your entire proposal in your summary. Show the justification for why this grant proposal is needed, how it will make a difference, and how it will be successful and change lives. Depict an irresistible project that the funder can't wait to help make a reality!

10. Focus on the Details

Follow the guidelines and meet the deadlines. This may seem simplistic, but it is critical that all details are precisely followed. Most funders have published grant guidelines. These are the requirements that must be met for your proposal to be accepted. It may outline such formatting requirements as

length, font sizes, and number of copies to be submitted. It will also list what components are required. They may require you to hold focus groups with your target population before submission, include letters of support, or provide signed partnership agreements. Most funders receive many more grant applications than they can actually fund, so make sure you don't take your grant proposal out of the running just by missing a deadline or an important requirement.

Never make funders have to look for information. Organize your grant proposal exactly the way it is stipulated. Use the exact terminology they used for headings, as this will help a grant reviewer when reading your grant proposal. I've read grants where I've had to search out the information. Grant reviewers often have to read stacks of grants, so don't make their job more difficult! An easy-to-read, well-organized grant will stand out in a positive way.

Always have someone else read your entire grant proposal before you submit it. Often we get so close to the material we've written that it is difficult to see glaring errors. Also, if you are applying to a funder who isn't a librarian, as is often the case, have someone outside of your library read your grant. Ask them if they can tell what your grant project is all about and what you are asking the funder to give you. You want to make sure you don't have any library lingo in your grant proposal.

I have been on both sides of the grant process, having written and reviewed grants. It is very inspiring to read grants from libraries and see the amazing projects they are implementing and their impact on their communities. Grant-writing is often seen as a chore, but it can be a fun and creative process. And if you are rejected, don't despair. Grants are usually very competitive, and it may just be that your proposal needs a little polishing. Ask for the reviewer's comments or speak to the grant officer. You may find out that your proposal was excellent, but so were all the others—and yours just didn't match the funder's priorities as well. But if there is feedback, read it carefully and try to learn from it. Then see if you can resubmit the grant to that funder. If not, perhaps you can modify it and submit it to another funder. Good luck! ■



The contributing editor of the Bringing in the Money column is **Stephanie K. Gerding**, Continuing Education Coordinator at Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records in Phoenix. She is co-author of the recently published Neal-Schuman book, *Grants for Libraries: A How-To-Do-It Manual*, and the library grants blog (librarygrants.blogspot.com). Please direct all correspondence about the column to her at stephaniegerding@earthlink.net.

Stephanie is currently reading *The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love* by Oscar Hijuelos, a Pulitzer Prize-winning novel set in the early 1950s about two Cuban musicians, brothers Cesar and Nestor Castillo, who emigrate to New York City from Havana. She is also reading *The Time Traveler's Wife* by Audrey Niffenegger, a mix of love story with a touch of science fiction; this well-written novel involves a Chicago librarian with "chrono displacement" disorder, meaning he randomly time-travels. Many intriguing situations arise, such as being able to meet his wife during her childhood and trying to explain to his boss why he disappears from the stacks. Good light reading.



InterViews is an occasional column highlighting unique perspectives, individuals, and institutions in the library world.

Copyright Concerns

Photocopies, Scanners, and Downloads: Is the Library Liable? (Part 2)

Carrie Russell

Just as the photocopier gave people the ability to make copies back in the 1960s, the personal computer also allows us to make copies. Many of these copies are incidental—those temporary copies made automatically as a function of the computer. Others are made when we save a document to our hard drive, forward an e-mail message to a colleague, and make a printout of a Web page. Our library users also are constantly making copies when using the library's public access terminals. Should we be concerned about the number of copies being made? If the copies made by our library users are infringing ones (and are not fair use), could the library be held liable?

There are many variables to consider just to begin to answer these questions. We do know that, as mentioned in my last column, libraries are required to post copyright warning signs at public photocopiers (Section 108[d] and [e]) and on interlibrary loan forms (Section 108 [d][2]), and include copyright notices on copies made for library users (Section 108 [a][3]). It is a good idea (although not stated explicitly in the law) to post similar signs or place labels on other library equipment capable of making reproductions (VCRs, audio cassette machines, computers, and so on). If we do these things, we have come a long, long way in protecting our libraries from liability.

Many of us are still a little concerned when we notice some of our library users printing out quite a bit of data from library databases and Web sites or downloading games or music files to disks. We may suspect that users are duplicating every DVD that they check out of the library. The law does not tell us what our responsibility is regarding these instances. Determining how to respond will depend almost entirely on our own library policies—if we have them. Here are some ideas you should consider when reviewing or drafting a library policy regarding potentially infringing user copying.

- Assume that digital works are protected by copyright. Copyright is automatic (registration and copyright notice are no longer required). Exceptions are works in the public domain (of course) or those works whose copyright holders have actively announced that they wish to forfeit their copyright protection.

- Library databases and online periodicals are acquired by license agreements that may limit or expand how library users may use those works regardless of the copyright law. Printing articles from databases is an expected activity that is generally allowed in license agreements. Some license agreements may limit the number of articles that can be printed during any one search. The software that runs the database can enforce contract terms like these by simply disabling the print function when the maximum limit is reached.
- If copying from Web sites grows excessive or beyond the ordinary, consider establishing time limits for computer use. Some libraries post signs by computers: "Computer use is limited to fifteen minutes when others are waiting." This tactic can cut back on *some* copying. A policy like this can be effective even when not enforced as computer users self-police one another.
- Some libraries (especially academic libraries) charge library users for printing. That helps users monitor themselves or be more selective when deciding to hit the print button. However, public libraries may feel strongly that they will not charge fees for any library service.
- Avoid "copyright police" tactics. By engaging in active monitoring, the library sets itself up as a supervisor of patron activities—a practice that will only lend credence to a legal argument that libraries are secondarily liable for the actions of their users because they act as if they can control the actions of users. In addition, librarians value user privacy and confidentiality. If we spy on users, we will quickly lose the trust of our community.

Have libraries been taken to court for the infringing acts of library users? At the time of this writing, we have *no evidence that this has ever occurred*. Libraries cannot be held directly liable because they are not the infringers—our users are the potential infringers. To be secondarily liable for the infringing acts of another, certain things have to be true. In brief, the library must contribute to the infringing act by encouraging or inducing the infringement or must financially benefit from the infringement. For the most part, libraries continue to be neutral entities that provide access to lawfully acquired resources. The copyright law allows libraries and their users the privilege of making some copies (fair-use copies, preservation and replacement copies, copies for interlibrary loan, and copies for library users).

In the next two years, the United States Copyright Office will complete its study on Section 108—the reproductions made by libraries and archives exception—to determine if the law requires any further tweaking to better map the copyright law to the digital information environment of today's libraries. The study will most definitely affect how our libraries operate and what library users can do. So, stay tuned! ■

Carrie Russell is Copyright Specialist for the American Library Association's Office for Information Technology Policy, Washington D.C.; crussell@alawash.org. She is currently reading *The Ha-Ha* by Dave King and several books on perennial gardening.

Reorganizing Reference

Barbara Brattin

When a medium-sized suburban public library in Chicago's northern suburbs decided to reorganize internally, it created

a redefined reference department from a mixture of former children's and adult services librarians, assigned to deliver reference and reader's advisory service to all ages.

By implementing a team approach to the department's assignments, all staff members were challenged to engage in the goals of the long-range plan. What started out as an organizational challenge turned into a productive, coherent group of generalists, infused with a new sense of creativity and a combined sense of purpose.

The Warren Newport Public Library (WNPL) is a medium-sized public library serving sixty thousand district residents in Gurnee, Illinois, a northern suburb of Chicago. The library's circulation topped 1.2 million in 2003, propelling it to the status of the twelfth busiest library in Illinois. The library's reference services department typically answers twelve thousand questions per month.

During the library's 2002 planning process, based on Sandra Nelson's *The New Planning for Results* (ALA, 2001), the library's management team took a hard look at how the library could deliver traditional services while meeting new service demands in a climate of budget cuts and tax caps. The team outlined goals, objectives, and activities to include department responsibility assignments. The framework for our activities during the next three years was clearly framed.

In October 2002, faced with the exodus of a prominent member of the management team, WNPL decided to reorganize. The goal: to do the necessary work of the organization more efficiently with fewer managers.

Whereas the standard corporate reorganization often involves merging departments, this exercise began at the task level with a zero-based approach to what we were doing and who would most logically get it done. The exercise began with a comprehensive listing of current library activities at all levels of service, both in contact with our customers and behind the scenes. Every activity was evaluated for relevance in relation to the library's current long-range planning goals, and we culled unnecessary activities from the final list. Each of the remaining activities were then grouped together functionally, and logical patterns of oversight emerged. Bookmobile service activities, originally managed by a unique outreach department, were reclas-

sified as most closely related to existing circulation activities, and supervision of the bookmobile was transferred to the existing circulation services group. Interlibrary loan, long associated with reference, was identified as an acquisitions function and transferred to the technical services management group. Youth and adult programming was distinguished from reference. The result: one programming and activities department delivering programs to all ages and a separate reference department serving all ages.

The restructured reference department consisted of nine adult reference librarians, five adult reference associates, one children's librarian, and three former youth associates. Together we had the assignment to deliver reference and reader's advisory service to all age groups from preschoolers to senior citizens during all service hours. The department also was assigned responsibility for information literacy, the library's second-highest priority service response, as well as the library's Web site content and management. Collection development, including selection and deselection of all adult materials, rested with reference.

We approached the challenge two ways—redefining space and intensive training. We consolidated former youth services and adult services desks into one point of service and moved it to the front of the library, where visitors could easily ask directional and informational questions. Two desk heights were maintained: a higher one for walk-ups and a low desk with stools for smaller people, the elderly, and physically challenged patrons. Although everyone in the newly developed department had served either adults or children no matter which desk they had formerly been assigned to, none had received training on the differences between children's and adult reference interviews. Most of the staff felt comfortable answering children's reference questions, but it was children's literature that surprised us. While we did limited reader's advisory work with our adult customers, the bulk of our work with children, especially during the summer months, revolved around recommending "the next book."

Logistically, we were playing catch-up to bring all our skills up to a competency level, whether in service to

Barbara Brattin is the former Reference Manager at the Warren Newport Public Library in Gurnee, Illinois, and is currently the director of the Wilkinson Public Library in Telluride, Colorado; bbrattin@telluridelibrary.org. She highly recommends *Mustang Sallies: Success Secrets of Women Who Refuse to Run with the Herd* by Fawn Germer and *The Coast of Chicago* by Stuart Dybek.

children or service to adults. Add to that a demand for more varied and larger numbers of information literacy classes and a web site sorely in need of redesign, and the message was clear: we needed to rethink how our department worked.

WNPL belongs to one of the most progressive library systems in the country, the North Suburban Library System (NSLS), headed by former ALA President Sarah Long. The training provided by the system invariably proves to be forward-thinking, even trendsetting. So it was no surprise when Julie Todaro, dean of library services at Austin Community College in Texas, was invited to present a workshop titled "Designing Work Environments of Tomorrow: Teams, Virtual Work, and the New Organization" at the NSLS training facility in Wheeling, Illinois. What would surprise me was how applicable Todaro's workshop would be to our current situation, and how the tools I received at that workshop would redefine the structure of our reference department and ultimately the quality of work we performed. Todaro's presentation provided a clear model for organizing a multifaceted workload into units or teams of responsibility and outlined a framework for management of those units, including the need for written team mission statements, job descriptions for team leaders as well as team members, and the need for established competencies. We also adopted Todaro's suggestion to create a visual representation of the paradigm shift occurring within organizations undergoing radical change—a clear outline of "how we used to do it" versus "how we do it now" to support staff adaptation to change.

Why Reorganize?

Upon my assignment as manager of the reference department, I soon became aware of the discrepancies between the MLS job description and pay scale, the reference associate job description and pay scale, and the true work being done in the department. On paper, the job descriptions for each position differed quite a bit. In reality, the two jobs were nearly the same. All positions delivered reference service, taught information literacy programs, and performed collection development tasks. Both positions were involved in staffing virtual reference through the shared My Web

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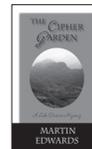
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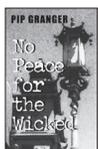
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Librarian service. The department head would occasionally assign a special project to an MLS, but assignments were erratic. In addition, I identified a number of other issues:

1. The department had too many staff members for one manager to individually direct.
2. Everyone was training the public, no matter their level of expertise.
3. Staff training was sporadic.
4. The print reference collection was underutilized.

5. The department manager was providing all goals and strategies for meeting them for the department.
6. Evaluation of services was neglected.
7. The reference Web site was bloated. Many pages received few or no hits per month.
8. Professional staff had limited team experience.

