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PUBLIC LIBRARIES (ISSN 0163-5506) is published bimonthly at 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611. It is the official publication of the Public Library Association, a division of the American Library Association. Subscription price: to members of PLA, $25 a year, included in membership dues; to nonmembers: U.S. $50; Canada $60; all other countries $60; Single copies, $10. Periodicals postage paid at Chicago, IL, and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: send address changes to Public Libraries, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611.

SUBSCRIPTIONS
Nonmember subscriptions, orders, changes of address, and inquiries should be sent to Public Libraries, Subscription Department, American Library Association, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611; 1-800-545-2433, press 5; fax: (312) 944-2641; subscriptions@ala.org.

ADVERTISING
William N. Coffee, c/o Benson, Coffee & Associates, 1411 Peterson Ave., Park Ridge, IL 60068; (847) 932-4695; fax: (847) 932-3877.

PRODUCTION
ALA PRODUCTION SERVICES: Troy D. Linker, Angela Hanshaw; Angela Gwizdala, Christopher Keech, Stephanie Kuenn, and Christine Veze.

MANUSCRIPTS
Unless otherwise noted, all submissions should be sent to Kathleen Hughes, Public Library Association, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611; khughes@ala.org. See www.pla.org for submission instructions.

INDEXING/ABSTRACTING
Public Libraries is indexed in Library Literature and Current Index to Journals in Education (CIJE), in addition to a number of online services. Contents are abstracted in Library and Information Science Abstracts.

MICROFILM COPIES
Microfilm copies are available from University Microfilms, 300 N. Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48103.


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Editor’s Note
Is your library doing something that is new, innovative, different, smart, or exciting? Why not let the library world know about it? Public Libraries is seeking manuscript submissions, and we want to hear from you, our readers. We are looking for feature articles, opinion pieces, and news items of interest to public librarians. So if you’ve got a good idea, get to work! On that note, the January/February 2007 issue of Public Libraries will focus on reference, so if you or your library are doing something original or inventive in that arena, be sure to get in touch. Author instructions are available on the PLA Web site, www.pla.org, or you can send questions and queries directly to me at khughes@ala.org.

To see good examples, take a look inside the pages of this issue. Ever wonder how your colleagues feel about the romance genre and its enthusiasts? The survey results on page 54 are interesting. Also, don’t miss Richard Baranowski’s article on how his library worked with the local American Legion post to preserve a bit of local history or Peggy Barry’s piece on how the Naperville (Ill.) Public Library used the PLA Smartest Card campaign to initiate a community partnership program.

In other Public Libraries news, our Bringing in the Money columnist, Stephanie Gerdin, has announced that she will resign with the March/April 2007 issue. We will miss Stephanie and are grateful to her for the time and energy she devoted to the column. Public Libraries is seeking a new editor for the column—if you are interested, please contact me for more information.

Kathleen Hughes
Editor, Public Libraries
khughes@ala.org

Kathleen is reading Star of the Sea by Joseph O’Connor.

Readers Respond

Thanks so much for writing about Librarything.com. (March/April 2006 Public Libraries, Internet Spotlight, “The Next Big ‘Library Thing’”) What a great tool for book lovers. I read the article on Saturday at the reference desk, and by the next day, I already had my catalog started. The thing I like best about it is looking at the users that share books from my lists and seeing what they’ve been reading . . . I’m all ready to get out a pencil and start making a “To Read” list. Thanks again! —Brenda Fay, North Shore Library, Glendale, Wisconsin
See the eLearning world, with WebJunction

Join in from the comfort of your own PC. The eLearning resources available and ready for action at WebJunction.org include everything from developing digital projects to fundraising to Photoshop. You'll discover new skills, accomplish goals and improve your library's effectiveness. WebJunction is an online community where library staff gather to share ideas, take online courses and have fun.

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News from PLA

2007 Spring Symposium—Save the Date!

The Public Library Association (PLA) Spring Symposium will be held March 1–3, 2007, in San Jose, California, at the Fairmont San Jose, 170 Market Street. The symposium features an opening session on Thursday evening and concurrent one-and-a-half day workshops on Friday and Saturday. Visit www.pla.org for updates and more information.

Members: We Want Your Books!

Put your library in the spotlight of our national distribution program. If you have a manual or publication that you’d like the PLA Monographs committee to consider for national distribution, contact khughes@ala.org. All publications distributed by PLA are reviewed by the PLA Monographs Committee. The committee looks at subject matter, intended audience, format, author and scholarship credibility, and presentation.

Upcoming PLA Continuing Education Events—Get These on Your Calendar

Results Boot Camp II, Nov. 13–17, 2006, Nashville, Tenn.
“The presenters were full of knowledge, able to focus on areas according to our needs and added how to implement for success, as well.”
“(The presenters) are perfect in their roles as trainers for many reasons—their familiarity with the material . . . the belief in and passion for the process, and their personal styles and unsentimental belief that focusing on our customers . . . will be what proves to keep libraries viable in the decades to come.”

These were just a couple of the comments made by class members from Results Boot Camp I held in 2005. This week-long workshop has been designed to provide you with the management training and skills you didn’t get in library school. The workshop is interactive and includes individual and group activities. It focuses on current library issues and concerns and presents case studies describing real library situations. You will be encouraged to apply what you learn to real-life problems and issues in your library. During Boot Camp, you will learn about all of the publications in the Results series and see first-hand how they interconnect. Participation is limited. Application and logistical information available at www.pla.org.

Implementing for Results One-day Workshop on Strategic Plans, Sept. 18, 2006, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Has your library developed a new strategic plan or updated an existing one in the recent past? Most public libraries have in the last few years. But there’s a big difference between planning and doing. This one-day workshop, Implementing for Results: From Idea to Action, will provide library managers with the skills needed to use their strategic plans as blueprints for change. This workshop will be held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on September 18, 2006. Advance registration cost is $175 PLA Member/$205 ALA Member/$235 Nonmember. Registration information and form, and hotel information are available at www.pla.org. Space is limited, so sign up today!

PLDS Statistical Report 2006 Now Available, Includes Results of Children’s Services Survey

Designed to aid in and enhance the public library planning and evaluation process, the Public Library Data Service (PLDS) Statistical Report 2006 is now available. The current edition will help library managers identify top performing libraries, compare service levels and technology usage, and provide documentation for funding requests. Also included are the results of a special survey on children’s services.

The data contained in this year’s report was collected from nearly eight hundred public libraries. Categories include financial information, library resources and per capita measures, annual use figures, technology-related statistics, and more. Library identification also is provided.

The PLDS Statistical Report 2006 (ISBN 0-8389-8367-7) is available from the ALA Order Department, 1-866-746-7252. Price is $100 with discounts for ALA and PLA members.

Public Library Data Service Custom Searching

Need quick, accurate information on how your library compares to other North American libraries? PLDS’s Custom Search has your answers! All of the information currently...
in the database is available to you (1988–2006). The basic fee is $65 for PLDS participants, $120 for nonparticipants. This fee covers consultation with the client, approximately one hour of data analysis, and preparation of a tabular or graphic report. For projects requiring work beyond this, additional time will be billed at an hourly rate of $40 for PLDS participants and $80 for nonparticipants. A not-to-exceed estimate can be given to the client before work begins if additional work will be required. Fax or overnight delivery services will involve additional charges.

To order your PLDS Custom Search, contact the University of Illinois, Library Research Center, (217) 333-1980.

**Bibliostat Connect**

Those interested in custom research can also visit Bibliostat Connect (www.informata.com), a customiz-able database of library statistics drawn from information in the PLDS report, the Federal State Cooperative System, and each state’s own annual statistical report.

**Planning for Results Service Responses to Be Revised**

The PLA Results Service Responses have been a core element of the Public Library Association (PLA) planning process for a decade. However, there have been significant changes in the way people use libraries in the past ten years, and the Service Responses have become increasingly dated. The information in the OCLC report *The Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources* underscores the need to review and revise the Service Responses to ensure that the PLA planning process remains relevant to public librarians and boards across the country.

New Service Responses will be identified through an open process that allows all interested librarians to participate, either in person or via the Web. The process will be managed by Sandra Nelson and June Garcia, the editor and associate editor of the Results series.

The process will take place during 2006 and 2007 when Susan Hildreth will be PLA president. She said, “Involving community leaders is the key element of the PLA Planning for Results process. The Service Responses are used to help community leaders understand the wide range of possible priorities for their local libraries. I am glad that this review and revision process is going to be open and that all interested librarians, library staff, and trustees will have a chance to participate. Working together, we will be able to develop a list of Service Responses that will help shape the future of public libraries.”

Current service responses include:

**Basic Literacy:** A library that offers Basic Literacy service addresses the need to read and to perform other essential daily tasks.

**Business and Career Information:** A library that offers Business and Career Information service addresses a need for information related to business, careers, work, entrepreneurship, personal finances, and obtaining employment.

**Commons:** A library that provides a Commons environment helps address the need of people to meet and interact with others in their community and to participate in public discourse about community issues.

**Community Referral:** A library that offers Community Referral addresses the need for information related to services provided by community agencies and organizations.

**Consumer Information:** A library that provides Consumer Information service helps to satisfy the need for information that impacts the ability of community residents to make informed consumer decisions and to help them become more self-sufficient.

**Cultural Awareness:** A library that offers Cultural Awareness service helps satisfy the desire of community residents to gain an understanding of their own cultural heritage and the cultural heritage of others.

**Current Topics and Titles:** A library that provides Current
Topics and Titles helps to fulfill community residents’ appetite for information about popular cultural and social trends and their desire for satisfying recreational experiences. **Formal Learning Support:** A library that offers Formal Learning Support helps students who are enrolled in a formal program of education or who are pursuing their education through a program of home-schooling to attain their educational goals. **General Information:** A library that offers General Information helps meet the need for information and answers to questions on a broad array of topics related to work, school, and personal life. **Government Information:** The library that offers Government Information helps meet the need for information and answers to questions on a broad array of topics related to work, school, and personal life. **Information Literacy:** A library that provides Information Literacy service helps address the need for self-directed personal growth and development opportunities. **Lifelong Learning:** A library that provides Lifelong Learning service helps address the desire for self-directed personal growth and development opportunities. **Local History and Genealogy:** A library that offers Local History and Genealogy service addresses the desire of community residents to know and better understand personal or community heritage.

The process began with two open meetings during the 2006 ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans. Those who were unable to attend the meetings in New Orleans will be able to participate in the revision of the Service Responses through a Web page that will be established by PLA in August 2006. Proposed revisions of each of the Service Responses will be posted to the Web page, and librarians will be encouraged to send their comments and suggestions to Nelson and Garcia. The final draft of the Service Responses will be presented at an open meeting during the 2007 Midwinter Meeting in Seattle, Washington. Visit www.pla.org for updates and more information.

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**Institute of Museum and Library Services Partners with National Endowment for the Arts to Create Largest Book Club Ever**

Anne-Imelda M. Radice, the recently appointed director of the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), announced that the agency will partner with the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) on the Big Read. The Big Read is a new, national reading program designed to revitalize the role of reading in America, encouraging America’s cities and towns to participate and apply for grants in an effort to reverse a dramatic decline in literary reading.

“**Reading at Risk: A Survey of Literary Reading in America,**” a 2004 NEA report, documented a dramatic decline in literary reading among all age groups, ethnic groups, and education levels, galvanizing a national discussion. The Big Read was developed to help reverse this trend by giving citizens in more than one hundred communities in all fifty states an inviting opportunity to read and discuss great books. Each city or town that participates will host a communitywide read that involves collaborations with libraries, schools, local government, and the private sector.

IMLS will contribute $1 million in the first year of the national program and cast America’s libraries and librarians in a central role to encourage community participation. The Big Read will be administered by Arts Midwest, a regional arts agency based in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The partners invite cities and communities nationwide to participate in 2007. The Big Read will award grants generally ranging from $10,000 to $20,000 to more than one hundred communities to conduct programs that encourage reading for pleasure and enlightenment. To find out how your organization can submit a proposal to join the Big Read, please visit its Web site at www.neabigread.org
Developing Partnerships for Free Choice Learning

It is my honor to serve as the president of the Public Library Association (PLA) and to continue the fine work of our previous presidents and staff. I would like to thank Dan Walters, 2005-2006 president, and Clara Bohrer, 2004-2005 president, for making my transition enjoyable. I know that the PLA board, members, and staff are all committed to an exciting future for public libraries; and, as PLA president, I will serve that commitment by being both an articulate spokesperson for PLA, and an advocate for public libraries. I will continue our focus on PLA’s strategic plan, and ensure that PLA continues to deliver the best possible continuing education program for our members. I am always interested in hearing your opinions so please feel free to contact me at shildreth@library.ca.gov. Thanks to all of you for your involvement in PLA; it’s going to be a great year!