By reassigning the goals of the reference department to five distinct teams, the following improvements could be made:

1. Clear distinctions between MLS and associate staff would be drawn. All full-time MLS staff would be assigned as team leaders, defining their distinctive role in the department.
2. Work would be divided and delegated to teams with responsibility to move the work forward.
3. One team would focus on information literacy training for the public.
4. All teams would participate in staff training.
5. Print reference sources would be highlighted.
6. The department manager would develop department goals based on the library's long-range plan; teams would develop strategies to meet department goals.
7. Evaluative measures of reference service would be devised for each reference team component.

participation in the systemwide My Web Librarian virtual reference project.

Information Literacy Team

Mission: to coordinate, develop, and deliver public information literacy training.

Reader's advisory Team

Mission: to coordinate and develop reader's advisory services to youth and adults.

Web Content Management Team

Mission: to develop and maintain a current, high-quality Internet presence for reference and reader's advisory services.

Team leaders were assigned based on personal interests and talents. Team participants were similarly assigned,

- Clearly defined mission statement for each team (see appendix C), including list of team responsibilities.

In addition, job descriptions for each position in the department were updated to reflect team (leader and participant) responsibilities and standards for performance. The department wrote distinctive job descriptions for full-time reference librarians and part-time reference librarians, based on the team leader responsibility for full-time staff.

The department developed an **Intranet site** (www.wnplref.blogspot.com) based on blogging technology to serve as the home page on all reference staff computers, providing quick links to frequently used electronic information, and, more importantly, allowing direct communication between the department head or team leaders and all reference staff members. Messages of immediate concern are pushed to staff members at the service desk and on their workspace computers. Team leaders are able to post quick training tips, booklists for reader's advisory, and notices concerning upcoming department or library-wide projects. Part-time and occasional staff as well as regular staff on leave from the library are able to keep current on department issues through remote Internet connection. Previous posts are archived for future reference.

It is important to note that the emphasis of the department reorganization was to create a climate in which all staff members would reach a level of competency in every aspect of service, and team members and leaders would reach an expert level in their assigned area. Therefore, public desk staffing decisions were not influenced by the formation of teams but instead relied on a strong staff training program and the presence of one or two specialists in combination with generalists on desk. In fact, the wide distribution of team membership has assured simultaneous representation by multiple teams at the service desk during all hours of service. The reader's advisory team, the largest group, is represented on nearly every shift and has greatly contributed to the accelerated rate of competency in this area for all staff members.

Outcomes

Reorganization of traditional library functions is a brave experiment, particularly when merging children's and

... the emphasis of the department reorganization was to create a climate in which all staff members would reach a level of competency in every aspect of service

8. The library's reference Web site would become lean and integrate with the Illinois state portal project, Illinois Clicks.
9. All reference staff would gain formalized team experience, either as leaders or as participants.

with full-time staff receiving multiple team participation assignments. Final team size varied from three to four members and included representation from both associate and MLS staff.

The following documents were drawn up, outlining the motives for reorganization and defining the roles and responsibilities of involved members:

- Paradigm shift wall chart, comparing past reality and future possibilities addressed through reorganization (see figure 1). This chart remains on the wall of the reference staff workroom to consistently remind staff of where we've been and how far we've come.
- Team leader job descriptions (see appendix A), listing core responsibilities and suggestions for time allotted to team activities per week.
- Team member job descriptions, listing core responsibilities and (see appendix B) suggestions for time allotted to team activities per week.
- Team monthly report forms (see figure 2), identifying core areas for reporting progress to the department head.

Reorganization Process

The first phase in the implementation of a team approach to reference was to divide the core department responsibilities into five main categories. The following teams originated from that division.

General Reference Team

Mission: to promote the print reference collection, evaluate reference desk services, and train staff in general reference skills.

Virtual Reference Team

Mission: to fully develop the virtual reference skills of the library's reference staff, and to coordinate the library's

Paradigm Shift Wall Chart: Why Reorganize?

<i>Current Situation</i>	<i>Under the Team Approach</i>
MLS and associate staff do the same work	Clear distinctions—MLS will be team leaders. Job descriptions will incorporate that responsibility
Too many staff for one manager	Clearer organization with current staff
Everyone trains the public (information literacy)	Information literacy team will train
Staff training is sporadic	Each team has staff training component
Print reference collection is underutilized	General reference team assigned to highlight print reference sources
Department manager provides goals, objectives, tasks	Department manager develops department goals based on library's long range plan, teams determine tasks to meet the goals
Evaluation of services neglected	Teams assigned evaluation piece for each of their focus areas
Reference Web site bloated	Web content management team will focus on making the site lean and integrated with Illinois Clicks
MLS staff have limited team experience	All reference staff gain formalized team experience, MLS staff as team leaders (critical skill!)

FIGURE 1

adult services reference into one point of delivery for all customers. The emotional attachment of many library staff members as well as library customers to a physical children's desk became evident early on. Although staff were dedicated to improving their reader's advisory skills to children, the need to be all things to all people wears on library professionals who hold high standards for their ability to serve their customers. At the end of a three-year period, management can step back and attempt to statistically evaluate the decision, but in the end, the decision on whether the experiment is a success is most heavily influenced by the public's perception of service.

Organizational change within the reference department is easier to objectively evaluate. Early on, it became evident that dividing work into teams was an efficient means to focus on each facet of department responsibility. Involving all staff members in projects improved morale and helped a diverse group become a cohesive team. The following organizational and service advances describe the reference team's progress by the end of the first three years of the reorganization.

Organizational Advances

Reference department reorganization resulted in a stronger, more cohesive, highly productive department. Librarians took ownership of their department goals, started thinking creatively, and gained essential team experience. Department projects (see sidebar) are numerous and well-distributed across the five teams, often involving multi-team cooperation. Reference statistical

Reference Team Monthly Report

Team:
Month:
Report on Current Projects

Staff Development (include workshops, training, out-of-building meetings)

Program Events and Training Delivered

Objectives from Previous Month and Results

Objectives for Next Month

FIGURE 2

measures are periodically evaluated and adjusted to reflect the library's current needs for organizational evaluation.

Service Advances

While the original intent of the reference department reorganization into teams was to improve department management overall, customer service directly and indirectly benefited from the emphasis on staff training, improved department communication, and increased involvement in the planning and execution of department projects.

- Information literacy programs exhibit new levels of creativity, are more responsive to patron feedback, and are available on the Web, offering information literacy participants different modes of training to suit their individual learning styles.
- The library's Web site is undergoing a complete redesign that offers such advanced interactive features as Real Simple Syndication (RSS) feeds, portal applications, single-search capability of the library's Web catalog and electronic databases, as well as links to such self-service features as

materials renewal, holds updates, and account information.

- Staff expertise in reader's advisory functions is improving due to the intensified reading program within the department, led by the reader's advisory team. The online catalog continues to be enhanced with locally created electronic pathfinders for readers at all age levels.
- Virtual reference service participation by Warren Newport district residents is among the highest in the system.
- Young library customers have access to many more professional librarians to answer their reference and homework help questions than under the previous organizational structure. Families approaching the reference desk together are able to receive answers to all members' questions at one combined service point.
- Relocation of the combined reference point of service to the forefront of the library building creates an information desk where none existed, offering quick answers to directional and basic informational questions in a visible location and reducing confusion for customers who are new to the library and its services.

Next Steps

Three years after the reorganization, the greatest challenge to the reference department remains developing and maintaining strong reader's advisory skills at all reading levels. After several years of attending formalized reader's advisory training programs and children's literature updates, the staff came to the conclusion that there is only one way to become excellent readers' advisors: become well-read. Beginning in March 2005, the department embarked on a formal mandatory reading program that will take us through the landscape of genres and subgenres of adult, young adult, and children's fiction. On alternating months, reader's advisory team

leaders assign each department staff member to read a title of their choosing from within an adult, young adult (YA), or children's fiction genre. One month, for instance, the department may choose from a list of adult "cozy mysteries," while another month they may be asked to read a YA adventure novel. At the end of each month, the department holds a meeting where each member summarizes his or her selection for the group. This book talk method of reader's advisory training has been quite effective in area libraries.

It has been said that "many hands make light work." By distributing responsibilities for meeting department goals among reference team leaders, multiple

projects are simultaneously given the attention they deserve and progress is exponential. By individually involving all reference staff in one or more department focuses, creativity has soared and staff interest in their work has rebounded. Organizational change is a rocky road, but well-managed change that encourages professional growth and direct participation in the planning process can revitalize a stagnant institution and take customer service to a new level. ■

Bibliography

Nelson, Sandra. *The New Planning for Results: A Streamlined Approach*. Chicago: ALA, 2001.

Sample Projects Completed by Reference Teams

1. Analysis of desk activity statistical patterns with recommendations for reallocation of staff. *General Reference Team*
2. Development of virtual readers advisory pathfinders through the Sirsi library catalog interface. *Reader's Advisory Team*
3. Staff training workshop on genealogy reference. *Joint project between General Reference Team and Virtual Reference Team*
4. Development of Get FIT (Fluent in Information Technology) @ your library® online information literacy tutorials. *Joint project between Information Literacy Team and Web Content Management Team*
5. Development of database experts within the department to keep all staff trained on searching techniques. *Virtual Reference Team*
6. Implementation of print "Reference Tool of the Month" displays and pathfinders for public and staff. *General Reference Team*
7. Development of information literacy component for inclusion within library's redesigned Web site via Sirsi EPS. *Joint project between Information Literacy Team and Web Content Management Team*
8. All-staff development day focusing on readers advisory skills for all library staff. *Reader's Advisory Team*
9. Annual evaluation of electronic subscription databases with recommendations for additions and deletions. *Virtual Reference Team*
10. Coordination of survey to determine adult community's need for training in the use of electronic information resources. *General Reference Team*
11. Reference staff training and system-wide coordination of participation in My Web Librarian virtual reference service. *Virtual Reference Team*
12. Implementation and coordination of monthly genre reading program and book talk events for staff to improve readers advisory service to children and adults. *Reader's Advisory Team*
13. Survey of staff attitudes toward effectiveness of "roaming" reference service using wireless technology. *General Reference Team*
14. New staff orientation and training. *All teams*

Appendix A. Team Leader Job Description

The reference team leader is responsible for all activity of the assigned team. To meet this responsibility, each team leader will:

- Develop a clear vision for the team and communicate that vision regularly with the team.
- Develop goals and objectives with the team.
- Develop ground rules for team interaction.
- Develop team members' skills by assigning each member specific tasks to meet the team goals.
- Establish clear expectations and deadlines for team tasks.
- Attend one training on team building annually.

- Establish virtual or in person meeting times with team members.
- Communicate effectively with all team members and the department head.
- Monitor team activity and redirect team effort when appropriate.
- Follow up weekly with each of the team members to determine progress.
- Serve as mentor to the team.
- Reward the team's efforts.
- Communicate with all reference staff the successes of the team.
- Communicate progress on team goals with department head weekly.
- Work cooperatively with other department team members on shared goals.
- Monitor trends in library work that affect the team and advise department head on implications for the work of the team.

Work load will vary in relation to current team projects. Team leaders should generally spend about five hours per week on team activities. Team members should generally spend three hours per week on team activities.

Appendix B. Team Member Job Description

The reference team member shares responsibility with other team members to achieve agreed upon team goals and objectives. To meet this responsibility, each team member will:

- Attend all formal team meetings.
- Help develop goals and objectives for the team.
- Communicate progress to team leader once per week.
- Help develop ground rules for team interaction.

- Follow ground rules for team interaction.
- Deliver quality projects or tasks on time.
- Support other team members' work.

Workload will vary in relation to current team projects. Team leaders should generally spend about five hours per week on team activities. Team members should generally spend three hours per week on team activities.

Appendix C. Team Responsibility Outlines

General Reference Team

Mission: to promote the print reference collection of the library, evaluate reference services, and train staff in general reference skills.

Team Leader: Sandy

Team Members: Ron, Kathie, Janet

Adjunct Member: Stacy (limited to desk scheduling responsibilities)

Team Responsibilities:

- Coordinate annual peer coaching program.
- Increase awareness of print reference collection through "Reference Book of the Week" or similar tool.
- Share tips and trends in general reference work through weekly postings to the department blog.
- Provide one annual reference staff training program annually covering print resources in specific subjects, especially business, statistics, and law.
- Provide one annual reference staff training to enhance general reference skills.
- Determine gaps in reference print collection and make recommendations for collection enhancements when appropriate.
- Promote roaming of reference staff through stacks at peak hours.
- Promote use of wireless tablet with roaming staff.
- Develop and administer annual evaluation tool for reference service to youth.
- Develop and administer annual evaluation tool for reference service to adults.
- Monitor the number and type of reference questions asked at the desk and report on trends.
- Record and tally reference desk statistics.
- Monitor patterns in desk activity and make recommendations for staffing adjustments.

- Evaluate desk statistics collection methods and make recommendations for improvements.
- Evaluate retention of reference transaction records and make recommendations in accordance with patron privacy.
- Monitor trends in reference service delivery nationwide and make recommendations for modifications in WNPL reference department procedures.
- Suggest ways to reduce work space at public desk
- Develop weekly desk schedule.

Information Literacy Team

Mission: to coordinate, develop, and deliver public information literacy training.

Team Leader: Kathie

Team Members: Stacy, Gia, Rachel

Team Responsibilities:

- Develop and maintain interesting and relevant curriculum for all public information literacy classes.
- Serve as primary and backup instructors for public information literacy classes.
- Train information literacy instructors.
- Monitor demand and respond to demand by adding class sessions when appropriate.
- Monitor attendance at information literacy classes and weed classes with repeated low attendance.
- Develop and maintain a Web site to highlight information literacy as a library service response.
- Maintain information literacy printed materials and hand-outs.
- Develop and maintain online information literacy tutorials.
- Coordinate and help develop promotional materials for the public information literacy program.

- Coordinate room reservations for information literacy training with programs and activities staff.
- Suggest upgrades, addition, or replacement of equipment used for information literacy.
- Monitor the literature on information literacy programming in public libraries and suggest changes at WNPL based on the literature.
- Monitor patron feedback on Information Literacy programs and respond by improving existing programs or developing new ones.
- Participate in grant writing and implementation projects when applicable.

Reader's Advisory Team

Mission: to coordinate and develop reader's advisory services to both youth and adults.

Team Leaders: Debbie, Gia

Team Members: Diane, Sandy

Team Responsibilities:

- Develop and maintain content for print and online pathfinders for youth and adult fiction.
- Develop and maintain content for print and online pathfinders for youth and adult nonfiction.
- Coordinate with graphics to develop RA printed pathfinder finished products.
- Provide two RA staff training programs annually.
- Provide monthly youth and adult RA updates to staff via department blog.
- Provide two RA training workshops for the public annually.
- Advise graphics/support services on library display topics and themes.
- Attend external RA training annually.
- Develop content for book discussion leaders Web site
- Develop content for Readers' Corner Web site.
- Develop content for KidSpot and Teen Community reader's advisory sections of Web site.
- Coordinate with electronic services librarian to update content for all RA Web pages within the WNPL site.
- Improve organization of print RA pathfinder files at reference desk.
- Participate in grant writing and implementation projects when applicable.

Virtual Reference Team

Mission: to fully develop the virtual reference skills of the library's reference staff, and to coordinate the library's participation in the system wide My Web Librarian virtual reference project.

Team Leader: Stacy

Team Members: Kathie, Sandy, Amy

Team Responsibilities:

- Coordinate WNPL's participation in My Web Librarian activities through the North Suburban Library System.
- Train and retrain WNPL reference librarians to fully participate in MWL.
- Monitor trends in online searching tools and techniques.
- Deliver advanced Internet training for WNPL reference staff twice annually.
- Coordinate and provide electronic database training for WNPL reference staff twice annually.
- Provide monthly updates on electronic searching trends via department blog.
- Conduct database trials annually and provide recommendations for electronic database collection.
- Serve as department experts on use of electronic databases in collection.

Web Content Management Team

Mission: to develop and maintain a current, high-quality Internet presence for reference and reader's advisory services.

Team Leader: Amy

Team Members: Debbie, Gia

Team Responsibilities:

- Develop content and select links for reference areas of library Web site within Kidspot, Teen Community, and main library Web site.
- Electronically maintain, weed, and enhance all reference areas of the library's Web site.
- Coordinate with readers advisory team to electronically update Readers' Corner, Book Discussion Leader, and other RA Web page content.
- Participate as advisors on the Illinois Clicks integration project with WNPL's reference Web pages.
- Communicate Web site changes to all reference staff as soon as changes are implemented.
- Develop additional reference Web pages on newsworthy topics as appropriate.
- Monitor Web site statistics to determine high- and low-use Web pages related to reference. Enhance content or weed pages based on use.
- Participate on library's Web site advisory committee.
- Monitor the literature on Web site accessibility and make recommendations when appropriate.
- Coordinate with information literacy team to incorporate Online Illinois tutorials within youth, teen, and adult reference Web pages.
- Keep current on Web technologies and their applicability to WNPL Web site.

Collection Development and Shelf Space

A Proposal for Nonfiction Collections

Tony Greiner

This article presents the idea that the amount of shelf space allocated to specific Dewey or Library of Congress ranges affects the availability and use of items that patrons want. It presents an argument for shifting these allocations to reflect use and provides a simple mechanism to determine shelf allocation.

“A Library is a Growing Organism.”—S. R. Ranganathan

There are many ways of analyzing a library collection to see if it meets patron needs. Among the most meaningful are studies of circulation and in-house use. Such statistics do not, in and of themselves, measure quality. But if we assume, as I do, that patrons are the best judge of what they need, and that they will borrow those items that meet that need, then circulation figures are a good measure of how well the collection serves. Libraries with this user-centered philosophy (best summarized as “Give ’em what they want”) recognize that library acquisitions need to change to reflect changes in patron demand.¹ Although adjusting budgets to meet demand is a commonly accepted idea, less work has been done on how the amount of shelf space allocated to different parts of the collection affects use.

Literature Review

The study of how shelf allocation reflects use became neglected when computerized catalogs made their appearance, and little has been done on shelf allocation in recent years. However, there is some good information available. Lancaster argued that “materials stored on open shelves should be those likely to achieve most use relative to the space consumed” and that density of use can be considered the shelf space equivalent of journal impact factors.² In the following year, Soltesz pointed out that circulation data could be used as a tool in collection development.³ There was good work done on evaluating shelf allocation in the periodicals collections of academic

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libraries by Taylor, Mankin and Bastille, and Wenger and Childress.⁴ Slote specifically mentioned matching collection size (in volumes) to circulation.⁵ Segal’s “CREW Method” of weeding maintains a consistent minimum standard throughout the collection, but does not directly address shelf space.⁶

Computers make the job of determining the correct shelf allocation easier. Because most integrated library systems can now generate exact circulation figures, it is no longer necessary to do statistical sampling in order to analyze a collection. Recent studies suggest that 25 to 30 percent of library patrons come to the library to use the Internet, which means the majority are coming to the library for other things—primarily books.⁷ This article presents a way to improve service to our core users, the readers of books.

Weeding, Shelf Space, and Circulation

When weeding, librarians are encouraged to remove the out-of-date, replace the worn, and keep the shelves from getting overfilled. However, a largely unstated factor sometimes plays a major part in weeding. After a library’s shelves are full, items are removed not because they are out of date, worn out, or unused, but simply because there is no room for them on the shelves. They are pulled to make room for more popular items, often within the same subject area. However, if the amount of shelf space devoted to popular parts of the collection is not adjusted to meet changes in patron demand, serious disparities may occur. In one part of the collection, items that are otherwise worthy may be removed because they have not circulated up to a preset standard, such as three times a year. In another part of the same library, a single use may be sufficient to keep a book on the shelf. This was certainly the case in Tigard and probably elsewhere.

These unequal standards occur because the space devoted to shelving library materials is unbalanced. If, after removing worn and out-of-date materials, one section of the collection is still weeded to a higher circulation standard than another, it means the library is not

using shelf space in the most efficient manner. The shelving for popular parts of the collection should be physically expanded and that of less popular sections reduced so that the material most readily available to patrons accurately reflects their wants. A simple system to achieve balanced shelving will be presented later in this article.

How the Problem Develops

When a library building is first occupied, a decision is made regarding the shelf space that will be occupied by each part of the collection. Reference materials get so much space, children's so much, and

So this example compares circulation figures for 1996 and the twelve-month period ending February 2002. These figures were obtained from the library's circulation systems, Dynix in 1996 and Polaris in 2001. During these years there were no significant changes in shelving allocation, but there was considerable growth in the library's service population and the advent of the Web. In table 1, circulation has been broken down by Dewey 100s, but the same practice could be used for smaller parts of the collection, such as 650–659, *Conspectus* areas, or however else the library decides to parse its collection.

There are several aspects to notice here. First, overall circulation for the

Dewey range were counted. This information was used to determine what percentage of available shelving was given to each decade and compare it to circulation for the same area. To make imbalances more easily identifiable, I modified the formula for relative use. Relative use gives collection assessors an easy way to determine how much any part of the collection is used in relation to the collection as a whole. The formula is the percentage of circulation divided by percentage of the collection. For example, if the religion collection constitutes 3 percent of the collection (by number of volumes) and also has 3 percent of the circulation, its relative use is one, or three divided by three. A section with 3 percent of volumes but 4 percent of circulation has a relative use of 1.33, four divided by three. A section with a relative use of 1.33 is used 33 percent more than the average for the entire collection.⁸ If there was a perfect balance between use and the size in each part of the collection, each part of the collection would have a relative use of one.

To apply this reasoning to shelf allocation, the formula should be modified to substitute shelf space for volumes. That is, circulation percentage of a subdivision divided by that subdivision's percentage of shelving (see table 2).

Now, some real imbalances become apparent. Collections that were heavily used include 000–199 and the 400s and 700s. Relative use shows that even though circulation in the 700s dropped slightly during the six-year period, it was still more heavily used than the collection average. More to the point,

The shelving for popular parts of the collection should be physically expanded and that of less popular sections reduced so that the material most readily available to patrons accurately reflects their wants.

so on. Within the nonfiction collection, further allocations are made, with each Dewey decade receiving a certain number of shelves. Unless adjusted to meet demand, areas that grow in popularity (and in turn have an increase in budget) will also, once the allotted shelves are full, be weeded to a higher standard than "sleepy" areas. This means that patrons will find more depth in the parts of the collection that are *not* as popular as areas of high interest. Using circulation figures (and in-house use, if it is available), it is fairly easy to determine if a library's shelving allocation accurately reflects patron interest.

An example is from data gathered from the adult nonfiction collection of the Tigard Public Library, a mid-sized public library serving a suburb of Portland. The library moved into a new building in 1983, which it occupied until summer 2004. By 2002 none of the professional staff from 1983 remained at the library, and the method used to allocate shelving had been forgotten. However, one thing is clear—in those twenty years, major changes occurred in both technology and society that affected how the collection was used.

Because shelving was added on several occasions during the occupancy of the building, it is not possible to compare figures from 1983 to a later date.

adult nonfiction collection was flat. However, there was a major increase in use of the 000–099 range, and significant increases in the 200s and 400s. Demand for computer books (shelved in 005) was particularly strong. For other parts of the collection, either patrons changed what they wanted, or computerization meant a shift away from books as a means to find information in some subjects.

After obtaining these numbers, the number of shelves set aside for each

TABLE 1

Circulation per Dewey Range, 1996 and 2001

<i>Dewey range</i>	<i>Circulation 1996</i>	<i>Circulation 2001</i>	<i>Change 1996–2001 (%)</i>
000	2,148	3,660	+70
100	4,464	4,320	-3
200	2,796	3,675	+31
300	12,048	11,811	-2
400	1,248	1,740	+39
500	4,728	5,009	+6
600	23,760	23,052	0
700	17,772	15,708	-12
800	4,176	4,008	-4
900	12,948	13,056	+1
Total	86,088	86,039	0

books in the 000–099 range were 79 percent more likely to be used than the collection as a whole. Subject areas that had a shelf allocation that exceeded their usage include the 800s and 900s. Because all the shelves were full, and purchasing had been adjusted to meet demand, this imbalance meant that books in popular areas were actually pulled more quickly than less popular books. This weeding practice resulted in reduced patron choices and access in the most popular parts of the collection. In addition, the high relative use of computer books probably meant that many patrons seeking this material left empty-handed.

Correcting Shelving Imbalances

If, from circulation analysis, we accept the principle that our patrons would like to find more materials in certain areas, then some sections are clearly under-shelved while others are using shelf space that would be better allocated to more popular parts of the collection. The solution is a major weeding of sections that are not circulating well, and then moving books from popular sections into the now-empty shelves. The goal would be to have the amount of shelf space devoted to various parts of the collection reflect their use—for example, the first decade, with 4.3 percent of nonfiction circulation, should also have about 4.3 percent of the shelves. With more space available, books in popular collections would be weeded only because they are

out-of-date or in poor condition, building holdings that were proportionate to demand after a year or two. After this occurs, the relative use numbers will begin to even out; that is not a sign of failure, but rather proof that the library is now supplying more titles in the most popular areas. Overall, greater availability of desirable titles should lead to a significant increase in circulation.

Concerns might be raised that using shelf allocation as a tool will lead to an imbalanced collection. Actually, it is such collections as the one in our example that are out of balance. Unless adjustments are made, users of popular parts of the collection have to put more books on hold and find fewer titles on the shelf than users of less popular parts of the collection. Their options are to wait or go to a bookstore. Retailers call customers who walk away empty-handed “missed sales,” and an inadequate collection delivers a message to frustrated patrons that the library does not have the material they want. The argument that we do not need as many shelves for computer books because they are always checked out is actually only an argument for buying more computer books.