In my regular columns, I may focus on California libraries or library topics on the table in the western states, but I will also cover issues that are timely for public libraries nationwide. Though I am state librarian of California, my perspectives, and the issues I address, will be broad.

Better Together Lays Groundwork for Partnerships
I was recently the keynote speaker for the Better Together conference at the Cerritos (Calif.) Library. Better Together, as the name suggests, was designed to show California public library teams how library partnerships with museums, public broadcasters, local government, and community organizations will help a public library’s community. Everyone’s intensive work at the Cerritos conference laid the groundwork for local projects that will hopefully strengthen partnerships, leverage resources, diversify audiences, and increase the learning assets and opportunities available in the teams’ communities.

The conference’s theme was library promotion of free choice learning, an innovative concept similar to lifelong learning, a key component of the public library service paradigm for many years. As I considered free choice learning while preparing for the conference, I became adamantly persuaded that free choice learning will attract our country’s increasing crop of Baby Boomers and complement the many other services that public libraries offer.
I also became convinced that free choice learning, the reward of libraries and other community organizations forming solid partnerships, is crucial for library success in the twenty-first century.

Partnership at the Federal Level
In 1996, activities and funding for libraries and museums came together at the federal level through the creation of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), one of the first examples of library-museum partnerships. One of IMLS’s many responsibilities is to distribute federal funds to libraries. After IMLS distributes funds to a state, the state library agency distributes the funds within that state. Although some were originally skeptical about its potential for effectiveness, IMLS has achieved much over the last ten years and has sponsored many impressive, collaborative projects.

The 21st Century Learner Initiative
The bureaucratic marriage of libraries and museums at the federal level through IMLS set the stage for collaborative activities between libraries and other groups. Recognizing the potential for free choice learning, early leaders of IMLS created the 21st Century Learner Initiative. Robert Martin, a former IMLS director and library educator, clearly articulated the initiative’s thesis when he said:

The responsibility for learning is not the exclusive preserve of formal educational institutions—schools, colleges and universities. It is instead a community-wide responsibility.

Learning throughout the lifetime should be a continuum, with formal and non-formal learning opportunities complementing one another. Learning does not start at the schoolroom door; neither does it stop at that portal either. It is ubiquitous.¹

Beverly Sheppard, the acting director of IMLS in the late 1990s, developed the framework for library and museum partnerships in the 21st Century Learner Initiative.² She based the initiative on several main premises:

- In a knowledge-based economy, learning across the life span is becoming increasingly essential.
- As lifelong learning becomes more central to our society, libraries and museums have new opportunities to serve as vital learning resources. Their unique assets already establish them as trusted community resources.
- The central challenge is awareness—to establish greater public awareness of and access to these resources and awareness of how to use these resources most effectively to foster critical thinking, enhance information literacy skills, and create a comfortable and effective environment for free choice learning.
- To meet this challenge, libraries and museums may be most effective by becoming part of an infrastructure or network of learning resources—schools and universities, public radio and television, community-based educational activities—all sharing a common educational mission.
- Technology provides us with many new tools to support, facilitate, and enhance these collaborations.
- Ultimately, well-defined learning collaborations, designed to meet the changing needs of the twenty-first-century learner will enrich and strengthen the quality and fabric of community life.

It is clear that libraries and museums both create comfortable and effective free choice and lifelong learning environments for citizens. Working together, libraries and museums can offer even more powerful informal learning experiences for our country’s diverse communities. Here’s why:

- Libraries and museums are seen as trusted, engaging, and stimulating resources for families and communities.
- Both institutions celebrate diversity through their collections, services, and programs.
- Libraries and museums customize learning experiences of high quality to meet needs of many different audiences, from amateur to expert.
- Libraries provide opportunities for teaching the skills of information literacy, enabling users to discern quality and think critically.
- Libraries and museums are skilled at forming partnerships that meet community needs.
- Libraries build bridges to formal educational institutions and complement and enrich the K–12 curriculum. Museums perform the same functions in cooperative exhibits and programming.

Partnership for Free Choice Learning
Showing genuine commitment to the 21st Century Learner Initiative, IMLS granted funds to the Urban
Libraries Council (ULC) to conduct a research project exploring partnerships among educational and cultural institutions engaged in informal lifelong learning. In 2003, ULC issued a report about the project, *Partnerships for Free Choice Learning*, a seminal work for which I applaud not only the Urban Institute and ULC, but also IMLS for its funding vision.3

*Partnerships for Free Choice Learning* is an in-depth review of the striking and complex aspects of partnerships between libraries, museums, and public radio and television stations. The report is a crucial resource for libraries when developing partnership projects, and I advocate anyone exploring a free choice learning project to read, and use, this powerful research. You can learn to how obtain a copy of this report from ULC’s publications Web site (www.urbanlibraries.org/publications/details.html). I also encourage you to take advantage of the searchable database of collaborative projects available on ULC’S Web site (www.urbanlibraries.org/research/database.html).

The report reveals important points about, to use Martin’s phrase, community-wide partnerships. One report finding was that partnering is not without risk. Partnering can bring great benefits but the consideration of potential risks in planning collaborative projects is wise. The report outlines four main types of risks that should be considered in project planning. Those risks are:

- **Capacity risk** refers to the prospect that partners will be unable to perform agreed-upon tasks.
- **Strategy risk** refers to the prospect that a project, even though it might be well-conceived, just does not pan out as planned.
- **Commitment risk** refers to the prospect of partners not fully committing to the successful accomplishment of a project.
- **Compatibility risk** refers to the assets and liabilities of two organizations just not being...
in synch. This could be due to personalities or organizational culture.

If projects undertaken are very innovative, complex, or interdependent, particularly if there is not the same level of commitment from each organization, all of these risks increase.

I found it useful that the report outlines a number of risk-mitigation strategies—tools I think the partnership planner should understand. However, I believe clear and constant communication among all parties mitigates the most risk and is the backbone of a winning project.

Though the report revealed that partnering with any other agency or organization is an investment of time, resources and lots of hard work, it also showed how partnering benefits our communities in several ways. They are:

- The range of educational and cultural opportunities available in our communities is expanded through a variety of projects: digitizing cultural artifacts; linking the experiences of art, literature, and moving images; and bringing adults and children together as learners.
- Access is increased to those opportunities that already exist, through efforts to present the many cultural heritages of Americans in the communities where they live, breaking down barriers of distance, cost, and familiarity.
- The quality of existing programming is improved through the blending of images, text, and physical objects that tell stories to children in powerful ways, encouraging adults to encounter historical and cultural topics or providing exhibits that take advantage of objects from many different collections.
- Audiences can be diversified, broadened, and deepened by expanding the reach of institutional offerings through mass communication; Internet-accessible collections, exhibitions, and programs in urban, rural, and immigrant communities; and programs that utilize the multiple ways people choose to learn.
- Opportunities are provided for staff and managers to initiate creative new programs, learn from the best practices of other institutions, adopt work styles and methods that make for more creative and productive work situations, and learn ways of seeing cultural assets as new resources for public services.
- Funders and constituents can clearly see that educational and cultural institutions merit the support they receive and that their services are critical to the future health of democratic institutions, the knowledge-based economy, and personal fulfillment through free choice learning.

The Partnership for a Nation of Learners
IMLS has further supported free choice learning by establishing the Partnership for a Nation of Learners with the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. The Partnership for a Nation of Learners encourages libraries, museums, and public broadcasters to work together to address local needs, increase civic engagement, and improve the quality of life in our nation’s communities. In September 2005, IMLS announced the first cycle of awards of $1.5 million for seven communities. Interest and need had been huge: 132 eligible entities applied for more than $26 million in this first cycle. Applications for the second cycle were due on March 1, 2006, and should be announced in September 2006. For more information on this impressive initiative, check the Web site at wwwpartnershipforlearners.org.

Here are a few examples of exciting collaborations funded in the first funding cycle of the Partnership for a Nation of Learners:

- **Open Doors: A Las Vegas-Clark County (Nev.) Library District Literacy Partnership with KLVX-TV**—$221,197 awarded, $217,845 match. This project addresses the literacy needs of adults, including young adults ages eighteen to twenty-four seeking the General Educational Development (GED) test and parents and caregivers of preschoolers and native Spanish speakers—a population with the highest rates of poverty, unemployment, and school dropout in southern Nevada. The project builds on existing and highly successful literacy outreach programs of the library’s Computer-assisted Literacy in Libraries (CALL) program and of KLVX Communications, the top-rated station for Hispanic family viewing in Las Vegas. The library literacy program will be extended to viewers via interactive television to provide a cost-effective, user-friendly
method for supporting critical literacy learning.

■ **Beginning a Healthy Life:**

Avampato Discovery Museum, West Virginia Public Broadcasting System, and Kanawha County (W. Va.) Library—$249,626 awarded, $687,962 match. This project tackles critical health issues facing citizens of West Virginia, including obesity, diabetes, tobacco use, and oral health. The project goal is to educate young children and caregivers about the essentials of healthy living. Sesame Street characters will be used to develop nutrition and health-related materials for children and adults. Exhibits, library story times, and a puppet theater touring group will all help to spread the word about healthy living.

**Free Choice Learning in California**

I am confident that the Better Together conference will jump start free choice learning projects in the state of California. One collaborative California project, the Cultural Crossroads Program, is already off and running, offering what I believe is a template for success.

California’s Cultural Crossroads Program, which the Library Services and Technology Act funds, helps libraries establish formal joint ventures with cultural entities that result in ongoing cultural programming in the library. Though a joint venture is more formal than a partnership (each party contributes equitable resources and derives equitable benefits), Cultural Crossroads is a good illustration of free choice learning.

In 2004–2005, seven libraries were selected to serve as the pilot libraries for this program. Each library and their partnering cultural organization received training in developing a formal joint venture and written agreement, consultative assistance, and a $25,000 grant to initiate new cultural programming. Each library then built a formal relationship with a different type of cultural entity.

In southern California, the San Diego Public Library partnered with the Latino Film Festival, a collaboration that resulted in library cardholders receiving discounted admission during library night at the festival. And, the film festival had the opportunity to screen films in the library.

Due to the pilot program’s success, seven libraries have been selected (through a competitive process) to participate in the program in 2006–2007.

I firmly believe, and constantly reiterate, that collaboration and outreach are crucial to ensuring the relevance and continuation of libraries in the twenty-first century. I think Martin states our challenge well when he says, “Perhaps it would be better to say that libraries—all libraries—are in the business of creating and sustaining learners of all ages. We live in an information society, but today, in the 21st century, we must do more that merely live among information. We must create a learning society.”

**References**


The Public Library As a Lab for Online Training Courseware Development
The Project LE@D Story

During the past two years, a rural East Texas library staff member has received high-quality training in copyright, multicultural customer service, reaching teenagers, radio frequency identification devices (RFID), privacy, handling difficult patrons, presentation skills, databases, the Internet, coworker relationships, and information-age etiquette . . . and she’s never had to leave her library once to get trained. She has earned twenty-two hours of continuing education (CE) credit without spending a single night away from home or a single hour away from her job. Project LE@D (Library Education @ Desktop) has made it all possible.

Public libraries have a long history of cooperation with library and information science (LIS) education. They have provided sites for interns and a source of high-quality adjuncts that have brought a wealth of experience to the education of the next generation of librarians. This article describes a different kind of relationship, one that is impacting not only the partner library system but also hundreds of libraries and thousands of librarians.