Others may worry that the classics would be eliminated from the collection. In many libraries the classics circulate just fine. But should a library decide to retain certain little-used titles because it believes they should always be available, there still should be plenty of room on the shelves for more popular titles in the same field. Having a little-used copy of *Upanishads* is one thing, but having a

little-used collection of Vedic literature is another.

Another potential argument against this system is that the book collection needs to be adjusted to take into account information that is offered online. However, one of the strengths of the system is that it is self-correcting. Say that an online car repair database is added to the library’s offerings and proves popular. As time passes, some patrons will shift to this online resource and circulation of the print collection will drop. Keeping track of changes in the use of the book collection will allow the library to make the appropriate adjustments. There is no need to guess at how a database will affect book use—the patrons will show us!

When Should Such a Shift Be Done?

Only occasionally will a library have the combination of time, labor, and will to take on a major shift. Perhaps a shelf or two can be adjusted to help meet patron demand, but unfortunately, in this example, the areas of greatest need are not adjacent to the areas with a surplus. (In favor of doing a major shift is the knowledge that, once the shift is done, future adjustments can be incrementally done.)

The perfect time to do this analysis and adjustment is when a library moves to a new facility. All the books will have to be moved anyway, an ideal situation for a major reassessment of shelf-space allocation.

Assume for this exercise that the new building will have a 50 percent increase in nonfiction shelving. The current 808 shelves will grow to 1,212. The following system will give librarians a tool to begin the allocation process. To begin, for each Dewey section, simply figure the percentage of the whole adult nonfiction circulation for each part of the collection and allocate the same percentage of shelving in the new building (see table 3).

In the example illustrated in table 3, all collections will have some sort of increase in size, except for the 800s, which will need a major weed before the move.

Another good time to undertake this project is when the library is full, but without a forthcoming new building. Reallocating shelving to reflect patron needs should significantly increase circulation, building support

TABLE 2

Adult Non-Fiction Circulation and Shelving 2001

Dewey range	Circulation numbers 2001	No. of shelves	Circulation per shelf	% of circulation	% of shelves	Relative use
000	3,660	19	193	4.3	2.4	1.79
100	4,320	25	173	5.0	3.0	1.67
200	3,675	31	119	4.3	3.8	1.13
300	11,811	127	93	13.7	15.7	0.87
400	1,740	12	145	2.0	1.5	1.33
500	5,009	69	73	5.8	8.5	0.68
600	23,052	165	140	26.8	20.4	0.76
700	15,708	123	128	18.3	15.2	1.20
800	4,008	71	56	4.7	8.8	0.53
900	13,056	166	79	15.2	20.6	0.74
TOTAL	86,039	808	106	100	99.99	1.00

for the institution and providing better service and use of taxpayer dollars. However much work such a shift might be, it is far less work and expense than the creation of a new building.

Conclusion and Caveats

This system should work for most public libraries. The very largest, which see themselves as having a research role, might be able to apply it only to branches and popular collections. Within the adult nonfiction collection circulation figures should be the major criteria in determining budget and shelf allocation, not that this is an absolute. There are several valid reasons why a library might choose to allow extra shelves for parts of the collection. It may decide to let the 900s be overallocated to provide depth to the history collection (especially if there are large holdings of local history). However, collection managers should know *why* they allocated a certain number of shelves to a certain part of the collection. Convenience is not management.

This method assumes that financial allocation for new titles in each Dewey section has been guided by patron use, and that the selectors did a good job of purchasing and weeding. If such statistics as number of holds and interlibrary loans placed per Dewey range are available, they should also be considered.⁹

When looking at changes in circulation figures over time, it is important to be aware of historical anomalies. A circulation assessment done in the six months following September 11, 2001 might misrepresent long-term interest in the sections devoted to Islam, terrorism, Afghanistan, and the Arab world. Tracking changes in circulation consistently during a period of years will reveal such irregularities and allow for adjustments. In addition, collection managers might see circulation growth trends in some areas and allocate more than the most recent percentage to that Dewey range.

This proposal is limited to adult nonfiction because people looking in fiction, juvenile, and other parts of the total collection may have different motivations, and have their needs met differently than someone looking for nonfiction. It is the difference between a patron asking "I want a good book to read" as opposed to "I need a book

TABLE 3

Allocation of Nonfiction Shelving in the New Building (assuming a 50 percent increase in available shelving)

Dewey range	ANF circulation % recent year	Current shelves (out of balance)	Future shelves to match circ.
000	4.3	19	52
100	5.0	25	61
200	4.3	31	52
300	13.7	127	166
400	2.0	12	24
500	5.8	69	70
600	26.8	165	324
700	18.3	123	222
800	4.7	71	57
900	15.2	166	184
Total	100	808	1212

on how to pour concrete floors." It also begs the question, "Is it better to buy multiple copies of fewer titles, or to provide the widest possible range of titles in the field of interest?" That is a great topic for further study. In either case, having more books in popular fields available will increase circulation.

Use statistics (circulation, in-house use, and interlibrary loan) are an essential tool in determining how well a library is meeting patron demand. They are also the key to understanding which parts of the collection should grow and which parts should be reduced. Patrons have two options when they want a book: picking from the items available on the shelf or waiting. If the library chooses to weed popular parts of the collection to a higher standard than less popular parts, it is, in essence, choosing to make its patrons wait while offering them shelves full of less-desired materials. The solution to the problem: budgeting and shelf allocation based on use. ■

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DIY in the Stacks

A Study of Three Public Library Zine Collections

Colleen Hubbard

Though the establishment and early workings of specific zine collections have been documented, there has been little effort to track the evolution of these collections and the ways public libraries use these unique materials. By comparing the collections at Salt Lake City Public Library, San Francisco Public Library, and Minneapolis Public Library, this article attempts to offer insight to librarians wishing to establish zine collections at their own institutions.

Public libraries have long struggled to balance the need for a wide range of materials with often restrictive budgets. In recent years, zine collections have been proposed as a low-cost method of including a broad spectrum of viewpoints overlooked by mass-market publications. While journal articles and even a book have focused on individual zine collections, there has been little comparison between collections and how they serve their communities.

Most zine collections are housed in academic libraries, including the Duke University, UCLA, DePaul University, and the University at Buffalo collections. This is likely a result of resources academic libraries can afford to allocate to the collections. However, some critics have argued forcefully for the inclusion of these materials in public libraries, citing the democratic nature of the institutions and the medium.¹ The Salt Lake City Public Library (SLCPL) **Zine Collection** (www.slcppl.lib.ut.us/details.jsp?parent_id=144&page_id=145) and the San Francisco Public Library (SFPL) **Little Maga/Zine Collection** (<http://sfpl.lib.ca.us/librarylocations/main/bookarts/zines/zinehist.htm>) are the two most prominent public library zine collections; their foundations and operations have been documented by their creators. Assessing zine holdings at the Minneapolis Public Library (MPL) offers insight into a smaller collection, one that practitioners can more easily replicate in their own libraries. These three institutions seem to be an excellent starting point for a comparative study of zine collections in public libraries.

Definition

Zines have been defined and redefined, but broadly speaking, they are noncommercial, self-published works usually written by one person with the aid of a word-processing program and a copy machine. Though online magazines like Salon.com are

occasionally called “zines” or “e-zines,” true zines are not the product of an editorial board or a corporate interest; they generally reflect the tastes, obsessions, and humor of one person. Zines also are not ephemeral like some electronic publications—that they are set down on paper and distributed speaks of the creator’s desire for something tangible and lasting. Reflecting on the impulse to create zines in *Boys and Girls and Pink and Blue*, Chris, a zinester from Ontario, writes “I need to see that I’ve made something. And the making makes me happy.”²

According to Chris Dodge, *Utne* magazine’s “Street Librarian,” zines are “a relatively low-budget, low-circulation means of self-expression.”³ Some boast a scrappy collage aesthetic, mixing hand- and type-written script with old photos, vintage advertisements, and cartoons. Others look like carefully crafted art projects. Zinesters, as zine creators are widely known, produce them for a variety of reasons, but generally speaking, they want a chance to speak about their lives, hobbies, and values, but are not given (or do not want) a mainstream platform.

Though it is easy to pigeonhole zines as the products of revolutionary youth angst, to do so ignores the broad spectrum of writers and subjects available in the format. Bicyclists (*Chainbreaker*), mothers (*East Village Inky*), foodies (*Chocoholic*), and yes, adolescents (*Girlswhirl*), all exploit the nature of zines to produce what they do not see in the mainstream media: an accurate reflection of their lives.

So why should libraries, particularly public libraries, expend precious resources collecting zines? A number of proponents have already made the case that ALA’s Bill of Rights, with its call for the inclusion of diverse materials in terms of format and viewpoint, supports the addition of zine collections in libraries. Both Dodge and Julie Bartel, teen librarian and zine collection coordinator at SLCPL, claim that establishing these collections may draw such traditionally underserved nonusers as teens and adults in their early twenties back to the library.

Zines also serve as a chronicle of the stories, personalities, and trends that mainstream media may neglect. A burgeoning independent music scene,

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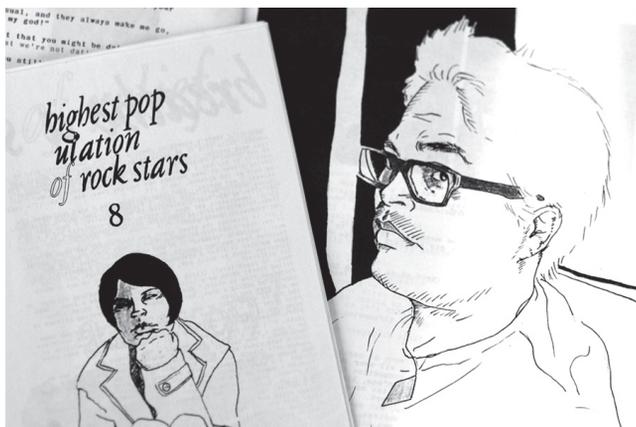
a literary renaissance blossoming five blocks from your library—these are all movements you (and your local news media) may miss, but the people involved may well be writing about their experiences in zines. Incorporating a number of local zines into a library's regional history collection may provide future researchers with unique primary sources.

The focus of this article is an examination of the individual collections. A look at the acquisitions, access, publicity, and outreach issues of the SFPL, SLCPL, and MPL collections can help librarians considering the addition of alternative publications to their libraries.

SFPL Little Maga/Zine Collection

History

Initially established and opened to the public in 1967 to document and preserve artifacts from the San Francisco Renaissance of the 1960s, the Little Maga/Zine Collection originally included only little magazines, which are literary magazines sometimes affiliated with academic institutions. The collection was stored in closed stacks and largely forgotten until 1988, when librarian Andrea Grimes inventoried and moved the publications into archival boxes, a conservation measure that saved the collection



Cover and artwork from Amy Greenan's *Highest Population of Rock Stars*

from damage and possible destruction during the Loma Prieta earthquake in 1989. The collection began including zines in the early 1990s and was transferred to the special collections department in 1993. Rechristened the Little Maga/Zine Collection (LMC) in 2003, it is now part of the Marjorie G. and Carl W. Stern Book Arts and Special

Collections Center on the sixth floor of the library.

Acquisition

The collection grows primarily through donation, though Grimes admitted purchasing some zines with her own money. In the mid-1990s, a call for donations was issued through flyers posted around the city and in bookstores. The flyers sparked renewed public interest, resulting in significant donations, including more than two hundred zines from *Factsheet Five* publisher Seth Friedman. The "call for zines" was sent out again in 2004, and continues as a form of outreach to the community. Although the collection places emphasis on the San Francisco experience, a look through the title catalog reveals some publications with roots outside the Bay area. As of December 2004, the collection included more than twelve hundred titles, though the exact number of issues is not known.

Access

As part of a special collection used as a reference to the city's literary landscape, LMC zines do not circulate. They have not been cataloged, although a serials cataloger recently started the task. In part, the delay in cataloging may be a result of the collection's unique nature. "I believe that the Little Maga/Zine Collection is still considered somewhat ephemeral and challenging," Grimes said, predicting that the periodicals may have to be cataloged as monographs to include all relevant information in the records.⁴ To offer improved access to the collection, both a brief history of the collection and a finding aid have been added to the SFPL Web site. A hard copy of the finding aid is also available at the Book Arts and Special

Collections Center and other departments throughout the Main Library.

Due to space restrictions, the collection is kept in compact stacks on another floor of the Main Library. To use the collection, a patron must ask a librarian to retrieve the desired material; shelving of materials usually takes about ten to fifteen minutes. Zines are filed alpha-

betically by title in Hollinger archival pamphlet boxes.

Publicity and Outreach

Uncataloged and housed in a storage area, the collection's existence is not apparent to a patron browsing the library's catalog or looking around the Book Arts and Special Collections Center. Interest has been largely generated through grassroots publicity efforts. Grimes' donation flyers alerted users to the collection's presence at SFPL, as did her article about the collection's history in the *Zine Librarian Zine*.⁵ Adding the history and finding aid to the Web site further spread the word among residents and other potential users, as did the collection's listing as an editors' pick in the *San Francisco Bay Guardian's* "Best of the Bay" in 2002.⁶ Between five and ten people use the collection or contact the library with questions about the collection per week.⁷

SLCPL Zine Collection

History

SLCPL's collection started in 1997 when Bartel, a former zinester, wrote a proposal requesting funding from her library for an alternative publications collection. After its acceptance, Bartel and colleague Brooke Young were given a small budget and space in the main branch's periodicals reading room. Soon realizing that the scope of such a collection was too broad, Bartel and Young instead focused solely on zines. Initially the collection was stocked with noncirculating reference materials (such as the *Factsheet Five Zine Reader*) and single zines gathered by purchase, trade, or donation.

In 2002, the SLCPL's Teen Task Force suggested adding zines to the remaining five branches as well as the teen department in the main library. Zines of special interest to teens, particularly zines written by teens, were selected for this collection. When the new central library building opened in 2003, the main zine collection received a space of its own on the floor that houses periodicals, fiction, and the teen department.

Acquisition

With the budget allocated by library administrators, SLCPL librarians purchased sample copies of zines through a

number of venues, including independent distribution centers (called “distros” in zine lingo) and by identifying publications of interest in review zines like *Xerography Debt*.⁸ Though it is possible to order zine subscriptions, librarians instead opted to order sample copies to create a more diverse selection for their users. The collection also includes some noncirculating reference materials that originally formed the basis of SLCPL’s alternative press collection.

Access

While zines in the main library’s teen department and at the five branch libraries circulate, the majority of zines, which are housed in the main library’s periodicals section between the teen department and the fiction department, do not. Zines are stored in plastic comic book sleeves or slipped into the bags traditionally used for children’s book and tape kits if they contain many parts, are fragile, or are made of unusual materials. Users can browse the zines, which are shelved alphabetically by title, or they can read printed subject-title lists.

To allow access to the collection, SLCPL staff maintain an Access database, from which interested users can make printouts. Zines were assigned primary subject headings and as many as five secondary headings from a list created by the collection’s librarians. To aid users in identifying subjects of interest, librarians also created a thesaurus that describes the subject, lists similar terms, and offers examples of prominent zines in that category. Many zines fit a variety of subject headings so librarians assign the primary heading by anticipating the access point that would prove most helpful to users. For example, *Muuna Takeena*, a Finnish music review zine, has a primary subject heading of “International” rather than “Music” because that aspect may prove more distinctive and thus more valuable for users.⁹

Offered the opportunity to catalog the collection in 2003, the librarians had to consider the access points and record type that best suited the unique collection. Concluding that a zine more closely resembles a book, which unlike a serial is complete as issued and primarily considered a creation of its author, the librarians decided to create monographic catalog records, assign unique cutter numbers, and shelve the works alphabetically by author.¹⁰ As of

September 2005, the project is far from complete—only a handful of zines have been added to the library’s catalog. The collection now includes seven thousand issues and averages between five and eight users per day.¹¹

Publicity and Outreach

To supplement the available materials, the library offers considerable programming and outreach. Like SFPL, SLCPL staff posted flyers at a number of locations, including coffeehouses and dance clubs. When the collection became more established, the “brand” was solidified with a logo that played on the main library logo. Open houses, workshops, and open mic nights filled out the programming schedule. Zinesters touring the country have stopped at SLCPL to give readings and participate in workshops. Outside of the library, SLCPL zines and zine librarians have made appearances in local schools and at such community events as the Great Salt Lake Book Festival.

MPL

History

MPL began collecting zines in the late 1990s at the suggestion of Cathy Camper, a collection management librarian who thought zines would bring diverse viewpoints to the library. According to Camper, the zines at MPL are “a sampling—a taste so people’s eyes would be opened to alternate views and nonmainstream publishing, and so even in a small way, we could recognize local zinesters.”¹² The zines were held in the arts and music department of the Central Library until the building closed in 2002, when they were transferred to the Walker branch library.

Acquisition

To develop the collection, which does not have an acquisitions budget, Camper relied on donations from local zinesters and other MPL librarians. Erica Bailey, a local woman who runs Pander Zine Distro, donated a number of zines. Camper sorts through donated materials to select items “that exhibit a uniqueness, an interesting viewpoint, intriguing art . . . in other words, I try to get things that aren’t run of the mill.”¹³ Local zines are also of particular interest. Camper weeds out older and worn publications.

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As of May 2005, the collection includes upwards of one hundred fifty titles.

Access

All MPL zines are cataloged as monographs. They are kept in bins in the Walker branch library and are available for circulation. A look at the library catalog reveals that about 25 percent of zines are checked out at any given time.

Publicity and Outreach

Users find out about zines through word-of-mouth, recommendations from librarians, or because they see signs posted on the bins that hold the zines. Camper explains that zinesters who discover the bins often ask to contribute their own work.

Comparison

While at first glance one might conclude that libraries with special collections in a distinctive format would have much in common, a close look at the SFPL, SLCPL, and MPL collections proves otherwise. Scope defines the operations of each collection, from acquisition to outreach. With a policy focusing on the San Francisco experience, the LMC is inevitably much smaller, with less need for a considerable acquisitions budget than the SLCPL collection. The desire to include a broad representation of the genre, from zinesters down the street and across the world, and the motivation to draw traditional nonusers back to the library, required a considerable commitment in both budget and time for the SLCPL collection, which grew exponentially—increasing from thirty-four hundred copies in 2003 to more than seven thousand in 2004. That a librarian sorts through donations at MPL and selects zines of particular interest ensures that the small collection still offers a broad representation of the format.

SLCPL librarians agreed to shelve zines by author once the collection is cataloged, while SFPL zines are shelved by title. This makes sense when considering the foundation of each collection. Title information may be of more use at SFPL, which offers successive issues of many zines because of its roots in the preservation of local literary magazines. As SLCPL has tried from its inception to cast a wide net for zines of many subjects from around the world, it has

single sample copies of many publications, making it easier to group works by author so that a user who likes a particular zine can easily tell if the library has any holdings of that zinester's other publications. Consisting of fewer than two hundred zines, the size of MPL's collection allows for a more casual arrangement scheme. By placing the zines in bins, users are encouraged to browse the collection and get an idea of everything the library owns instead of searching for specific titles or creators.

What do the collections have in common? A strong personal commitment on the part of librarians has been central to all operations. A SFPL librarian dusted off that library's zines and reenergized the collection, while SLCPL and MPL librarians laid the foundations for their collections. As with any proposal that may raise eyebrows with library administration or staff, dedicated librarians must be able to speak convincingly as to how the materials serve the mission of the library.

Implications

To a librarian working in a mid-sized city or a small town, the example of three metropolitan library collections may not seem germane. However, librarians working in smaller communities can use the blueprints developed by SFPL, SLCPL, and MPL to develop a collection that suits user needs and library resources. Though institutions lacking considerable resources may not be able to collect seven thousand zines, they can buy seven and add them to a periodicals section or a special display within a young adult area of the library. Locate interesting zines by browsing such review publications as *Zine World* (www.undergroundpress.org) or check out such distributors as *Microcosm* (www.microcosmpublishing.com), which allows users to search by such subjects as travel, feminism, or music.

Though cataloging zines seems like an insurmountable task, there is some precedent. Both SFPL and SLCPL catalogs have a few examples of monographic records and will have more as their collections are cataloged. The MPL catalog has monographic records of all zine holdings, while the Western New York Zine Archive at the University at Buffalo collection offers examples of zines cataloged as serials. If full-scale MARC records are not possible, there are other ways

to offer access, as evidenced by SFPL's title list and SLCPL's database. However, attempts should be made to convince library administrators to catalog these publications. Users who search the catalog and do not find records may think the library has no zine holdings.

For a smaller collection, publicity and outreach efforts can be trimmed down accordingly. Though SLCPL's buttons and workshops may not be feasible, announcing the addition of zines to your collection by placing posters in local coffee shops or record stores may prove effective in drawing new users to the library. Submit a press release to local alternative newspapers as another way to spread the word to your potential users. Zinesters who are aware of the collection may donate their zines—a helpful tactic when acquisition funds are scarce. Whether on a large or a small scale, libraries of all types can use the examples set by SLCPL, SFPL, and MPL to construct alternative publication collections that will educate, inspire, and delight their users. ■

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Reading America Program Fosters Intergenerational Understanding in Chinese Immigrant Families

Erin M. O'Toole

Davis Library in the Plano Public Library System, Texas, received a grant from Libraries for the Future to implement the MetLife Foundation Reading America Program in 2003. The goal of Reading America is to use the public library and its materials to promote understanding between generations of immigrant families. This article describes the planning and implementation of the grant, resulting in the exhibit and Web page titled, "Teens between Cultures: Chinese American Teens and Their Parents Explore Cultural Differences."

The evening of Friday, November 7, 2003, was a long-anticipated one at Davis Library in the Plano Public Library System (PPLS) in Texas. Fourteen Chinese American teens and their parents from the Dallas Modern Chinese Language School (DMCLS) and several PPLS librarians had spent the past two months preparing for an exhibit that would open that night. The exhibit's title was "Teens between Cultures: Chinese American Teens and Their Parents Explore Cultural Differences," and it had a companion Web page debuting on the PPLS Web site. The MetLife Foundation funded all the supplies and equipment for the Teens between Cultures program and exhibit, through a grant administered by **Libraries for the Future** (LFF) (www.lfff.org) through The MetLife Foundation Reading America Program, coordinated by Elissa Goldman.

The long process leading up to the exhibit began in fall 2002, with a call for grant applications for the MetLife Foundation Reading America Program. The purpose of the program is to reduce tensions and promote cultural understanding between teens

and adults in immigrant families through film and book discussions at the public library. This grant was perfect for Davis Library, which has a high percentage of immigrant Chinese patrons. Extended Chinese families frequent Davis Library on a daily basis. Once PPLS director Joyce Baumbach and Davis Library manager Cathy Ziegler gave their enthusiastic approval, Blythe Lee, an adult services librarian, and Erin O'Toole, a youth services librarian, commenced work on the application.

Finding a Community Partner

Research for the application revealed some surprising facts about the Davis Library service area and its patrons. In 2002 *DallasNews.com* reported that in Collin County, Texas, home of PPLS, the general Asian population quadrupled between 1990 and 2000.¹ Census 2000 shows that Asians make up 14.6 percent of the population in the Davis Library zip code area.² Furthermore, 6.4 percent of the population is from mainland China alone!³ Obviously, Davis Library was a strong candidate for the grant, but needed to fulfill a crucial requirement for Reading America: finding a community partner with whom to collaborate.

PPLS is fortunate to have two librarians who are from mainland China, Janeen Zhu at Haggard Library and Hui Zhang at Parr Library, and they suggested a number of Chinese organizations. The most youth-oriented of these, therefore the most attractive for this grant, were the Chinese schools in the Plano area. There are approximately four Chinese schools in the city of Plano proper and many more in the nearby cities of Richardson and Dallas. These schools meet on Sundays and offer courses in Chinese language, culture, and history, as well as other academic topics.

After contacting a number of Chinese schools, Davis Library finally received a positive response from Hua Yang, the principal of DMCLS. The school was established in 1994 with eight students and has now grown to more than four hundred students, guided by an administration, board, and faculty. O'Toole communicated with Yang through e-mail, then arranged a meeting with Yang and some board members to discuss the tentative program details.

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While meeting with Yang and the board members, it became clear why LFF requires a community partner for Reading America—the community partner knows the target immigrant group best and is alert to sensitive issues in the community. O'Toole discovered that the majority of families associated with the school were from mainland China, thus they had strong opinions about how China should be portrayed in any books or movies shared with their children. For example, O'Toole had tentatively selected *Red Scarf Girl* (HarperCollins, 1997), a highly acclaimed Cultural Revolution memoir for young adults, for a book discussion. She was surprised to learn that the board considered the book a biased and sensational depiction of China. DMCLS agreed to be Davis Library's community partner in this endeavor after making it clear that they wanted to use materials that depicted China in an even-handed manner and that the time commitment of their teachers, parents, and students would take into consideration their already busy schedules.

O'Toole sent off the application in December 2002, proposing a schedule of four programs, culminating in a reception and exhibit opening. The four programs consisted of a film viewing and discussion, a book discussion, an oral history presentation, and a tour of PPLS's Chinese language collection. In March 2003, Davis Library was awarded the grant. By this time, Lee had moved on to another job, so Judi Collett, now a youth services librarian at Parr Library, stepped in to help implement the program. The next phase was to flesh out the details of the proposed programs and exhibit, and start preparations.

PPLS decided to start "Teens between Cultures" after August because O'Toole would be busy with the summer reading club and many Chinese families would be taking extended vacations to China during the summer. In addition, the library did not want to interfere with the students' preparation for fall semester finals, so the exhibit opening was scheduled for early November. Recruitment for participants was limited to students and parents of DMCLS because they would be more motivated to participate because they are proud of and committed to their Chinese heritage. Yang and her teachers distributed recruitment flyers, along with pep talks, to fifth through twelfth grade classes on two consecutive Sundays. A core group of fourteen teens, in grades five through ten, and their

parents made the commitment to undertake this project.