Genesis of LE@D
The Northeast Texas Library System (NETLS), which serves the 105 public libraries and more than 4 million people surrounding Dallas, saw a need for high-quality and consistent training for public library staff. In 2002, Dale
Fleeger, the director of NETLS, approached Philip Turner, dean of the School of Library and Information Sciences at the University of North Texas (UNT), with this need, and various technologies were explored as means of meeting the needs (see sidebar). Web-based lessons that could be completed on the desktop were identified as the best solution. A pilot lesson topic was identified through a needs assessment, and a lesson entitled *Library Privacy and Confidentiality: Law and Policy* was created, tested within NETLS, and revised for delivery throughout NETLS. This pilot was very successful, with more than five hundred librarians and library staff completing the lesson. Based upon the success of the initial project, a proposal was forwarded to the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) through their National Leadership Grants in Library Program (2003–2005) to expand the partnership to serve public libraries nationally. The proposal was successful and Project LE@D was initiated. As Dale Fleeger noted:

After the first course, Turner and I met with other UNT and NETLS staff to outline ways to expand the Web-based training opportunities. Building on the success of this first offering, a proposal was made to the Institute of Museums and Library Services (IMLS) for funding to expand the program. The name and the direction of the project resulted from the meetings to put together the IMLS grant. As they say, “The rest is history.”1

### Choosing the Course Topics

The NETLS libraries were asked to rank a list of more than seventy topics that they would like to study. Steve Seale, special services consultant for NETLS, coordinated the survey, handled registrations, facilitated the Library Privacy course, and has continued to provide guidance on the usability of the courseware.

The NETLS survey revealed that library staff (from library director to volunteers) were most interested in the following ten topics:

- managing difficult patrons
- multicultural library services
- copyright basics
- reaching teenagers
- presentation skills
- using databases
- harnessing the Internet
- grant-writing basics
- improving coworker relationships
- business reference sources

These rankings were then shared with the blue-ribbon steering committee of public library faculty and library-system coordinators, where the topics were validated. The first seven courses were scheduled, and subject-matter experts (SMEs) were identified for each of the courses:

- Managing Difficult Patrons with CONFIDENCE!—Laura Isenstein
- Providing Excellent Customer Service in a Multicultural Environment—Yolanda Cuesta
- Copyright Basics for Libraries—Carol Simpson
- Presentation Skills for Librarians—Chris Peterson
- Reaching Teenagers—RoseMary Honnold
- Using Databases—Teri Dalston and Mike Pullin
- Harnessing the Internet—Amanda Williams

Because of other funding opportunities, we were also able to schedule and produce three more courses in the grant time period:

- Improving Coworker Relationships—Pat Wagner
- RFID: Are You Ready for It? Is It Ready for You?—Becky Anderson
- Info-Age Etiquette—Linda Rollins

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The History of LE@D

LE@D began with an initial approach by the Northeast Texas Library System (NETLS) staff to the University of North Texas (UNT) to discuss a joint video teleconference project to offer continuing education. NETLS was looking for a way to offer ongoing training and education to the staff members of the many small community libraries in the northeastern corner of Texas. Leaving their buildings and driving to workshops was a major challenge for many of these employees and supporters. In that meeting with Philip Turner, the idea of a Web-based project—rather than video teleconferencing—was developed. The topic of privacy and confidentiality of patron information was selected as the first training offering. NETLS worked with the subject authority, Herman Totten, and with the technical staff at UNT to develop the course and to offer it to the NETLS membership. More than 525 staff members signed up for this first course, and the completion rate was extremely high. The UNT and NETLS staff were pleased with this first offering. It indicated that a need was present and that Web-based training was one possible solution.
Locating SMEs was not limited by geography because the courses and the course development were online. The best in each subject area were sought, and they enthusiastically responded.

**Course Development**

The content for each course is written by the SME, who then works with an instructional designer to develop the look of the course. The format of each LE@D course is similar, beginning with a WebCT Vista tutorial, pretest, introduction, and ending, followed by a post-test and evaluation. The SME and instructional designer suggest flash techniques, video clips, or other uses of technology that are developed by the instructional programmers and media specialists of the UNT Center for Distributed Learning. When scenarios are used, the UNT Center for Media Production and actors from the UNT Drama Department are involved to produce a quality video clip. Transcripts of each animation or video clip are included for those who may not have a media player or who are visually impaired.

**NETLS Beta Testing**

When course development is complete, it is reviewed by Seale, NETLS special services consultant, prior to being scheduled for beta testing by the NETLS member libraries. Because they are partners in LE@D course development, NETLS libraries do not pay a fee to take the courses. Their evaluations are used to revise the courseware before making it available to library systems nationwide.

Although the funding was projected to create, evaluate, revise, and disseminate Web-based tutorials on seven topics during the grant period, LE@D was able to produce ten courses. LE@D creates, designs, tests, and delivers high-quality online CE tutorials for the low price of $10 per staff member. The two-hour courses are hosted on UNT’s servers using the WebCT Vista learning management system.

**The Maximizing Your LE@D Continuum**

It can be useful to view the possible ways of integrating LE@D courses as falling along a continuum of effort. The library system that advances along the continuum will see a correspondingly greater return on its investment in LE@D training. That return on investment will be in the form of improved patron and employee satisfaction, and a more proactive and confident staff better equipped to deal with the challenges they face every day.

For library systems:

**Promote**

- Send out broadcast e-mails, faxes, and flyers to member libraries announcing LE@D classes. Put up signage and sign-up sheets in staff areas, and remind personnel during staff meetings of upcoming LE@D courses.
- Provide updates on LE@D availability and registration information at system membership meetings and other face-to-face events.
- Set up online registration through your system Web site to make enrollment simple and convenient.
- Establish a CE-credit opportunity for staff who complete the course.

**Participate**

- Establish CE coordinators as course facilitators for your LE@D class, allowing them to build their LE@D expertise.
- Have all appropriate system staff take LE@D courses—they’re not just for your member libraries!

**Integrate**

- Include LE@D classes in your system CE and workshop calendars.
- Recognize and reward member libraries that maximize their integration and use of LE@D classes.
- Establish usage and completion goals for LE@D courses for appropriate members of the system staff.

**Follow Up**

- Discuss the courses in your staff meetings. Ask staff members who have taken a course to report on what they learned to the rest of the staff.
- Solicit feedback from library directors—find out who used LE@D effectively.
- Share
Interested libraries contact LE@D, register their staff for an upcoming LE@D course, pay the cost, and provide the names of the registrants to LE@D. LE@D staff then put the registrants’ names into the online course and provide a tutorial to assist the students in using the courseware. The library staff usually have one month to complete each two-hour course, working at their own pace. At completion, a UNT certificate can be issued, but most participants prefer CE credit certificates from their state library or regional system.

The project is coordinated by Gary Werchan, who has worked in public libraries and serves on a library foundation board. He had excellent experience in training and marketing from his years of working for a major telecommunications company, and his marketing skills have been invaluable to the project.

The Results
As of spring 2006, there have been more than fifteen thousand enrollments in LE@D lessons in fifteen states. The evaluations have consistent ratings of 80 to 90 percent in overall quality, usefulness of course content, interest in taking additional lessons, and other measurements. The initial evaluative comments made by participants at the Missouri State Library include the following:

This was my first online course and I thought it was informative, easy to follow, and the time to complete was adequate.

Having this online was so very helpful for us that live so far away from any major city here in Missouri.

It was nice to be able to take this tutorial at my own pace and at my own schedule without having to drive hundreds of miles!

Statistics from the Kentucky Department of Libraries and Archives showed that:

- Seventy-three percent of the participants rated the tutorial as excellent overall; 98 percent found the level appropriate; 88 percent felt that information was very useful; and 88 percent would like to take another LE@D tutorial.
- Seventy percent took the tutorial for CE credit; 15 percent to meet management requirements; and 50 percent because of an interest in the topic.\(^2\)

After eleven courses, participants have become more sophisticated and more specific in their evaluations:

I appreciated the links to mental health sites about anger management. However, could you expand the section in this tutorial on how to condition yourself to handle problem patrons (such as how to master your instinctive response other than counting to ten and deep breathing; sometimes neither of these works).

The link to the LC subject-headings database malfunctioned. I was unable to access content 3.3 “Using Databases Guided Tour” (message stated unable to locate page requested).

Marc Marchand, director of The Library at Cedar Creek Lake, a NETLS member library, commented:

These courses have been indispensable to me and to my staff. The convenience factor is the greatest benefit, but the content has been excellent. I have had both my staff and volunteers participate in the courses on occasion and they have enjoyed the courses. The only issue has been with some of my less technology-savvy volunteers who have had trouble logging into the courses. For those of us who are accustomed to WebCT, there has been no problem.\(^3\)

Joyce Baumbach, director of Plano Public Libraries, another NETLS member library, noted:

The greatest benefit is that the whole library staff can be trained without travel time and time out of the building. The topics presented so far have been very beneficial to support staff who are not very familiar with library issues. Staff feel they are being included in the library world. The courses are very easy to navigate. I would like to see some more in-depth topics in the future, building on what has already been presented. I have heard nothing but positive remarks from the staff. I hope this program continues for a long time.\(^4\)

Using Project LE@D Lessons
Local library facilitators have been encouraged to be involved with each course, so that it is integrated into the overall CE and training program of the library system. See the sidebar on page 14 for suggestions from the LE@D Web site.

The Future of LE@D
The following LE@D courses are in development for 2005–2006:

- A Brief Tour of the Library of the Future
- Basic Reference Skills for Paraprofessionals
These courses are financed from operational funds and other sources. It is expected that the LE@D project will continue and will be sustainable.

LE@D II: A Partnership to Create Web-based Courseware for CE for School Librarians and Library Staff
In summer 2005, the school of LIS at UNT was notified that a second grant was funded to provide online CE courseware for school librarians. This partnership is with the El Paso Independent School District and the Ysleta Independent School District in El Paso, Texas.

The need for quality training for all librarians and library staff will continue to grow. The success of LE@D has demonstrated that LIS education and public-library partnerships can help address this need through employing emerging technologies to share expertise.

References
1. Dale Fleeger, e-mail correspondence, Nov. 22, 2005.
2. From evaluations submitted to Project Le@d.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
HSPLS Receives $92,000 in Tax Refund Donations

Thousands of taxpayers in Hawaii demonstrated their support of public libraries in 2005 by donating a total of $92,200 to the Hawaii State Public Library System (HSPLS). This was made possible when they donated a portion of their 2004 tax refunds to the HSPLS Special Fund. The State Department of Taxation collected and tabulated the funds and presented it to the state library system.

Act 193 (HB 638) provides a check box on state individual income tax returns that allows taxpayers an opportunity to support HSPLS. The $2 tax-refund donations ($4 for a joint return) have made it possible to purchase books and other library materials for all ages to enjoy.

All you need to do is mark the appropriate check box on your state income tax return form.

For more information, visit www.librarieshawaii.org.

Library Limelight Ends Thirty-Two-Year Run on TV

Late in 1973, Mary Bobinski, at that time the recently appointed director of the Amherst (N.Y.) Public Library, approached Amherst Cablevision (now Adelphia) about an occasional, perhaps monthly, television program sponsored by the library. She came away with a weekly program (repeated twice at different times) that first aired on December 6, 1973, and ended its run on December 25, 2005. Reaching more than one million households in the greater Buffalo area, it was probably the longest-running, library-sponsored TV program in the world.

Library Limelight, a thirty-minute talk-and-demonstrations show, was produced and hosted by Bobinski, who interviewed local experts on various topics and then showed what resources and information the library had on those subjects. Hundreds of topics were covered, ranging from parenting to plumbing, from home decorating to pet care, from stress management to hair styling. Programs on cooking with local chefs were especially popular.

“Library Limelight has been a wonderful way of showing the importance of the public library as a community information resource,” said Bobinski.

For more information, contact Mary Bobinski at (716) 688-4919.

NLC Awards $350,000 to Eligible Public Libraries

The Nebraska Library Commission (NLC) has awarded 2006 direct state aid to eligible public libraries. This funding augments local support for library services and is used by local public libraries to meet a wide variety of needs. To be eligible for this annual state-aid payment a library must be accredited, must submit public library statistical data online using Bibliostat Collect, and local
income must be equal to the lowest annual local income from the three previous years. One hundred and sixty-eight libraries met the eligibility requirements, with more than $350,000 distributed.

For more information, contact Kit Keller, Nebraska Library Commission Planning and Data Services Coordinator, at (402) 471-2045 or write kkeller@nlc.state.ne.us.

Follow St. Paul Bookmobile As It Blogs Its Way to Mexico

Saint Paul (Minn.) Public Library's (SPPL) retired bookmobile departed from Central Library in January 2006 on a week-long, 2,200-mile journey to Manzanillo, Mexico. The city's fourteen-year-old bookmobile, which has logged thousands of miles bringing books to city neighborhoods in Minnesota, is being donated to Manzanillo to help improve literacy in Saint Paul's newest sister city. The three bookmobile drivers—John Marshall, Bob Marshall, and Matt Reinartz—made stops at public libraries in Des Moines, Kansas City, Oklahoma City, and Austin, Texas, before crossing the border. They are documenting their journey with a diary, including photos, on a travel weblog. To follow the bookmobile's progress, visit www.twincities.com or SPPL's Web site, www.sppl.org. The project is sponsored by the Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library.

During a visit to Manzanillo last year by SPPL board chair Pat Harris, the government of Manzanillo expressed an urgent need for el autobus del saber, or the bus of knowledge, to serve rural children in need of library access. Working in conjunction with the Friends of the SPPL and the Saint Paul-Manzanillo Sister City Committee, Harris raised private funds to refurbish and send the bookmobile to Manzanillo, where it will serve more than thirty thousand children. A new bookmobile for Saint Paul was brought into service in September 2005.

A thirty-member delegation representing a cross section of the city of Saint Paul met with the bookmobile's crew to formally present the vehicle to the city of Manzanillo. As part of the sister-city exchange, the delegation also had the opportunity to visit, meet, and interact with Manzanillo's business, education, cultural, civic, and community leaders.

For more information, visit www.sppl.org or call (651) 266-7000.

Counting Birds at Your Library

Early this year, Plano (Tex.) Public Library (PPL) invited Marcy Brown Marsden, an associate professor at the University of Dallas and preeminent bird researcher, to speak to Plano resident about birds. In particular, PPL wanted to let patrons know how they could participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count, a joint project of the National Audubon Society and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, which takes place each February.

According to Marsden, the Great Backyard Bird Count is a good way for beginning birders to get started because “it lets them observe birds from the comfort of their own home.” Bird watchers do not need to make a huge time commitment, but can count birds, Marsden said, “for as little as fifteen minutes or all weekend.” They can count by themselves or as a group. They can count birds in backyards or fields.

Anyone with a little time, patience, and access to a post office or computer can contribute valuable scientific data. Scientists need observers (or “citizen scientists”) to take a continent-wide snapshot of bird populations so they can determine how a species is faring. “This project has become a major source of scientific information about North American bird populations,” said John Fitzpatrick, director of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology.

Plano resident Craig Dalley, after hearing Marsden speak at PPL, decided to take Boy Scout Troop 555 on a five-mile hike and birding expedition. The eleven-year-old Boy Scouts recorded more than seven hundred birds from seventeen different species. The boys spotted three hundred cedar waxwings, moving Plano into eleventh place in terms of cedar waxwings reported nationally.

Though Texas, with its varied habitats and twelve eco-regions, is a particularly good state in which to go birding, any community can host a Great Backyard Bird Count workshop. The best place to find speakers is through a local chapter of the National Audubon Society. To obtain more information about local chapters, visit www.audubon.org. To find out more about the Great Backyard Bird Count held each February, go to www.birdsouce.org/gbbc.

Boston PL Delivers New High-Tech Newspaper Service

A new service from the Boston Public Library (BPL) allows you to check out last night's cricket scores from India, scan current ads for flats before your move to London, or read election results from your native land—all within hours of the information becoming available.

Almost forty newspapers arrive electronically each day at BPL, where...
a high-end printer produces them in an eleven-by-seventeen-inch format. “Because we now print entire editions in-house every day, newspapers from around the globe are available to library customers quickly and reliably,” said BPL president Bernard Margolis. “News from Russia, Kenya, and Brazil will be in the hands of our customers within minutes—not the weeks it takes for mail delivery.” This new technology also means newspapers can’t be damaged or lost en route. They arrive each morning at BPL’s newspaper room at Copley Square.

Newspapers from such countries as Italy, Israel, and Lebanon are included in this new service, as are as those from major cities in the United States, from New York to Seattle.

For more information, contact the BPL Communications Office at (617) 859-2212.

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### So Why a Joint Conference Of Librarians Of Color?

The American Library Association’s (ALA) five affiliate caucuses, representing the nation’s four ethnic groups, are convening a joint conference October 12–15, 2006, and it’s causing quite a buzz!

“Gathering at the Waters: Embracing our Spirits, Telling Our Stories,” the conference theme, reflects a diversity of one hundred sessions on seven thematic tracks. There are presentations by 150 professionals from school, public, academic, and special libraries, as well as from state and federal agencies and advocate organizations.

Whether you’re a librarian of color or one of the thousands of library staff or administrators who are not American Indian or Hawaii or Alaskan Native, African American, Asian Pacific Islander or Chinese American, or Latino or Hispanic, the 2006 Joint Conference of Librarians of Color (JCLC) can be a boost to your strategic delivery of services to these populations in your local communities. JCLC invites library administrators, trustees and advocates, and support staff to join this first-time-ever effort in teaching, exchanging, and celebrating successful practices.

Although many JCLC programs are multitracked, the breakdown of topics is broadly addressed for library staff development. The largest topics cover:

- library recruitment, retention, mentoring, and general staff development;
- library resources accessible through ALA, state and federal agencies, and the Internet;
- legal issues, such as book challenges, immigration, and legislative strategies;
- ESL (English as a Second Language), basic and information literacy; and
- diversity strategies in programming, ethnic and gender studies, collection development, and multicultural programs and services.

Plenary and luncheon speakers (three of the five invited) include:

- **Novelist Alisa Valdes-Rodriguez**, one of *Time*’s twenty-five most influential Hispanics in America, introduces her first YA title (*Haters*) in the fall, and is the author of celebrated novel, *The Dirty Girls Social Club* (St. Martin’s, 2004)
- **Loung Ung**, a survivor of the killing fields of Cambodia, and author of the best-selling title, *First They Killed My Father: A Daughter Remembers* (Hyperion, 2001)
- **Bertice Berry**, a respected motivational speaker, has a doctorate in sociology, is a former stand-up comedian, and is the author of the celebrated *Redemption Song* (Ballantine, 2000)

Two all-day preconferences are scheduled for Wednesday, October 11, 2006—Good Health/Buena Salud/Sen ti Glen and Promises to Keep: Only The Best for Children & Youth.

The conference site, Dallas’ Adams Mark Hotel, features special sleeping room rates starting at $105, with exhibits and meeting rooms under one roof. An online Job Placement Center is open now for employers, with free enrollment by job seekers until September 1, 2006. Nomination procedures for conference scholarships and achievement awards may be accessed at the [JCLC Web site](http://www.ala.org/jclc).
The Care and Keeping of Friends Groups

A Friends group can be an incredible asset to a public library. Its members are often our best supporters, providing us with additional funding for programs, volunteering for numerous hours and tasks, and acting as outspoken advocates for all libraries. Yet our relationship with our Friends group can, at times, become burdensome. The role of the Friends board can often become confused with that of the trustees. Groups stagnate because of lack of interest, or worse, new members are not welcomed into what more often appears to be a private club. The following essays offer insight into how to organize and grow a successful Friends group so that it remains more friend than foe.

Examining the Past, Looking toward the Future

SALLY REED, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FRIENDS OF LIBRARIES U.S.A.; SREED@FOLUSA.ORG

Successful, high-functioning Friends groups can be one of the library’s most valuable assets. Not only do these groups raise appreciable funds to support programs and materials not covered by the library’s budget, they can also raise public awareness and be terrific advocates for the library. Too often, however, Friends groups begin to stagnate and slow down in their supportive efforts due to a shrinking core group of active members or the continual recycling of the same members. So just how can you work with the Friends to bring new people and energy into the group?
Learning why interest in your group has waned will help to develop an action plan for renewed membership and activity. It’s important for the core group of active members (including those who have been around for a long time) to take time out to look back over the organization’s history. Consider working with the Friends to plan a mini-retreat to begin to assess where the group has been. This can be a basis for brainstorming ways to bring the group to new levels of membership and activity. Included in the agenda should be a discussion about why the group was initially established. Was it to meet a special need, such as a new building? Was it to raise funds or for advocacy? Look at the golden years of the organization when membership and activity were high. Are there characteristics about your group that were different then? Are the needs of the library different now? Are the members different now? For example, were they mostly housewives, were they mostly women, were they younger in general, or were they more active as volunteers for the group? Ask yourselves who the potential members are today. How can the Friends be more responsive to the changing characteristics of potential members? How can the current needs of the library be used to make a compelling case for membership? What is your greatest need from membership? Is it funding or is it a need to attract more volunteers to assist Friends with their activities? Is it both? Is the dues structure right for today’s potential members? How can a renewed membership campaign be designed to attract new and active members in today’s environment?

Understanding how the environment for your membership may have changed over the years will go a long way in helping to design programs and a campaign to bring in members who may be entirely different than those the group has had in the past. In addition, if the group was formed and active because the library had a well-defined and pressing need that has since been met, you will want to discuss ways in which to promote the new and equally compelling needs of the library. For example, a new building requires a bigger budget, more staff, more computers, and more materials. Friends groups can reposition their publicity to promote membership to address these needs, either through fund-raising, advocacy, or both.

It’s a good idea to consider just who is likely to become a Friend as well as who should be targeted for membership. You should also determine what you would want from new members. If it’s to increase your revenues through dues, the membership appeal should focus on the importance of their contributions to the well being of the library. Many groups, however, are interested in revitalizing their Friends groups because they see a dramatic decline in the numbers of people who will volunteer to support Friends activities and to be active on its various committees. Sure, the Friends want and need dues revenue, but, more than that, they need members who are engaged in the group and are willing to put in time as well as money.

For both increased dues revenue and an increase in active members, the Friends should develop a marketing and membership promotional campaign that includes lots of local publicity about its renewed efforts. A newspaper article that focuses on the important contribution the Friends have made to the library in the past will help create a more receptive environment when you launch your membership campaign, as will promotional materials made widely available in the library. Once you’ve raised the profile of the Friends, you’re ready to initiate a direct-mail membership campaign.

To get more active participation in the group, be sure that the membership brochure includes categories that a new member can check to become more involved. For example, be sure to list committee options in addition to the usual information such as category and dues, name, and address. Let people know that volunteers are needed to help with programs, book sales, soliciting membership, marketing and promotion of the library, and to help with shelf reading, home delivery, or other needs that your library has.

Be sure the brochure includes space for a contact phone number and have someone in the Friends group who is prepared to follow up with these new recruits immediately. Nothing will lower the Friends’ credibility and create ill will faster than failing to contact someone who has offered to help.

New active members will instill the group with new ideas and new life. It’s important to involve them right away and give serious consideration to any ideas they come up with. It is so easy for longtime members to dismiss new ideas out of hand because they’ve been tried unsuccessfully in the past or they’ve never been tried before. If the Friends are serious about expanding their ranks and including new leadership, they must be prepared to let go of some of their old ways and experiment with some new ideas.

The most important ingredients for a successful membership drive are promotion and follow-through. The goal should be to ensure that every single person in your library community knows about the Friends,
what they do, and how the group positively impacts the library. Every member in your community should be invited to join, and once they do, they should hear back from the Friends right away thanking them for their support and offering them a variety of opportunities to become active in the group. The following fact sheets are available from Friends of Libraries USA (FOLUSA):

- Starting a Friends Group
- Revitalizing a Friends Group
- Keeping Accounts
- Getting and Keeping Members
- Role of the Friends Board
- Role of the Library Trustees
- Board Development
- Board Diversity
- Starting a Friends Foundation
- Teen Friends
- Branch Friends

FOLUSA also offers the following checklists:

- Successful Programs
- Advocacy
- Strategic Planning
- Fund-raising
- Literacy Programs
- Book and Author Events
- Designating Literary Landmarks

Moving to Center Stage in the Community or on Campus

CONNIE TOWLER AND KAREN LARABEE, CO-PRESDIDENTS, FRIENDS OF THE GREENFIELD (MASS.) PUBLIC LIBRARY, TOWLER1@VERIZON.NET

The Friends Board at the Greenfield Public Library in Massachusetts has hit its stride and the enthusiasm is catching. The board searches for high-energy, talented Friends board members, people who are team players and are not hesitant to roll up their sleeves and do the work that is needed.

When a new member joins the board, they are given several documents, including our bylaws, terms of office, and a list of board responsibilities. We ask that members volunteer for at least one committee and attend monthly board meetings. Next, they are given a tour of the library.