Meeting to Discuss and Learn

On a Thursday evening in September 2003, a group of wet yet highly energized Chinese parents and their teens arrived at Davis Library for the first meeting in the midst of a thundering downpour that caused flash floods in the Dallas area. Each family was given a folder containing the grant press release, a schedule of events, and handouts for coming programs, plus the book chosen for discussion at a later date, *Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China* by Jung Chang (Simon and Schuster, 1991). The meeting started with an explanation of Reading America and a summary of coming events.

After refreshments and conversation, the group watched the first half of a 2002 Chinese movie in Mandarin without subtitles, *He Ni Zai Yi Qi* or *Together*, directed by Kaige Chen. Yang recommended the movie because it explores family relationships. It follows a father who makes great sacrifices so his violinist son can prepare to be a professional, but the son has doubts about his planned career and its implications. Zhang and Zhu helped interpret the movie for those who were not native Mandarin speakers.

The following week, the parents and teens met again at Davis Library to watch the remainder of the movie and discuss it. For all of the discussions, the teens and parents were divided up for the first half of discussion time, each group having at least one PPLS or DMCLS facilitator. Facilitators thought the teens would feel more open to exchange ideas when alone with their peers, then everyone would regroup for the second half of the discussion. O'Toole and Collett facilitated the youth discussion, which was conducted in English; Zhu facilitated the adult discussion, parts of which were conducted in Chinese.

The teens discussed whether the stereotype that all Asian youth play a musical instrument had any basis in truth. Indeed, all of the teens in this group, except one, played an instrument. When asked why, and whether they felt their parents forced them to play, the teens explained that their parents wanted them to take advantage of this opportunity and that they knew their parents would let them quit if they did not enjoy it.

The teens and their facilitators later gathered with the parents for further dis-

ussion and discovered what this "opportunity" was. The majority of parents involved were young teens during the Cultural Revolution in China. Most of their families could not afford to own or rent an instrument; some had not even seen a musical instrument during their youth. So when they arrived in America and starting raising families, they were overjoyed to find that they could afford to purchase instruments and music lessons for their own children. The parents wanted their children to experience musical opportunities that they never had.

The third meeting was held at Haggard Library, which houses the system's Chinese language collection, including books, periodicals, and media materials for adults and children. The majority of these are in Mandarin, and both simplified and traditional character fonts are available. The program participants were taken on a tour of this collection so they would know what PPLS has to offer to its Chinese-speaking patrons.

The bulk of the third meeting consisted of a presentation by O'Toole and Collett about how to conduct an oral history interview. They distributed and discussed handouts that explained basic guidelines. Then O'Toole and Collett did a sample interview of each other about clothing they wore as teens. The teens and parents were amused to hear what passed for stylish in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s and that girls were not allowed to wear pants to school until the late 1960s. Then the parent-teen teams were asked to pick a topic about which they would interview each other. The topics chosen were food, clothing, friends, hometown, entertainment, school, higher education, relationships with parents, and relationships with grandparents. The facilitators encouraged teams to ask for detailed answers so the oral histories would be interesting to the public.

The parents and teens met for their last discussion program in early October at Davis Library. During the past weeks, everyone read selections from *Wild Swans*. The program used the English-language edition of this adult title so the teens could concentrate on the subject matter without struggling with the language. Yang chose chapters about events that occurred during the parents' teen years, specifically the later years of the Cultural Revolution. This memoir is packed with political and personal details from the author's life. Some of the reading was difficult, especially for the teens. Nevertheless, they had a lively discus-

sion during which the parents compared their teen years with those of the author. Although some parents were uncomfortable discussing this period of China's history, the teens gained an appreciation of the hardships and deprivation many Chinese, including their parents, endured and why their parents have such high hopes and expectations for them today.

Preparing the Exhibit and Web Page

After the last discussion program, the parents and teens worked on their own to create their oral histories. Each parent-teen team drafted interview questions for each other about their topic. The resulting oral interviews were limited to two pages each, totaling four pages per team. The librarians and Yang invited parents and teens to communicate with them about their projects during the next month; the librarians instructed them to e-mail completed histories to O'Toole for editing and standardization.

The librarians were also busy during this month, preparing for the reception and exhibit. They scanned photos borrowed from the families and took them to a photography shop for printing, and ordered banners bearing the name of the exhibit for the header panels. The city's print shop designed a beautiful poster to promote the exhibit. Library Advisory Board members, City Council members, and all faculty, administration, and school members of DMCLS were invited to the exhibit opening.

The oral histories started trickling in and the librarians were so pleased! Some were funny, others poignant, and all were fascinating to read (see appendix). O'Toole experienced another flurry of activity as she standardized the histories for the Web page and exhibit panels. She also searched for graphics of objects or places mentioned in the histories. The printed histories were mounted on cardstock, as were the photographs, then hung on the exhibit panels. Librarian Sara Mosca designed the Web page for the exhibit; O'Toole sent her the photos and oral histories, which she used to create an amazing cyber-exhibit.

Sharing and Celebrating the Achievement

On the afternoon of November 7, everything finally came together. The exhibit

was complete and ready to put on the public floor. The Web page was ready to view. The program room was decorated for the reception. By 7 P.M., more than sixty people had arrived for the reception, including the participating parents and teens; other parents, students, and teachers from DMCLS; and Library Advisory Board members. O'Toole and Yang made heartfelt speeches about how much was shared and learned during the program, and how the program actually did promote understanding between the American and Chinese cultures. Then they presented each teen with a bookstore gift certificate and gave each the opportunity to say a few words about participating in the program. All were glad they had participated because of what they learned about China and their parents. One student commented that she had discovered her father had been "a bad boy." We truly attained our goal of increasing understanding between generations!

Then it was time to cut the cake and enjoy the exhibit, both in person and on the library Web site. The parents and teens were pleased with the presentation of their efforts; the teens were especially proud to see others reading their oral histories. A guest book near the exhibit allowed reception guests to make comments about the exhibits. In addition, a notebook was placed by the exhibit for the next two months so library patrons could also make comments. We found the comments gratifying, and they confirmed our sense that this was a worthwhile community experience.

The icing on the cake? *People's Daily Overseas Edition* published an article about "Teens between Cultures" in its March 25, 2004, issue.⁴ The *Overseas*

Edition is the international arm of *People's Daily*, an influential Chinese language newspaper with a circulation of more than three million. The newspaper was very interested in this new direction taken by a Chinese school, namely collaborating with an American organization on a project. So *People's Daily* invited the school to submit an article; board member Xinsi Lin wrote it. O'Toole, who left PPLS for an academic position, was overjoyed to receive a copy of the *People's Daily* article on her last day.

Davis Library heartily recommends doing an intergenerational, cross-cultural program with a community partner, particularly a school, in your library's service area. The members of DMCLS were enthusiastic, dedicated, and generous with their ideas, opinions, and time. The program team never worried about attendance or whether projects would be completed. "Teens between Cultures" served to both bond the parents and teens in participating families and bond Davis Library with the surrounding Chinese community. Furthermore, the exhibit promoted understanding of Chinese culture in the entire Plano community. Many exhibit visitors commented that this was their first exposure to Chinese history of the 1960s and 1970s and said they found it enlightening and intriguing.

This fruitful relationship between DMCLS and PPLS continued in 2004 with a continuation grant from LFF and Reading America. Yang and librarian Hui Zhang coordinated the program, which featured The Cultural Exchange Project. After participating in film and book discussions, each teen and parent exchanged information with each other about a subject in their respective cultures. They

were asked to focus on cultural aspects that they liked or admired. The eighteen teams then wrote joint reports, recording what they had learned about each other's culture. For example, one mother and son team shared their musical tastes and wrote the report, "Eminem's Rap and Cui Jian's Rock Music," while another team compared important cultural buildings in "Forbidden City and the White House." The Cultural Exchange Project was posted on the Internet at www.planolibrary.org/teensbetween.

LFF again received funding from the MetLife Foundation to administer Reading America in 2005. This year fifteen libraries were given \$5,000 each to start programs in their communities. Interested libraries can obtain information on how to start their own intergenerational programs for immigrants from the *Reading America Booklet*, which was written by LFF and is posted at www.lff.org/programs/RAbooklet.pdf. ■

References and Notes

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Appendix. Voices of the Participants

The following were excerpted from the Web exhibit at [www.planolibrary.org/Teensbetween_copy\(1\)/index.htm](http://www.planolibrary.org/Teensbetween_copy(1)/index.htm).

Oral Interviews about Entertainment

Lin Zhang (mother) and Jeff Zhang (son)

Mother: What are the popular singers or bands, or types of songs you like?

Son: Anything with heavy bass. I like many kinds of music, except the country ones. Often country songs are based on high stuff, like melody. Often they don't accompany with bass or drum. I also enjoy some classic music, with a minor key.

Son: What kind of music did you have?

Mother: Limited, very limited. Eight operas, which were made under the government's control. We memorized them so well because those were the only movies we could see, and those were the only plays we could make locally.

Oral Interviews about Higher Education

Xinxi Lin (mother) and Shulin Ye (daughter)

Mother: As a girl, do you think higher education is necessary? Do your girlfriends think education is necessary?

Daughter: Yes. Do you think boys should get a better education than girls? No, no, no!

Mother: Why?

Daughter: We are all created equal.

Mother: How about your girlfriends? What do they think?

Daughter: Although in the school we do break ourselves into two groups, girls and boys, girls usually play with girls and boys usually play with boys. Usually, you think boys and girls should get the same educations, although sometimes girls do

better than boys in the classes. I know that, I find out that easily. You just watch out in the class, who are the people who raise their hands when my teacher asks questions. As a girl, did you think higher education was necessary? What did your girlfriends think about higher education?

Mother: In the new era of China governed under the Communist Party, we were brought up under the belief that the girls can do the same thing as the boys do. I didn't have the slightest doubt about that, naturally I never thought that as a girl I may have to think differently. I don't remember among my girlfriends that we ever discussed whether we should or shouldn't (get a higher education).

Oral Interviews about Hometown

Dapent Xin (father) and Tianyi Xin (daughter)

Father: How did the location of your hometown affect your teen years?

Daughter: San Antonio has a large Hispanic population, so I had quite a few Hispanic friends, learned a lot about Hispanic culture, and ate a lot of great Mexican food! Also, San Antonio has Sea World and Six Flags, so that gave kids something to do when we had time off.

Father: Was there anything special, say a custom or tradition, in your hometown?

Daughter: Every year, we would celebrate the Battle of the Flowers and Cinco de Mayo (fifth of May). I think the kids get Cinco de Mayo off from school every year. Also, when I was in elementary school, we would make flowers out of tissue paper to celebrate the Battle of Flowers. How did the location of your hometown affect your teen years?

Father: It was a city with climatic conditions close to that of New York, by the coast. During summer, I went swimming, and during the fall, I could pick apples and peaches in the nearby country farm. I could climb tall hills to see the sunset and sunrise. Also due to its location near the ocean, the residents of Dalian could enjoy delicious seafood, not available to most of the other areas of China.

Daughter: Was there anything special, say a custom or tradition, in your hometown?

Father: Every summer, the kids would go down by the Tiger Beach Park to swim. During winter, we would ice skate in the man-made skating rink by our school. We could also visit the local zoo and shop at the fancy Tai Yuan Street, the most popular shopping area in Dalian. Kids could also ride the trolley to tour the city when they had free time. Also, the whole family could go see the Dalian soccer team, which was famous nationwide.

Oral Interviews about School

Chunmei Shen (mother) and Lucy Miao (daughter)

Daughter: What other activities did you have at school besides the core subjects?

Mother: In my elementary school years during the Cultural Revolution the kids didn't learn and the teachers didn't teach. Therefore, the children had a lot of time to do whatever they wanted to. When I was in the fourth grade, my friends and I went to a restaurant to volunteer. I learned how to make Chinese pancakes and bread. The first benefit of this education was when I cooked for my parents and siblings for dinner. They all said that the food was very

good. Now, I can cook bread and Chinese pancakes for my husband and kids!

Mother: What kind of other activities or clubs do you have in your school besides the core subjects?

Daughter: We have *a million different clubs* at our school! There are many writing and reading clubs sponsored by our librarian, Mrs. Long. There is also a spirit club, for the wannabe cheerleaders. We also have tutorials in all subjects every morning except for Thursday, since that is the teachers' meeting day. We also have a student council. I applied and got accepted! It was really exciting until I realized that they met on Monday afternoons, which is when I have my piano lesson. They get to vote for the Teacher of the Year at our middle school!

Oral Interviews about School

Lan Sheng (father) and Rena Sheng (daughter)

Daughter: How was the school in the city different from school in the country?