We have formed a partnership with our board of library trustees and meet together to share ideas and plans. A representative of the Friends board attends all trustee meetings and vice versa. This allows for a free flow of information between the two groups that is advantageous to all.

As a group, we have identified outreach as a main priority. Some ways that we have reached out to our community are: distributing our quarterly newsletter to all Friends members; insuring that our events appeal to both regular patrons and non-patrons alike; designing and producing events to raise funds for the library, including a silent auction; conducting raffles for handmade quilts, seasonal baskets, and other items throughout the year; and running two annual book sales.

We have established contacts with our mayor, councilors, at-large councilors, and heads-of-town committees. Anyone interested has been given a tour of the library. We keep in touch with our local officials on a regular basis to assure that they know what our library has to offer.

Fund-raising is also important to us. We have sold bouquets of flowers on Groundhog Day, to cheer folks up during the doldrums of winter, and held celebrity events. We invite authors to our Pioneer Valley Author’s Series, and we host an annual Poet’s Seat Poetry Contest, both of which have earned us Massachusetts Friends of Libraries Awards. We find that it helps to offer a variety of new events each year.

Recently, the Friends set up a display case just inside the front door of the library for selling Friends merchandise. These items include several sizes of book bags, t-shirts, note cards, wristbands, bookmarks, and bottled water. We will soon be having a ribbon-cutting ceremony, and plan to invite representatives from our local newspaper.

Every April, we conduct an annual fund drive. During the past few years, we have enhanced our mailing list, and, correspondingly, the fund-drive income has steadily increased. We now have a new tracking database in place that we are looking forward to using as we approach our next drive.

Visibility is tremendously important. Our group has a Public Relations Committee that is made up of a representative from the Friends and another from the trustees. The responsibility of this duo is to keep the library’s name in the news. This includes a weekly newspaper column called “Library Notebook” that features what is new and fun at the library.

As we record this work in progress, it strikes us that it may sound as if it has been easy. It has been anything but. We have left out all of the squabbles, raised voices, temper tantrums, and disappointed looks. But we’re at a very good place now. We know there is a lot of hard work ahead, but we also know that we can do it, whatever it takes.

“Raising” a Friends Group

KRISTA MCLEOD, DIRECTOR, NEVINS MEMORIAL LIBRARY, METHUEN, MASS.; kmcleod@mvlc.lib.ma.us

I am in working-mother mode these days and have begun to think of
many things in terms of child-rearing. I have been at the job of “raising” Friends of the Library groups a lot longer than I have been raising a child, though, so I feel a bit more confident about it. I think that Friends groups go through stages and life cycles—they change, flourish, and have setbacks and growth spurts. As with children, someone has to be there to support them, be the consistent voice, and help guide the way. Also, when they are growing, you have to know when to get out of the way, give them wings, and let them fly.

I have been working with public library Friends groups for close to twenty years, and with the Friends of the Nevins Memorial Library for thirteen years. We have had many ups and downs, periods when we could not find anyone to run for secretary, times when we had a Friends’ president simply stop coming to meetings, and years when our book sale almost didn’t happen because the small, loyal, courageous band of volunteers was simply so exhausted they didn’t know if they could sort another book. However, over the last six or seven years our group has begun to grow, evolve, and flourish. We have a large group of regular book-sale volunteers. The Friends sponsor many programs and activities throughout the year, and monthly meetings are well organized and well attended. We have a good president and board; an active, involved staff liaison; and comfortably stocked coffers that the Friends generously spend to support library programs. This year the Friends are planning a major fund-raiser (a house and garden tour), which is going to take a lot of volunteers and a lot of organization, but they are well on the way to accomplishing this major task, with a minimum of staff assistance. I am very proud of what our Friends have accomplished and what they are in the midst of getting done this year. It is not easy in this day and age to run any organization that relies on volunteerism.

I think librarians need to be realistic about how much time and effort they need to put into working with and supporting Friends groups in order to nurture them into independence. In our library it took many years of significant staff support to bring our Friends group to the point where they are working on projects on their own initiative. Some of the growing success of our Friends group has been luck, and some of it just good timing. Having a new building doesn’t hurt either; there is a lot of capital in the civic pride that a community has in a new library, and that helps to bring new blood into a Friends group. A really important step was being able to recruit a few key individuals in the community who truly cared about the library and were able to bring in some new enthusiasm and fresh ideas. Their enthusiasm and connections have, in turn, brought in other new faces. In the past, I have been envious of library directors who would talk about their Friends group as a highly independent entity, very separate from the library staff, and very much doing their own thing. Now that our own Friends group is headed in the same direction, I admit that it has been a little difficult to let go, but it is very rewarding.
I firmly believe that Friends of Library groups are invaluable to the health and well being of our public libraries. . . . If you see your Friends groups through the tough times, you will be rewarded in manifold ways when they emerge as stronger, more energetic organizations.

to see the group functioning on its own. We still provide staff support—especially at book-sale time—with making flyers, with PR, and some mailings, but more and more the ideas, the planning, and the execution of new projects are coming from within the group itself.

With a more highly independent Friends group, however, I also see some of the issues that can crop up when you have more people and personalities involved. It takes a bit more effort to make sure our communications are in place and working smoothly, so that library administrators, trustees, and Friends all know who’s doing what, and what’s going on. We are working to clarify the roles of the groups, so that nobody’s toes are stepped on. Occasionally a bit of diplomacy is required. Again, as with a child, I can see that the growing independence of a Friends group also means loss of control on the part of the library staff and the trustees, and that can be a difficult transition for everyone involved. Growing pains can be managed, however, with cooperation and good will from all sides.

There have been times in the history of our Friends group when I almost despaired of its survival. We had a very small, dedicated group, but by far most of the work was accomplished by paid staff members. It was the only way to keep the tiny band of willing-but-tired volunteers going. I would spend fruitless hours comparing our Friends groups to those in other libraries that did not seem to require much assistance, and I would wonder what we were doing wrong. Any parent should recognize this syndrome all too well . . . and, as in parenting, we should be very cautious about comparing our Friends groups with others. Our Friends group has served various purposes for us over the years. Looking back on the last thirteen years, I see some ebb and flow, but also discern a slow, steady progression toward a stronger, more functional organization. I believe that, eventually, a small Friends group that has been fostered and nourished by library staff can and will flourish.

We all know that children do not develop in a straight, steady arc. Neither do organizations. There will be times—when a president quits in mid-term, or you can’t find anyone to run the next book sale—that it seems you are taking a major step backward. This may be the time that you need to step in and step up by providing extra help to get through the crisis. Giving up is not an option. In some cases it can take a significant investment to keep a Friends group functioning through a rocky time. But in general, I think you will find it worth the investment.

I firmly believe that Friends of Library groups are invaluable to the health and well being of our public libraries. We all know the reasons for having a Friends group, but we also need to recognize the reasons for working so hard to maintain and grow them. If you see your Friends groups through the tough times, you will be rewarded in manifold ways when they emerge as stronger, more energetic organizations. For all of the energy I feel I put into our Friends group over the years, I am reaping the reward now of going to Friends meetings and emerging energized and excited by their plans, programs, and progress. All I can hope is that this is also what happens when the kids grow up!

Good luck to you and your Friends!

**Weathering the Storm**

JOHN JASUMBACK, BRANCH MANAGER, MID-CONTINENT PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM; GLADSTONE, MO.; AN_LIBRARIAN@MCPL.LIB.MO.US

For many years, the Pierce City (Mo.) Public Library was located in the old First Christian Church, also known as the Pierce City Christian Church, once used by the late best-selling author, preacher, and one-time area resident Harold Bell Wright. The church was converted to a library in 1933. It was lovingly looked after and cared for by a library board of area citizens and volunteer librarians, while serving residents of the city and the surrounding areas.

In the ’90s, former resident and Pierce City High School graduate David H. Jones appeared on the horizon. Jones approached then-Mayor Carol Hirsch and offered to
finance the purchase of a building, an old garage, to house a new library. Jones also offered financial assistance towards the purchase of books and supplies for the new library. Many hours of hard volunteer work by citizens, donations from other library systems, and even help from the National Guard were provided, and a new library was built. In 1998 the new library was dedicated and opened to the public. A tremendous amount of pride and accomplishment was apparent in the old garage turned public library. To mark this, a plaque was hung on the wall of the library listing the names of those who helped make this dream a reality. In 2001, it was agreed that the David H. Jones Pierce City Library would become part of the Barry-Lawrence Public Library System.

On Sunday, May 4, 2003, everything changed. An F3 tornado tore through historic Pierce City and turned most of the downtown buildings into rubble.

Among the destroyed buildings was the library. Everything in the library was destroyed or declared contaminated and unusable with the exception of the plaque that had hung on the wall. Pierce City started anew.

During the summer of 2003, the David Jones Pierce City Library Friends of the Library was organized. Initial interest was strong but began to fall off after the shock of the loss began to fade. Many residents of the town had suffered personal losses and were attempting to rebuild their homes and lives. While they were happy to join the organization, they did not have time to donate. In addition, many outsiders had joined the group as a way to contribute to the efforts financially. Though many asked about the group and its activities, meetings were sparsely attended. Despite this, officers were elected, a charter was written, goals were set, and the group registered with the state for nonprofit status. By this time, active members had basically dwindled to the four officers and the librarians. Family members and friends were regularly recruited to help with activities such as the physical cleanup of the site.

Outside of Pierce City, word spread quickly of the fate of the library, and books and offers of help started pouring in. Judy Bowman, a member of the Friends organization, suggested the members contact everyone they could using the Internet as a way of raising interest and attention. Members e-mailed the story of Pierce City and its library, and the world responded. The initial e-mails sent were read, reacted to, and forwarded on again and again. Books arrived from all fifty states as well as from several foreign countries. Authors sent autographed books. Libraries, both public and private, scoured their collections and sent books, audio books, and videotapes. A bookstore in Springfield, Missouri, gave a percentage of their profits for a day.

Church groups had book drives. A pilot flew into nearby Monett to present the library with an autographed book, which brought more attention to the plight. The availability of the lot adjacent to the library was determined and Jones, who was aware of the situation, offered funds for its purchase as well as an addition to the library. Along with insurance and Federal Emergency Management Agency funds, they were able to rebuild, this time with space for a community meeting room and a more spacious library.

During the rebuilding, the Friends organization continued to support efforts by hosting multiple book sales and contacting former residents and organizations for donations. The new community room was furnished with the funds raised. The group compiled before-and-after scrapbooks to mark the history of where they had been, made a quilt showing a map of the United States with designations of all towns that sent donations, and helped move books from the Barry-Lawrence Library in Monett, where they had been processed. The group served as host at the dedication of the new David Jones Pierce City Branch in February 2005.

With the library reopened, the Friends organization continues to meet and work for the library by holding raffles, book sales, and membership drives. Due to their successful endeavors, monies helped sponsor the Summer Reading Program for 2005 and 2006. Funds recently raised by the group were used to begin ordering microfilm of old Pierce City newspapers. The group also volunteers at the library for special events or when extra hands are needed. The Friends of the David Jones Pierce City Library hopes to continue their efforts by encouraging active membership and financial support.

Conclusion

Friends groups, like flowers, need to be planted first, and then tended to on a regular basis. Without proper care, they can become unfocused and unwieldy. When starting up a Friends group, make sure that the board understands its roles and responsibilities. Make sure to meet with them regularly to update them on library needs, and most importantly—remember to thank them.
Appendix: Resources

State Friends Organizations with Web Sites

California

Colorado

Connecticut

Florida

Hawaii

Indiana
Friends of Indiana Libraries, www.incolsa.net/~foil

Kansas

Maine

Maryland

Massachusetts
Friends of Massachusetts Libraries, www.masslib.org/mfol

Michigan

Minnesota
Minnesota Association of Library Friends, www.malf.info

Mississippi

New York

Ohio

Oklahoma
Friends of Libraries in Oklahoma, www.okfriends.net

Pennsylvania

Rhode Island
Rhode Island Coalition of Library Advocates, www.bodees.com/cola.htm

South Carolina
Friends of South Carolina Libraries, www.foscl.org

Tennessee
Friends of Tennessee Libraries, www.friendstnlib.org

Texas
Friends of Libraries Archive of Texas, www tsl.state.tx.us/friends

Washington

Wisconsin

National Organizations

Publications


DOMINIQUE MCCAFFERTY is a Librarian at the Riverside (Calif.) Public Library; dmccafferty@riversideca.gov.