Father: When I moved to the countryside, it seemed that was less affected by the Cultural Revolution than the city. We still had normal class, not just revolutionary activities. But the facility was really poor. The whole village had no electricity. We used candle or oil lamps to study in the night. At school, there were only simple tables and we had to carry a stool or a little bench with our school bag to school everyday to sit on. There was no air conditioning, no light, no fan, and no heater at school. The walls were made of clay and the windows weren't made of glass, they were made of plastic.

Daughter: Was there a group of people that were considered "popular"?

Father: In China, in school, the teacher sometimes assigned a student leader, like the chairperson for all the activities. Maybe one of the students was in charge of student learning activities, and another student was in charge of sport activities. Sometimes they might be considered to be the "popular group." The teacher really liked these students so they could be kind of like the teacher's pets.

Father: What is the most challenging thing at school?

Daughter: The most difficult thing I would have to say is to fit in. There's a popular group of people that will kind of suck up to you if you're smart so they can get help with their work, but if you're a teacher's pet, they won't like you anymore. The best way to fit in is just to be you!

Oral Interviews about Entertainment

Mr. Wu (father) and Ye Wu (son)

Son: What kinds of books did you read?

Father: We couldn't read books; it was against the law. All of the libraries were closed, and none of the books were allowed. The only books we could read were used to make negative comments about other Chinese leaders that disagreed with President Mao.

Father: After you have heard about my teenage years, how do you feel about that we could not read a lot of books?

Son: Dad, as you know, I am a reader; I love to read books. From *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms* to Sherlock Holmes are all in my collection of favorite books. I thought I did not like school, but still, not being able to read any books would be torture for me.



More than 150 Programs to be Offered at PLA National Conference, March 21–25, 2006

More than 150 continuing education programs and talk tables will be offered during PLA's 11th National Conference, "PLA 2006," to be held March 21–25, 2006, in Boston.

Utilizing PLA's educational track system, conference-goers will be able to build schedules tailored to their specific information needs. Program tracks cover eight areas of specialization: administration/leadership; collections/tech services; facilities; marketing; serving adults; serving youth; staffing; and technology. Talk tables on many subjects also are planned for each time slot. Preconference programs on: the library as community partner; early literacy; cultural programming; organizing and staffing libraries effectively; managing building projects; the fantasy genre; and reader's advisory for history are scheduled to be held immediately preceding the conference.

In addition to these continuing education programs, the conference will feature nearly 800 exhibits booths and a number of special exhibit events including an opening reception and coffee breaks scheduled throughout the conference.

A number of special author events are scheduled for the conference including:

- Preconference Luncheon (Tuesday, March 21) featuring Anna Deavere Smith.
- Opening General Session (Wednesday, March 22) featuring Linda Ellerbee. Support provided by Highsmith, Inc. for this event.
- Book Buzz (Wednesday, March 22) featuring Nancy Pearl.
- Author Luncheons (Thursday, March 23, and Friday, March 24) featuring Elie Wiesel (support provided by Farrar, Straus & Giroux for Wiesel luncheon) and Jon Scieszka (support provided by Penguin Group USA for Scieszka luncheon) with more authors to be announced.
- Beantown Banquet, sponsored by Audio Publishers Association (Thursday, March 23) featuring Julia Spencer-Fleming, Clive Brill, and Joe Finder.
- Closing Session (Saturday, March 25) with keynote speaker to be announced.

The conference also will feature several social events including a New Member Orientation and Reception scheduled for Wednesday, March 22, 2006, at 6 p.m. and an all-conference reception slated for Friday evening of the conference.

Visit www.placonference.org to register for the conference, to reserve housing, or to see more information.

FOLUSA Event at PLA Conference

Friends of Libraries U.S.A. (FOLUSA) and ReferenceUSA present "Reading for Relief" during the 2006 PLA Conference in Boston. Proceeds from ticket sales will be donated to the ALA Hurricane Relief Fund. The event will be Wednesday, March 22, 8:30–11 p.m., in the Constitution Ballroom of the Sheraton Boston located at 39 Dalton Street. This event is presented in partnership with PLA.

Ten authors will read from their works while attendees enjoy dessert, coffee, wine, and champagne. Featured authors include Margot Livesey (*Banishing Verona*, Picador), Ellen Cooney (*A Private Hotel for Gentle Ladies*, Random House), Christopher Castellani (*The Saint of Lost Things*, Algonquin) and award-winning journalist Roger Rosenblatt (*Lapham Rising*, HarperCollins). Book signings will follow the author presentations. Some books will be given away free and others will be available for purchase at a generous discount. Tickets cost \$25 in advance through March 15 and \$35 onsite, with proceeds from ticket sales benefiting the ALA Hurricane Relief Fund.

Additional authors include Emily Franklin (*Love From London*, Penguin), Valerie Hurlley (*St. Ursula's Girls Against the Atomic Bomb*, Penguin), Laura MacDonald (*Curse of the Narrows*, Walker Books), Katherine Hall Page (*The Body in the Snowdrift*, HarperCollins), Amanda Ward (*How to Be Lost*, Random House), and Jenny White (*The Sultan's Seal*, Norton).

Tickets for the "Reading for Relief" are available online at www.folusa.org or by phone at 800-936-5872. Tickets will also be available while supplies last at the PLA Conference, Booth 2820 from 4–6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, and just prior to the event at the door.

Missed PLA's Fall Boot Camp? Read All About it on the PLA Blog

PLA's Results Boot Camp: A Five-Day Immersion Program was held in September in Salt Lake City, Utah, with fifty-two participants from across the country (twenty-four states, plus Canada) in attendance. The boot camp, which was designed to provide attendees with management training and skills they didn't get in library school, focused on current library issues and concerns and presented case studies describing real library situations. Attendee Renée Vaillancourt McGrath (PL's Features Editor) blogged the sessions, and you can read her notes at www.plablog.org/event_archive/2005resultsbootcamp.shtml. PLA is tentatively planning another Boot Camp for Fall 2006. ■



Information Ethics in the Electronic Age Current Issues in Africa and the World

Edited by Tom Mendina and Johannes J. Britz. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2004. 197p. paper \$49.95 (ISBN 0-7864-1742-0) LC 2004-005504.

In fall 2001 the University of Memphis convened its sixth annual Ethics of Electronic Information in the 21st Century (EEI-21) symposium (EEI-21 information and archives at <http://exlibris.memphis.edu/ethics21>). This collection of the presenters' essays could almost serve as a primer on the complex range of information access and privacy issues that the digital age has thrust upon us.

The 2002 event featured a special session on Africa's electronic information, economic, and political development, led by J. J. Britz of the University of Pretoria in South Africa. The eight essays from this session illustrate well how the poor of the world are in danger of being made redundant by globalization and the digital divide—both of which impose the Western notion of information as a pri-

vately owned commodity upon cultures that have traditionally shared such resources as communal property.

The next eight essays cover a broad selection of issues of concern for information organizations: the teaching of electronic research ethics to students, the management of digital reference or consumer health information services, universal Internet access, and so on. The final six essays examine the conflicts—already prominent in 2002—between rights of access to information and of privacy on the one hand, and concerns for protecting intellectual property and guarding public security on the other.

Although many of these essays do not directly relate to public library practice, almost all address issues about which responsible library professionals should be concerned and well-informed. Several break new ground in the development of information ethics (for example, the essays on information imperialism, information poverty, the questionable enlistment of Internet service providers to investigate cybercrime, and the

potential threats to “fair use” of materials in the Digital Millennium Copyright Act of 1998.

Both library school faculty and students and public library staff can find much of value in this collection.—*Michael Austin Shell, Integrated Library Systems Librarian, Jacksonville (Fla.) Public Library*

Web Site Design with the Patron in Mind A Step-by-Step Guide for Libraries

By Susanna Davidsen and Evelyn Yankee. Chicago: ALA, 2004. 128p. paper \$40 (ISBN 0-8389-0869-1) LC 2003-23148.

You might be saying to yourself, “Not *another* book on Web site design! Do we really need another book on this topic?” As Karen G. Schneider, director of the Librarians' Index to the Internet, states in the foreword, this book is for “all librarians, who sense, deep down, that their libraries' Web site needs a serious makeover but want to do it correctly from the ground up” (ix). Davidsen and Yankee present a clear and practical approach to turning this idea into a reality.

This volume is practical and easy to understand. The authors, both accomplished information professionals with extensive experience in Web site development and usability, work through the entire process in the context of four phases: set site goals, analyze, redesign, and evaluate the site. The book is broken down into ten chapters, including “The Vision Thing—Goals for Your Web Site,” “Patrons—Who They Are,” and “Evaluating and Testing.” Each chapter is logical, clearly written, and well-documented. The book also contains a glossary, bibliography, and index.

The ideas and solutions addressed here are broad enough to be useful to any librarian, regardless of the type of library in which they work. Also included are examples from academic, public, and special libraries that are graphically coded to make it easy for the reader to quickly pick up relevant information. I recommend this title to li-

brarians of all types who are involved in maintaining and developing their Web site.—*Emma Duncan, Coordinator, Business and E-Services, Brampton Library, Ontario*

Animals Are the Issue Library Resources on Animal Issues

Edited by John M. Kistler. Binghamton, N.Y.: Haworth Information Press, 2004. 147p.; hardcover \$39.95 (ISBN 0-7890-2488-8); paper \$24.95 (ISBN 0-7890-2489-6) LC 2004-10139.

Kistler's third book, an edited volume of essays and annotated bibliographies by librarians and experts on various animal welfare rights issues (co-published simultaneously in *The Reference Librarian* 41, no. 86 [2004]) provides researchers with a balanced and comprehensive survey of the most essential books, journals, and Web sites on historic and modern animal treatment. Subject coverage includes the human-companion animal bond; the use of animals in sports, entertainment, religion, science, education, industry, and hunting; animal biodiversity; endangered species; historical resources on animal rights and welfare; and animal intelligence.

More important than this, though, is the man behind the work. The author's blurb in the publisher's order form led me to a Web site containing background information on Kistler and his work. A former acquisitions librarian, Kistler reviews animal-rights books for *Library Journal*. He also recently assisted the elephant consultant with the design of the armor for the elephant battle scene in Oliver Stone's movie *Alexander*.

Kistler has provided leadership in the development of library collections in the areas of animal rights and animal welfare by pointing to key print and Web resources for both public and academic libraries and by highlighting the best works (by subject and style) as a foundation for a basic collection. Prior writings focused on the controversial issue of animal treat-



If you are interested in reviewing or submitting materials for “By the Book,” contact the contributing editor, Julie Elliott, Assistant Librarian, Reference/Coordinator of Public Relations and Outreach, Indiana University South Bend, 1700 Mishawaka Ave., P.O. Box 7111, South Bend, IN 46634-7111; jmfelli@iusb.edu. Elliott is currently reading *The Last Night of the Yankee Dynasty* by Buster Olney.

By the Book reviews professional development materials of potential interest to public librarians, trustees, and others involved in library service.

Public Library Association Policy dictates that PLA publications not be reviewed in this column. Notice of new publications from PLA will generally be found in the “News from PLA” section of *Public Libraries*.

A description of books written by the editors or contributing editors of *Public Libraries* may appear in this column but no evaluative review will be included for these titles.

ment in order to help students understand the pros and cons of animal use for the benefit of humans (*People Promoting and People Opposing Animal Rights: In Their Own Words*, 2002; *Animal Rights: A Subject Guide, Bibliography, and Internet Companion*, 2000, both published by Greenwood Press).

Kistler's background and experiences in animal rights, and elephants in particular, points to his abilities as an editor to seek well-qualified experts—librarians, publishers, lawyers, professors, writers, and researchers—who are familiar with the literature to provide essays and lists of helpful and relevant resources. *Animals Are the Issue* introduces students, researchers, and library professionals to major issues and resources in the field and is recommended for all public and academic libraries.—*Diana Kirby, Librarian/Collection Management, Miami-Dade Public Library System, Miami, Fla.*

Books to Grow With A Guide to Using the Best Children's Fiction for Everyday Issues and Tough Challenges

By Cheryl Coon. Portland, Ore.: Lutra Pr., 2004. 308p. paper \$17.95 (ISBN 0-9748025-7-3).

With the growing issues facing today's youth, a book such as this should be a welcome sight for anyone who deals with children. Unfortunately, what starts out as a great idea never quite gets off the ground. Cheryl Coon brings together children's titles dealing with everyday concerns and more difficult issues that affect many children. She covers more than one hundred topics and includes detailed annotations for each title. Annotations also include such additional information as general reading level, type of illustrations, awards won, avail-

ability in Spanish, and whether the book is still in print. It also includes indexes of authors, illustrators, titles, and subjects, but it is the index of multicultural books and the index of books available in Spanish that are unique additions.