Dominique is currently reading Cuba Diaries: An American Housewife in Havana by Isadora Tattlin and Dante’s Paradiso.

“Book Talk” provides authors’ perspectives on libraries, books, technology, and information.

Geography of a Writer
An Interview with Brent Hartinger

Brent Hartinger is the author of Geography Club (HarperCollins, 2003); The Last Chance Texaco (HarperCollins, 2004); and The Order of the Poison Oak (HarperCollins, 2005), a sequel to Geography Club. Forthcoming books include Grand and Humble (HarperCollins 2006); Dreamquest (Tor Books, 2006); and The Fifth Season (Tor Books, 2007).

Hartinger’s Geography Club was twice named a Book Sense 76 Pick—once in hardcover, and once in paperback. Other honors include an International Reading Association Notable Book, a Lambda Literary Award Finalist, a New York Public Library Book for the Teen Age, a Booklist Top Ten First Young Adult Novel, an ALA Quick Pick for Reluctant Readers, winner of the Society of Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators/Judy Blume Grant for a Contemporary Young Adult Novel, and an InsightOut (Bookspan) Book Club Main Selection.


Public Libraries: Tell us about your childhood.

Brent Hartinger: I grew up in Tacoma, Washington, which is where I live now. I moved back to Tacoma (after living in Seattle and Los Angeles) to help out with my mom, who recently died of Alzheimer’s. Tacoma was a smelly, industrial town when I was a kid, but it’s changed so much since then. And home prices are actually affordable!

PL: Which is not the case in Southern California. What about your parents?

BH: My father was an attorney, and my mother was a housewife. No matter how much you try to disguise it, your real parents always seem to creep into your fictional parents. I guess that’s because most of us only have one set of parents.
PL: And brothers or sisters?

BH: I have one older brother, but most of my characters seem to be only children. It’s usually easier that way.

PL: Were you encouraged to read as a young person?

BH: Mine was a family of big readers. Everyone was constantly reading. But I was sort of the oddball, because I didn’t read that much as a kid. I had some great friends, and we lived near a massive wood, so most of my childhood was spent outside. The rest of my time I spent inside working on various creative projects—movies, posters, haunted houses, prank phone calls to the nuns who taught us.

PL: Prank phone calls equal creative projects? You liked to stir up trouble! And perhaps you still do, Brent. I wouldn’t doubt it.

How old were you when you settled into reading? What were some of your best-loved books?

BH: So many, but mostly fantasy. It wasn’t until I was older, in high school, that I discovered fantasy books, and that’s when I realized that books didn’t have to be boring and depressing. I loved The Lord of the Rings, Momo, The Neverending Story, and The Chronicles of Narnia. I also loved The Great Brain books, and The Mad Scientist’s Club. I didn’t read a lot of realistic fiction, which is mostly what I write now, but I adored The Outsiders. I was so disappointed when I learned that S. E. Hinton wasn’t actually a boy (though she was sixteen years old when she wrote the book!).

PL: Oh, how I loved The Neverending Story! And I loved The Outsiders, too! Actually, I was happy the writer was a woman because it reaffirmed my feelings as a young person that girls could also feel this way. Even though I grew up in a middle-class home and took ballet lessons and drama lessons and piano lessons, I continued to feel mostly like an outsider.

BH: Isn’t that funny? I grew up white-bread suburban all the way, and yet I totally related to Ponyboy and his friends. I remember how disturbing it was when I realized that The Outsiders was fiction—that it didn’t really happen. I get e-mails like that now from teen readers. They’re disappointed that I’m not a teen, and that Russel [the main character in Geography Club] doesn’t really exist.

PL: So you mostly read fantasy, then? Fantasy served as a kind of inspiration for you?

BH: Well, it was realistic fiction that inspired me to write. When I realized that S. E. Hinton had written a fictional book that seemed so incredibly real, that was when I first started wanting to write fiction of my own.

PL: Out of curiosity, was there a particular teacher who fanned your creative flame as you were growing up?

BH: Well, to be honest, I really disliked school, and most of my memorable teachers were the ones I hated. Many of them were nuns, many of whom seemed spectacularly untalented with kids. As an adult, I can now see that a lot of those teachers did their best. But I’ve always been a self-driven person, so I get frustrated when I’m told I have to do the same things as everyone else, along with everyone else.

Teachers, and adults in general, don’t always come off too well in my books, and I think that’s probably because when I was a teenager, teachers didn’t come off too well in my life.

It was in college that I learned you could actually be friends with your teachers, and talk back when you disagreed with them! I had several great professors in college, including one, Michael Leiserson, who really showed me what great teaching is. He is still the wisest person I’ve ever met, and truly an inspiration.

How about if I told you I had great librarians at my schools?

PL: Did you?

BH: Actually, even that’s not true. My grade-school librarian was the nun who had gone sort of senile, so they put her in the library. The problem was, she wouldn’t let you touch the books!
PL: She was one of those dragon-lady librarians.

BH: Seriously. Gosh, we laughed about that.

PL: Sorry to hear about the dragon lady. But it sounds like college was a bit of an improvement for you. Where did you go to college?

BH: I went to Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington. I was able to breeze through in three years, with a double major in psychology and political science.

PL: My! That’s impressive.

BH: Yeah. I got out so quickly that heads spun. My mom was upset because she thought I wasn’t getting the “typical” college experience, but the way I see it, I saved them $25,000! Maybe she was right, but I have no regrets. Upon graduation, I realized I wanted to be a writer, and I was in a hurry to get started. For me, college was a hoop to jump through. I jumped, because I had to, but it wasn’t a particularly enjoyable experience.

With that said, I am glad I studied psychology. I went back a couple of years later—at my mom’s insistence—and completed the coursework for a master’s degree in psychology. Actually, I completed the coursework in three quarters (which may be another record!), but I never did my thesis project. Again, I didn’t like school, and only went back to please my parents. When I realized that I had made a mistake, I decide not to validate the experience by finishing my final project and getting the actual degree. It was sort of a moral victory at the time.

A lot of psychology is a bunch of bunk, but spending that long thinking about human behavior, the human mind, forces you to come to some conclusions. And more than anything, it helps you see the world from the perspective of another person, which is exactly what writing fiction is all about.

PL: Your writing, in particular—it’s all about stepping into the minds of teenagers. Do you find it difficult at times?

BH: In many ways, I still think like a teenager. I certainly remember my own teen years very well. And when I write my books, I try hard to avoid the things that would have bored me as a teen! So far, it seems to have worked, because I get a lot of e-mail from reluctant readers—people who are bored by most books, but who seem to enjoy mine.

PL: Your books are a joy to read. Geography Club and The Order of the Poison Oak were wonderful!

BH: How nice! I’m glad you liked them.

PL: For the sake of our readers who might not be familiar with your books, is this as good a time as any to mention that both Geography Club and Poison Oak deal very openly with gay and lesbian issues.

BH: Yeah. They do.

PL: And I certainly think your novels must help teens to develop a healthy sense of their sexuality. I realized this as I was reading them. There was a terrible lack of it as I was growing up.

BH: Well, first and foremost, I always think of all my books as hopefully just good stories.

PL: Just like Barbara Kingsolver. She’d like for her books to make us forget what we left on the kitchen stove (and they do)!

BH: Yes, I try to write intriguing plots and engaging characters. But I think sort of a byproduct of my stories is that they hopefully do help teens develop a healthy sexuality. I know this is controversial in a lot of circles, but I can’t quite get my mind around the idea of writing for and about teenagers, but never actually dealing with sexuality. The teenage years are all about forging an identity, and part of one’s identity includes sexuality. So the characters really sort of demand that the subject be dealt with, it seems to me.

PL: Brent, I’m sure your readers are divided into two camps: those who love you (as evidenced from all the e-mails you receive from teens as well as adult readers), and those who’d see your books removed from every library shelf, every bookstore in America. Speaking of which, I understand your book was recently banned.

BH: Yup. Geography Club was officially banned for the first time here in my hometown.

PL: So it’s true! A local author I know told me one of her books was banned. She was in tears as she talked with her agent over the phone, but her agent said, “Are you kidding? This is great!”

BH: Yeah, if nothing else, I’m trying to make lemonade.

I think it’s hard not to take it personally when a school district bans your book. It’s also weird when it happens to be a district that starts two blocks from where you grew up.
PL: Of course. Now what happened, exactly? What reasons did they give for pulling it?

BH: It was the University Place School District. They pulled it from libraries after some parents complained. Two characters come together because of an Internet chat room, and because of that, the parents claimed that the book encourages “extremely high-risk behavior.” But my character, Russel, is clearly fully aware of the dangers of Internet chat rooms and sexual predators. He only agrees to meet the other character after exchanging specific information that confirms that he is, in fact, another student at his high school. Later, after the two agree to meet, my character spies him from afar and sees with his own eyes that yes, he is another teenager, who he turns out to know very well.

PL: Yes, Russel is extremely cautious. So their complaint isn’t as sound as they might like. And it’s obvious that that’s not the real reason why they pulled the book.

BH: No. The parents who complained were initially upset with the book because it was about gay teens. They compiled a long list of objections, only one of which the superintendent agreed with. But surely it was the book’s gay theme that led to this intense level of scrutiny.

I wrote an article about it. I pointed out that there is something in almost every book that will offend someone, somewhere. If you also exclude the books where the main character does something “questionable,” or even outright dumb, you’ve got library shelves that are effectively bare.

PL: Speaking on behalf of libraries and librarians, I’ve been reading from John Stuart Mill’s On Liberty of late. He takes the position that curtailing opinions of any kind eventually leads to tyranny. Because where does it end? You wind up with a regime like Stalin’s, or George Orwell’s 1984. A dystopia. We can’t afford to assume it couldn’t happen again.

BH: I hate slippery-slope arguments, but in this case, I think that’s absolutely right. Freedom and liberty are such fragile things—there are so many pressures working against them! Books and ideas can be explosive and unsettling. But they’re also essential.

Right now, there are lots of people who don’t want to talk about gay issues, especially regarding teenagers. But I wish everyone who thinks my books are not appropriate for teenagers could read my mail for one single week—the avalanche of touching e-mails I receive from lonely or harassed gay and lesbian teens and their friends, so grateful to see gay characters portrayed accurately and with dignity, not merely a stereotype or the punch line of a joke.

But the good news is that the banning has just increased interest in my books.

PL: It is an exquisite irony! Banning a book always draws more readers. Teens who embrace rebelliousness, and, of course, curious adults.

BH: The book did very well, but this can only help. And it’s currently being adapted for the movies, so this is a story that definitely seems to have legs.

PL: Adapted for the movies? Oh, congratulations! How did this come about? Who’s involved?

BH: My film agent is the same agent who helped adapt Holes for the stage, and later for the movies. She’s doing the same thing with Geography Club, and we’ve got a deal with some very respectable producers. We’re still in the early stages, but I’m cautiously optimistic that the time is right. After all, everyone said there was no market for a book about gay teens; I’m sure some people will say there’s no market for a movie about gay teens, and I’m sure they’ll be just as wrong!

PL: We mustn’t forget your book The Last Chance Texaco. Another book about outsiders.

BH: As a writer, I’m always looking for situations that are interesting and dramatic. Years ago, I worked at a group home a lot like the one in The Last Chance Texaco. Within five minutes of walking through the door, I knew the story of a group-home kid would make a great book. No, really! There was so much drama, and everyone was so interesting and so complicated. Besides, who doesn’t love an underdog? And man, nobody is more of an underdog than the kids in group homes. Everything is against them.

I love hearing from group-home kids who have read the book. It’s not often they see themselves reflected in literature, so they’re usually pretty grateful. And I also love hearing from non-group-home kids who write and say they never thought about what it might be like to live in a group home.

PL: I’d like to ask you about the writing process. Have you taken any formal writing classes? Or did you teach yourself?

BH: I took a few formal writing classes, but nothing that was very influential. I once misinterpreted an assignment and had a writing
teacher spend about an hour humiliating me in class, telling me what a horrible, hopeless writer I was. Afterwards, my friend said to me, “I can’t believe that just happened. I’ve never seen a teacher be so mean to anyone before!” So my writing class was not a very positive experience!

Basically, yes, I taught myself the process, by reading and by trial and error (mostly error!). I wrote in three mediums: novels, screenplays, and plays. And I just wrote and wrote and wrote and wrote and wrote, until other people started saying that what I was writing might have some small amount of potential. But I think writing in three mediums was very helpful, because it helped me to see the elements of story that all three mediums have in common, which is a lot. Basically, it has to do with structure, and I think the fact that I believe so strongly in structure (and in character) is really the key to whatever success I’ve had.

PL: Do you see yourself writing for adults? Or do you prefer writing for a teen audience?
BH: When I’m writing a book, I don’t really think about an audience. I really do write for myself, trying to tell a story that I think I would like to read, or that I would have liked to read as a teenager. But when all is said and done, and I’m intellectualizing about a book, I like to think of it as being appealing to both teenagers and adults. I like to say that the thing about the teen genre is that all of our readers either are teenagers or they were teenagers. So they all have the experience of being a teenager in common. In that way, the themes of a teen book truly are universal and common to everyone.

One thing I do know. Teen books have many, many adult readers, some of whom are very enthusiastic, and some who are “closeted” and read these books in private (for fear of ridicule by other adults maybe). As for why adults read these books, some do so to relive or rewrite their own teen years; and some adults work or live with teenagers and want to see how they think.

PL: Would you talk about your plays?
BH: I think every writer of novels should have to spend time as a playwright, because it’s really the only medium where you’re forced to sit and watch an audience react to your work. It immediately becomes clear what interests them and what doesn’t—where they perk up, and where they get bored. Because it’s such a miserable experience watching your work bomb—and because you never, ever want to go through it again!—you immediately start to ask yourself some important questions, like: do I really need that scene? And, more importantly, what is the essence of drama? The answer, of course, is conflict, action, and getting to the point. Anyway, the experience of seeing your plays performed changes a writer forever.

PL: What are you working on at the moment?
BH: Well, I’m always reluctant to talk about works-in-progress because people (hopefully) read about them and think, “Oh, I want to read that!” And they can’t. But for you, I’ll talk.

PL: Well I appreciate that!
BH: I have Double Feature, the next book in the Geography Club series, coming out in February 2007. It’s actually two books in one—one from Russel’s point of view (called Attack of the Soul-Sucking Brain Zombies) and one from Min’s point of view (called Bride of the Soul-Sucking Brain Zombies)—about the time they go to work as extras on a horror film. And, finally, I have a fantasy called Dreamquest coming in May 2007. It’s the story of a girl plagued by nightmares, and how one night she wakes up behind the scenes of those nightmares, in a magical wonderland called Slumberia, which is the place inside her own brain where they “film” her nightly dreams.

PL: Wow. The last one just grabbed my attention. And so you’ve written a third in the Geography Club series. Do you think Double Feature will be the last in the series? Or do you take the Fifth?
BH: Nah, I’m already planning another book in the series. I love the characters, so I’ll go on as long as people are interested in reading them. I like to say, “I’m going to milk this cash cow till she dies of dehydration!”

Anyway, the projects I mentioned are all mostly done, and to be honest, I haven’t started working on my next project yet. Ideas are never a problem for me—like most working writers, I’ve got thousands. But it’s hard to decide which idea you want to spend the next year writing about, and the rest of your life talking about! 🌐
A User’s View of eFlicks from the Denver Public Library

For this issue, guest columnist Michael Sauers takes a look at the Denver Public Library’s new initiative on free video downloads.

On March 21, 2006, the Denver Public Library (DPL) became the first library in the United States to offer downloadable video in addition to its already popular collection of downloadable audio books (http://downloadmedia.denverlibrary.org). Because I am both a trainer of librarians and a DPL patron, I decided to give their new service a test drive and look at the system from the point of view of a typical patron.

Because a typical patron will not read the directions first, but just dive in and figure it out on his own, I opened the DPL home page and got to work. I selected “eFlicks” under “DPL Downloads” on the menu to the left and was presented with the “Browse eFlicks” page. The list of titles is broken down into seven categories ranging from “Music” to “Teens,” along with an “Always Available” category. At the time of this writing, the selection was limited to just eighty-two titles. The “Classics & Feature Films” category contains just fourteen titles, all old enough to be in the public domain. At this time, OverDrive, the vendor offering the content, does have a collection of several hundred titles but according to Michelle Jeske, manager of Web services at DPL, “Our budget is limited so we are waiting to see a larger list of titles before expanding the collection.”

Next, I clicked on the “More” link for the music category. I’m a jazz fan, so I added the documentary Chick Corea: Rendezvous in New York by clicking on the “Add to eList” link. I was then presented with “My eList,” which showed that I had one item. Clicking on a title retrieves information about
the check out period and license restrictions such as copying, downloading, and burning to a compact disk or DVD. It also provides the opportunity to view a preview before downloading. I was uninterested in adding additional titles or finding out more information about the title I’d selected, so I clicked the “Check Out” button.

The “Check Out” screen came up, listing the titles I’d added to my eList and informing me of the basic checkout policy, limiting me to twenty items at a time. The screen did not give information about policies specific to downloaded video (such as length of checkout, copying rules, and so on). After this, a screen warned “in order to use digital media, you must first download and install the appropriate digital software before downloading the title to your machine.” Because I wasn’t reading instructions, I failed to see the link on the “Check Out” page to “download the software needed to use this eFlicks title” and proceeded to click on the “Download” button. My browser’s “open or save” dialog box appeared on the screen. The “open” option had no program associated with it, so I chose to save the file instead. It downloaded almost instantly, but I wasn’t able to open it because no program had been installed to handle the file. I then returned to the “Check Out” page where I found the download and install link.

After clicking on the software-download link, a new window opened, where I found what seemed to be the actual link to download the OverDrive Video eFlicks software. I clicked on the OverDrive logo as instructed. A third window opened with—finally!—the real link to download the software. The downloaded installation file took me through the process in just a few clicks, including typical information such as license agreements and directions as to where to save the file. Once the installation was complete, I was back at my browser and able to close the two windows that I no longer needed in order to get back to the “Check Out” page so I could download the movie I chose.

This time, my open-or-save dialog box gave me the option of opening the file with the OverDrive Media Console (OMC). I chose this option, and again, the download completed quickly and the OverDrive software was launched. The software then asked me what folder I would like to use to store my video files. I selected a location and clicked “OK,” then received an error message stating, “A security upgrade is required to perform the operation on this media file.” I started poking around in OMC’s menus and under “Tools,” found a Windows Media Player Security Upgrade. I selected that option, and a dialog box appeared, asking me to confirm that I wished to “re-upgrade the security of my Windows Media Player.” I wished to “download this upgrade.” A few seconds later, I was shown an OverDrive-branded dialog box telling me that my “Windows Media License Request” had been granted and that I should click “Play” to make sure. I did as instructed and heard an audio file telling me that everything was installed as it should be.

In this case, I was downloading a forty-six minute video with a file size of 243.8 megabytes. With my cable modem connection, this took approximately eleven minutes. Of course, download time will vary, but given my previous downloading experiences, I think this length was reasonable.

Once I completed the video download, I clicked on the “Play” button at the top of OMC. A DPL-branded OverDrive Media Explorer opened and proceeded to play my video. The quality was good, but the window was small. Even after I expanded the window to full-screen, a good portion of the window was taken up by the video’s cover image and chapter listings. I did locate a “Windows Media Player” button that switched from displaying the video in the smaller window to playing inside my Windows Media Player. This allowed me to show the video in true full-screen mode, but I lost the chapter stops.

The “Properties” button is another important feature of OMC. When a user clicks this button, a new window is opened with three tabs: “General,” “Source,” and “License.” The first two offer such details as the location of the stored file and the site where it was downloaded. The third, “License,” is the important one. Clicking on this tab shows you the expiration date of the file.
whether the file can be collaboratively played, whether it can be burned to a compact disc or DVD, whether it can be transferred to another computer without redownloading it, and whether the license can be backed up.

Having gone through the complete set-up process once, I figured I’d go back and try to download another video to see if the process would be easier the second time around. This time, I selected Ramones: RAW, added it to “My eList,” checked it out, downloaded it, and played it without needing to install anything or double-back through the process as I had with my first attempt.

Overall, I was impressed with the system once I got it working. However, even with my extensive computer background, I did find the installation process a bit frustrating. Reading all of the instructions first may have eased this frustration but I felt that doing so wouldn’t keep my experiment as authentic as I’d intended it to be. The only specific improvement I can suggest for DPL is to somehow make it clearer that the software should be downloaded before a title is even selected, instead of halfway through the process of checking out a title.

Would I continue to use this service? The answer isn’t easy. The first thing I would need is a dramatically increased selection. (Feature films more recent than the 1940s would be nice). Movies that were released on DVD in the last month would drastically increase the chances of my using the service. The other issue is the viewing experience. If I have to choose between my thirty-two inch television with 5.1 Dolby Digital surround sound in my living room and my seventeen inch monitor and small stereo speakers in my home office, the living room setup is going to win every time, but that’s not something DPL can address. DPL did respond to this comment that since the videos are portable (i.e. downloadable to a laptop) that they could be viewed “instead of the in-flight movie or in the car when your child needs to be occupied on a road trip.”2 This is something I’ll keep in mind when planning my next flight.

Readers interested in viewing a slideshow of the screenshots I took while performing this experiment (including those showing my missteps), can find them at www.flickr.com/photos/travelinlibrarian/sets/72057594115167191/show.

Resources
Denver Public Library Web Site— http://denverlibrary.org
Denver Public Library eFlicks— http://downloadmedia.denverlibrary.org
Flickr Screenshots of eFlicks—www.flickr.com/photos/travelinlibrarian/sets/72057594115167191/show

References
2. Ibid.
Library Associations

Bringing in the Money

Library associations exist in every one of the fifty United States, and almost all conduct some type of fund-raising. Many solicit funding primarily from their members, while others have discovered revenue sources outside of their library membership.

I contacted all fifty of our state associations to investigate how they “bring in the money,” and I received replies from almost half. The most common fund-raisers are revenue from annual state conferences, annual membership dues, raffles, and auctions. Some associations have foundations that coordinate all fund-raising activities. Funds are primarily used for scholarships, professional development grants to library staff, continuing education events, and workshops.

Not every library association should consider fund-raising a necessity. The time taken to support these revenue-generating activities can often take away from the mission of the association and create additional work for association staff. As in most libraries, associations are often faced with doing too much with too little staff. The real trick is for the association to find funding for the operation of the association while achieving the needs and activities of the members. Depending on the mission, fund-raising may or may not be an appropriate activity.

Thanks to everyone who provided information for this article. The following relates successes from several associations.

“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.
Massachusetts Library Association

The Massachusetts Library Association (MLA), has a very comprehensive array of activities, so much so that I’ve included many of the initiatives below. Katie Baxter, library director at the Noble and Greenough School Putnam Library and MLA president, shared with me her appreciation for “the enormous dedication of the MLA executive board and members.” She attributes MLA’s resourcefulness and fund-raising success to the strategic planning and goal setting completed by the MLA executive board in response to MLA members. I’m sharing her comments regarding their fund-raising work for the last year.

With fewer than one thousand members, MLA rethinks traditional fund-raising practices to continue covering the increasing expense of meeting members’ demands for activities and services that keep the business of libraries and the library profession vital. Membership dues and the annual conference are their primary sources of income. However, a few years ago when it was announced that the Public Library Association’s (PLA’s) conference would be held in Boston in 2006, they began challenging themselves to rethink funding strategies. Some of their general practices and initiatives are described as follows.

Lapsed Member Phonathon

During the past two years, executive board members committed to phoning lapsed members and discussing the benefits of MLA membership. This enabled MLA leadership to have open conversations to find out what members did and didn’t like about the organization. The executive board members clarified any questions and conveyed suggestions to the appropriate people within the organization.

Event Collaboration

MLA cosponsors events, such as the 2005 21st-Century Literacies Symposium with the New England chapter of the Association of College and Research Libraries. Their 2005 goal of three hundred registrants was realized last year. This helped offset the impact of the PLA conference on their budget. Not having an annual conference this year resulted in the loss of a traditionally important revenue stream.

MLA also partners on a regular basis with the Massachusetts Center for the Book on such annual events as the Letters about Literature program and the Massachusetts Book Awards. While these events are free,
they promote MLA and draw new members. They also held a MLA pre-conference at PLA.