A sampling of topics and books, however, shows an uneven, incomplete listing. The section on AIDS includes only one title when there are a number of good picture books available. Homosexuality, an extremely important issue, is a glaring omission in the topic category. There is no indication anywhere in the book as to the credentials of the author, which may leave you wondering what Coon's expertise is—if any—in the field of children's literature. However, for the price, this is an adequate book for parents or caregivers. This title will not replace the old standbys, so educators and librarians will want to stick with *A to Zoo* and *Best Books for Children*.—*Ellen Bassett, Reference Librarian, Cook Memorial Public Library, Libertyville, Ill.*

The Library's Crisis Communications Planner A PR Guide for Handling Every Emergency

By Jan Thenell. Chicago: ALA, 2004. 77p. \$25 (ISBN: 0-8389-0870-5) LC 2004-10891.

The Library's Crisis Communications Planner by Jan Thenell is a succinct and effective "do-it-yourself" manual. Thenell's premise is that a "library's openness makes it vulnerable to crisis" (2). She asserts that libraries need to be proactive and have a communications plan in place before disaster strikes.

Thenell stresses the importance of creating and sustaining relationships with a library's community prior to an emergency situation. She highlights

Rudy Giuliani's response to the September 11, 2001, attacks as a positive example of crisis management, with praise given for his genuineness.

According to Thenell, the need for a communications plan to address potential areas of vulnerability needs to address the "what if?" questions and a library's key message should focus on concern, facts, and a "we'll keep you informed" stance (42). She suggests it is imperative to debrief after getting through a crisis to ascertain what staff learned and how to apply those lessons to future situations. Former ALA President Sarah Long shares, "The best things in my life have come from painful situations And I learn from it" (65). Appendixes demonstrate how to draft effective news releases in relation to crises.

The Library's Crisis Communications Planner is a pragmatic tool for preparing library communications plans. Recommended for all libraries, *The Library's Communications Crisis Planner* should be required reading for library management courses.—*Lisa Powell Williams, Reference Librarian, Moline (Ill.) Public Library*

Reaching Out to Religious Youth A Guide to Services, Programs, and Collections

Edited by L. Kay Carman with assistant editor Carol S. Reich. Westport, Conn.: Libraries Unlimited, 2004. 222p. paper \$38 (ISBN 0-313-32041-1) LC 2003-069495. Includes index references, annotated bibliographies.

By far the best and most consistent of the Professional Guides for Young Adult Librarians series that I have read, this title includes ten chapters, each of which is organized the same way, on all the major

religious groups in the United States—namely Protestantism, Evangelical Christianity, Roman Catholicism, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Orthodox Christianity, Seventh-day Adventists, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism. Each chapter in turn includes a box with dates of "Beginnings," a small paragraph on "Beliefs and Practices," the "Demographics" of believers, and a Web-based "Information Point." The box is then followed by descriptions of subdivisions within each religion and the history and core beliefs of the subdivision (for example, under Protestantism, subdivisions include Lutheran, Anglican, and Methodist); a section on "Misconceptions and Stereotypes" followed by one on "Formative Experiences," or what teens of this faith are looking for in the library; how to build a responsive collection for them with review sources and lists of the types of books available; suggested library services and programs; and a suggested bibliography.

While one might quibble that some controversies are left out—Roman Catholic opposition to abortion, for example—in general, these presentations are excellent. Insofar as possible, the individual authors are members of the particular religion or familiar with it without prejudice. All have biographical information included. This book is important, not only for its legitimizing function of including religious teenagers in the library clientele definition, but also for going to great pains to show libraries how to do this well. It could as easily be a reference book as a professional one, but either way, it is an excellent selection.—*Mary K. Chelton, Professor, Graduate School of Library and Information Studies, Queens College, Flushing, New York* ■

NEW PRODUCT NEWS

R. R. Bowker Partners with H. W. Wilson to Deliver Book Analysis System for School and Public Libraries

R. R. Bowker announced that it has signed an agreement with the H. W. Wilson Company to power Bowker's Book Analysis System for school and public libraries with the content from H. W. Wilson's Standard Catalogs.

Bowker's Book Analysis System enables library professionals to perform quick core and gap analyses of their book collections by subject, eliminating the tedious and manual comparisons that plague most collection development. The strategic partnership with H. W. Wilson means that subscribers to H. W. Wilson's electronic Standard Catalogs will be able to view a comparison of those appropriate core titles with their own library's collection, identifying specific titles they would like to purchase. In addition, comprehensive bibliographic details on each title can be quickly viewed through Bowker's BooksInPrint.com database.

H. W. Wilson's Standard Catalogs include Children's Catalog, Public Library Catalog, Fiction Catalog, Middle and Junior High School Library Catalog, and Senior High School Library Catalog.

www.bowker.com
www.hwwilson.com

AccessMyLibrary.Com to Allow Millions of People to Access Trusted Library Information Online

Thomson Gale announced a library advocacy initiative that will enable libraries to

capitalize on Internet search engines as a means of connecting library users with authoritative content. This unique initiative will increase peoples' awareness and usage of the library resources users are entitled to, and at the same time provide them with direct access to more high-value information than ever before through Internet search.

With the launch of AccessMyLibrary.com (www.accessmylibrary.com), Thomson Gale has enabled its content to be crawled and indexed by major search engines such as Yahoo! and Google. In doing so, Thomson Gale is not only making high-value content resources visible to a broader universe of information seekers, but is also highlighting the critical role libraries play as providers of quality information. Once desired content has been identified and made visible through the search engine's results, it becomes available through AccessMyLibrary.com if the searcher is an authorized user of a library that subscribes to that content.

www.gale.com
www.accessmylibrary.com

OverDrive Announces Video on Demand for Public Libraries

OverDrive announced the addition of Video on Demand (VoD) services and materials to its Digital Library Reserve network. The new VoD service is scheduled to go live for patron use later this year.

With the new VoD service, library patrons will be able to access high-quality digital video anytime of day from anywhere in the world via an Internet-connected PC.

As part of its opening collection of films, TV shows, and video titles,

OverDrive has entered into a distribution agreement with multimedia leader Clearvue & SVE of Chicago. Clearvue & SVE has won numerous awards for its educational and self-improvement videos spanning a wide range of subjects including language, children's literature, social studies, math, science, guidance, health, art, and music. VoD users will have direct access to more than one thousand Clearvue & SVE video titles.

www.overdrive.com

Two New Fine Art Image Databases Available

H. W. Wilson announced it will offer the Art Museum Image Gallery, a new art image database to replace The AMICO Library, which dissolved in July. Art Museum Image Gallery is a rich digital resource of art images and related multimedia gathered from the collections of distinguished museums around the world, reflecting the wide coverage offered by The AMICO Library.

Thomson Gale announced the availability of the Corbis Images for Education: Fine Art Collection, a new digital image collection for libraries that offers many of the most important and frequently studied works of fine art.

www.hwwilson.com
www.gale.com

Comprehensive Discussion Guide for Readers and Leaders Launched

Bookclub-in-a-Box, the first-ever comprehensive discussion guide for popular fiction, was recently launched. Ideal for reading groups, students, educators, and avid readers, Bookclub-in-a-Box presents in-depth information and analysis of selected best-selling works of fiction. Developed to stimulate thoughtful discussion, each Bookclub-in-a-Box guide presents illuminating, well-researched coverage of a novel's themes, characterization, writing style, imagery, historical context, author information, and more.

Founder Marilyn Herbert is a graduate of the University of Toronto and has taught English language skills to students at all levels. Herbert currently organizes



The contributing editor of this column is Vicki Nesting, Regional Branch Librarian at the St. Charles Parish Library, Louisiana. Submissions may be sent to her at 21 River Park Dr., Hahnville, LA 70057; vnestin@bellsouth.net.

Vicki Nesting is currently reading *The Secret Life of Bees* by Sue Monk Kidd, *The Third Secret* by Steve Berry, and *All the Flowers are Dying* by Lawrence Block.

The above are extracted from press releases and vendor announcements and are intended for reader information only. The appearance of such notices herein does not constitute an evaluation or an endorsement of the products or services by the Public Library Association or the editors of this magazine.

and conducts literary presentations, workshops, and discussions for private and public groups.

Each bound discussion guide is also accompanied by a distinctive Read-Alongside-Guide (RAG). This mini-guide, a quick reference filled with interesting facts and questions, can be easily copied and distributed to group members. Bookclub-in-a-Box also offers PDF versions of the guides, online and telephone support, and a newsletter for members who register at their Web site.

www.bookclubinabox.com

Booklist Now Available Online

Booklist Publications announced the introduction of Booklist Online, a state-of-the-art Web site and subscription database serving librarians, library patrons, and book lovers everywhere. Booklist Online will:

- complement and expand on the print journal *Booklist* by offering a database of more than 100,000 reviews, together with thousands of *Booklist* features;
- serve selectors, collection development specialists, readers' advisors, and general readers;
- link reviews and features dynamically, creating a new level of access to *Booklist* content;
- find the next great read for you or your patrons by merging read-alike recommendations from the *Booklist* editors with a customizable subject search;
- deliver Web-only content including the "Booklist Blog," "Booklist Book Club," and "At Length with . . ." (extended interviews);
- allow browsing or searching by author, title, publisher, subject heading, grade level, *Booklist* taxonomy, and many other useful categories; and
- offer patrons of subscribing libraries in-library or at-home access.

All online subscriptions receive a free subscription to the print version of *Booklist*.

www.booklistonline.com

Tech Logic Offers Self-Checkout with ATM

Tech Logic offers a powerful feature on its self-checkout stations—an automated teller machine (ATM) that rests in the station's countertop. This revolutionary new product delivers on the promise of true patron self-service where all other self-service vendors have failed.

The flush-mounted ATM is a unique feature from Tech Logic. It includes a grab-

and-hold patron card reader, a credit and debit card swipe, a dollar bill acceptor, a coin acceptor with change return, and a large capacity receipt printer.

The ATM is part of a Tech Logic "combo" station, a patent-pending Tech Logic feature. Combo stations are placed at a library's traditional circulation desk, and use a patron-friendly interface and touch screen monitor. With a combo station, if a block occurs, a staff person can quickly resolve the issue, and then turn the self-checkout back over to the patron—all from the circulation desk.

The self-check ATM is easy to service. A library staff member simply unlocks the unit, which rises out of the desk on gas-powered shocks to provide easy access to all the components.

www.Tech-Logic.com

Audible Begins RSS Delivery of the World's Leading Periodic Audio Content

Audible, Inc. announced that its wide selection of periodic audio content can now be delivered to its customers via secure Really Simple Syndication (RSS). Audible customers can schedule automatic delivery of their periodic programming to their computers and to any one of more than 135 AudibleReady handheld devices.

Audible customers can still receive their periodic programs through Audible's current delivery methods, but now have the additional option to use personal Audible RSS feeds for up-to-date delivery of their Audible content simply by installing software that supports the delivery of podcasts, such as iPodder, Doppler, NewsGator Online, FeedDemon, or NetNewsWire.

www.audible.com

Dynix Partners with Cymphonix to Deliver LiveNetwork

Dynix announced a partnership with Cymphonix, Inc., a provider of network management solutions for business, government, and educational institutions in the United States. Through the partnership, Dynix is introducing LiveNetwork, a managed service through which libraries will gain control in administering their computer networks.

LiveNetwork provides libraries with real-time visibility of bandwidth usage by application, category, or user, enabling management to understand at a glance who and what is using or abusing network bandwidth. The service allows system administrators to make real-time adjustments to the network through an easy-to-manage interface and is unique in its

ability to provide bandwidth management tools to libraries that were previously accessible only to large corporations.

Dynix will offer LiveNetwork to all libraries, not just those running ILS systems from Dynix.

www.dynix.com

DocuFax Direct Allows Users to Fax Documents Directly to the Web

Docutek, a provider of Internet software for academic, public, and K-12 libraries, announced the release of DocuFax Direct, the next generation of its patented DocuFax software. DocuFax Direct includes new features that enhance the ability of users to fax documents directly to the Web.

DocuFax Direct enables users to move paper copies of documents to the Web using a standard fax machine. The system creates a compressed file from the received fax and loads that document in the location on the Web server specified by the user. Files are created in Adobe's PDF format, the standard for electronic documents.

The DocuFax process is widely used by organizations where many individuals regularly publish material to the Web. The technology behind it enables a document faxed to the system to be routed to any Web server computer and to have any electronic action applied to it.

www.docutek.com

Experian's New Research Tool Provides Users with Access to More than 12 Million Businesses

Experian announced the launch of BizInfo Online, a new subscription-based research tool that delivers verified data on more than 12 million United States businesses. Leveraging information from Experian's National Business Database, BizInfo Online provides users with the most data available on small- and mid-sized businesses in an easy-to-use format.

BizInfo Online's intuitive Web interface allows users to research competitors, acquisition targets, or potential partners within seconds. By clicking on the Company Report tab, the site provides instant access to companies by inputting such basic information as company name, address, or phone number. Users can then select the business and retrieve information including key demographic and contact data, as well as its Commercial Intelliscore. Users also have the option to purchase a full credit report on the business via a link to Experian's SmartBusinessReports.

www.experian.com/products/bizinfo ■

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