**Stand-alone Events**

Some MLA sections and committees hold workshops and charge registration fees. The bylaws require that stand-alone events must be self-supporting. The purpose is to provide networking opportunities, professional enrichment, and training as well as to recruit new members. A popular program often has the additional benefit of being a fund-raiser that helps MLA cover operational expenses.

**MLA Auction, Live and Online**

This is one of MLA’s favorite success stories. It all started years ago in a pub in Hyannis across from the MLA annual conference hotel. The Education Committee chair was brainstorming ways that MLA could raise money to do even more for its members. Someone tossed his tie onto the bar and offered to auction it off. The fun continued . . . and a tradition was born. Live Auction is one of the key social occasions of MLA annual conference, and it raises an average of $7,000–$10,000 for MLA conference scholarships and other educational activities. In March 2006 the association piloted an online auction. Proceeds were raised for the MLA continuing education fund and for advocacy efforts on behalf of Massachusetts libraries. Auction items ranged from exotic vacation getaways, temporary library staffing hours, private sculling lessons, Web design, and jewelry. Nora Blake, chair of the MLA Online Auction Pilot Task Force; Diane Kliaber, MLA executive manager; and Barbara Flaherty, an MLA past president, worked with C-Commerce and MLA task force members to arrange for and solicit auction items. (C-Commerce specializes in providing online auction support to not-for-profit organizations.)

**Collaborating with Organizations Interested in Promoting Libraries within Communities**

In December 2005, MLA partnered with the Massachusetts Regional Library Systems and Barnes and Noble bookstore in the first Great Bay State Library Fundraiser. Vouchers available at libraries were given to use at participating Barnes and Noble stores. Barnes and Noble donated 25 percent of the proceeds to the fundraising partners. The library partners raised more than $12,000 with this project.

**Library Leader Membership Campaign Drive**

This year MLA launched a pilot program to invite sixteen affiliate library organizations to become MLA Library Leaders by joining at a partner ($1,000) or affiliate ($5,000) level to help underwrite specific MLA expenses, such as a conference program, publication, or educational activity.

**The Public Relations Award Program**

This program takes in anywhere from $1,000 to $1,500 in application fees to help defer the cost of MLA publications.

**Sponsorships**

MLA’s part-time executive manager is amazingly successful at identifying appropriate sponsors for specific MLA activities. Sponsors in 2005 have helped cover the cost of publications, special events, and speaker fees.

**Newsletter Advertisements**

MLA has a contractual consultant who serves as the publications manager and who is a go-getter when it comes to finding advertisers to offset the cost of the newsletter. She worked closely with the MLA Public Relations Committee to create a policy and procedure for soliciting ads.

**Other Library Association Fund-raising**

While Massachusetts is unique in their multifaceted approach, many other associations also are bringing in the money.

**Conferences and Sponsorships**

Revenue from conferences is the most common way that library associations receive financial support. Registration fees generate an immediate profit. Many associations also include a conference store that sells everything from mugs to t-shirts. Some associations, such as the Oregon Library Association (OLA) and the Illinois Library Association (ILA), solicit sponsorships of various activities (banquets, receptions, shuttle buses, breaks, Internet cafés) from vendors or local businesses. The 2005 North Carolina Library Association (NCLA) conference realized the largest profit in recent memory—more than its previous four conferences combined. Robert Burgin, NCLA president,
explained that the Conference Planning Committee tried very hard to keep costs down and generate revenue. “For example, all of our major speakers were relatively inexpensive . . . but still very good. We also sold advertisements in the conference program and pushed sponsorships of specific events. I had a great team, and they all worked very hard.”

**Summer Reading Programs**

OLA has raised money for the statewide summer reading program by obtaining sponsors that fund posters and manuals for all libraries. The sponsors are then acknowledged on the statewide poster. In Illinois, the statewide summer reading program is part of ILA. Income of about 19.5 percent of their budget is derived from sales of the theme manual with clipart, as well as from shirts, pencils, clings, wristbands, shoelaces, banners, and bags. They also sell reading program manuals and other materials to other states.

The New Jersey Library Association has been able to raise $50,000 as a partner with Barnes and Noble to help fund the 2006 summer reading programs for all libraries.

**Silent Auctions and Raffles**

Baskets are often donated by libraries and librarians from around the state. The Iowa Library Association holds a raffle for one or two big items that have been donated (examples include quilts, iPods, and airline tickets to Las Vegas). They also have a silent auction of approximately two hundred donated items, which raised $9,283.50 last year. Most of these items are donated by members and vendors at the conference. Items include wine baskets, chocolate baskets, Iowa-themed gifts, book baskets, artwork, and jewelry.

**Publications**

ILA produces such publications as *Illinois Library Laws*. They anticipate an income of $40,000 in 2006 from publications, with a tentative profit of $22,500.

**Special Events**

The Montana Library Association has a standard fund-raising event named “The Sheila Cates Event.” Held at conferences, this event, in honor of an inspirational Montana librarian, differs from year to year depending on the imaginations of the committee members. The purpose is to raise money for librarian scholarships. Milla L. Cummins, 2006 Montana Library Association president, attests that Cates events tend toward zany entertainment, such as Sumo wrestling contests using an inflatable ring and suits. The 2006 Cates event is Trivia Mania. Librarians form teams to compete, and they are encouraged to come in costumes representing different decades.3

In 2005, the Iowa Library Association celebrated its 115th anniversary. In honor of the event, pledges of $115 were requested. Susan Knipple of the Iowa Library Association Foundation reports that they had seventy-eight pledges that grossed $9,055.

**State License Plates**

NCLA has arranged for specialized license plates with a library symbol and “North Carolina libraries.” Twenty dollars of the plate fee goes
to NCLA to support North Carolina library services and programs.

Foundations
Wisconsin Library Association (WLA) has a foundation that, acting as the association’s charitable arm, has an annual giving program. There is a contribution option on the association’s membership form as well as specific, targeted mailings to membership, sent periodically. This year, a planned giving appeal program is underway, which they hope to build over the next five to ten years.

Lisa K. Strand, WLA executive director, states that they also raise funds to support a Campaign for Wisconsin Libraries. This expansion of their annual giving program will include organizations as well as individuals. In the future they will approach corporations as well. The foundation also holds auctions and a special event fund-raiser at WLA’s annual conference. In 2005, the foundation worked with members in the host city to produce an Oktoberfest Beer Tasting event with hors d’oeuvres and polka music.

Endowment Fund
ILA established an endowment fund. According to Dianne Harmon, ILA president, funds are raised primarily through “a combination of raffles, begging, and pleading.” ILA offers presentations at their conference and makes it easy for people to donate on the spot. Last year they collected contributions by using containers labeled “$5 for the future.” The endowment fund is aimed at long-term financial stability of the organization. The principal is not touched, and the interest is used to accomplish annual goals.

As you can tell, there are many options available for fund-raising for your library association. Just make sure that all endeavors really fit the mission of your organization, that you have enough staff to execute the project, and that you bring in enough money to be worth your time and effort. Have fun fund-raising!

References
2. Ibid.

Jan Sanders Elected PLA Vice-President
Jan Sanders, director of Information Services at the Pasadena (Calif.) Public Library, has been elected vice-president/president-elect of the Public Library Association (PLA). Sanders will become PLA president-elect in July 2006 and will assume the PLA presidency in July 2007.

Sanders has been involved with libraries for more than thirty years, serving as children’s librarian, bookmobile librarian, branch manager, community college librarian, and library construction supervisor before becoming a director in 1990. Her career has led her to Missouri, Tennessee, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Washington, and now California.

An active member of ALA for more than twenty years, she has served on various ALA, PLA, and Library Administration and Management Association (LAMA) Committees. She is currently an ALA Councilor at Large and a member of the PLA Board of Directors. Sanders is also an active member of many community organizations, including the Pasadena Chamber of Commerce, the Pasadena Arts Council, and Rotary International.

Much of Sanders’ work on behalf of ALA has focused on legislative and advocacy issues. She led a successful campaign to build a library and create a foundation for the Bartlesville (Okla.) City Library. As chair of the ALA Committee on Legislation, she led a five-hundred-member delegation to National Legislative Day in Washington, D.C.

“I am deeply honored and thrilled to be named PLA’s next president-elect,” said Sanders. “Our organization has always set the standard for excellence in America’s public libraries, and we must continue in that tradition. We have much to do to promote advocacy, to encourage further professional development, and to ensure that we are creating trends, not just following them.”

Sanders earned her master’s degree in library science from Indiana University and a bachelor’s degree in English education from Northwest Missouri State University.

For more information, call the PLA office, 1-800-545-2433, ext. 5PLA, or visit PLA’s Web site at www.pla.org.
It is nearly impossible for a patron to shock me. I’ve been asked reference questions on intensely personal subjects, quizzed as to my political stance on library issues, and was once very calmly informed that a child was creating a “toilet-paper sculpture” in the restroom. Working with young adults requires an even higher tolerance for shocks to the system. But it took me a bit off my feet when a teenage girl who came to many of my programs and often hung around the reference desk chatting told me she had a girlfriend. I nodded politely and then scurried off into the stacks muttering something about shelving.

I suppose I would do myself some good with a bit of preface and full disclosure. First, I’ve been involved in gay rights since I was a teenager. I’ve had my car and dorm room vandalized for displaying a gay-rights poster, and a great many of my friends are gay, lesbian, or bisexual. As far as I’m concerned, homosexuality isn’t a moral argument or a religious discussion; it’s simply a clinical term for the sexual identity of some human beings. For me, the only question is: when sending out formal dinner invitations should I address it as “Mr. and Mrs.” or “Mr. and Mr.”? Simply adding “and guest” after a friend’s name has solved even that little worry.

Now that I’ve put my cards on the table, constant reader, it is likely that you are somewhat puzzled. Why would this secular-humanist militant librarian be shocked by a teen patron—a friend of the library and frequent visitor—mentioning her sexual preference? The answer is that I was afraid to be identified as an influence in her sexual identity. I was worried that if I expressed anything other than the blandest assent I could be seen as somehow condoning or even encouraging this young person as to her sexual preference.
Again, with some preface, I am a firm believer in the genetic argument for homosexuality. Any cursory study of nature will reveal that homosexuality is as natural a part of biology as winged flight or gills. I don't believe that having a strong maternal or weak paternal figure in one's life will drive someone into the arms of a same-sex partner anymore than will one's choice of breakfast cereal. But my beliefs, well-meaning and vetted as they are, are not the opinion of everyone.

The first time, as a librarian, that I heard a child use the word “faggot,” I laid into him and wrote him up. I was employed as a school librarian at the time and enjoyed some small pleasure in bawling out the kid on his bigoted comment. When I've heard homophobia in public library work, I've been a tad slyer. When an adult patron was decrying the “gay agenda,” I asked what she meant. She informed me that it was the “gay movement’s goal to normalize homosexuality in America.” She seemed especially appalled by the idea of gays in the military. I asked, building off her interest in the military, if she was aware of the Scarlet Band. She was not. I informed her that the Scarlet Band was made up of the most fearsome warriors in ancient times; they never left a man on the battlefield and were loyal beyond a fault. I referred her to an excellent book on ancient history to learn more. I did neglect to tell her that the Scarlet Band was made up entirely of men and their lovers.

Dropping an intellectual grenade into a staid perception is part of the joy of librarianship. But when do you go from keeper of the information and guardian of the light to just another mouthpiece with an agenda, gay or otherwise?

The dreadful hypothetical that plays in my mind runs something like this:

Child: Mom, Dad, I’m gay.
Parents: Oh. My. Have you told anyone else?
Child: Well, Mr. Farrelly—you know, the librarian—and I have talked about it before.
Parent (dialing phone): Spell his name . . . slowly. . . .

Every gay, lesbian, or transgender person I’ve known has cited at least one example of a tolerant person in their lives who helped them find the courage to accept themselves and come out to family and friends. Can young adult librarians fulfill that role and still keep their jobs? A single sensational rumor (“Did you hear that the local librarian is encouraging kids to be gay?”) can ruin a career, not to mention its impact on the kids involved, who could begin to see their developing sexual identity as some kind of danger to those they confide in.

If the above sounds laced with an unhealthy degree of fear, you’re spot on. In 2004, the gay marriage issue drove a wedge in elections throughout the United States. Nearly a dozen states voted bans on same-sex unions into law. The climate for gay rights isn’t exactly peaches and ice cream out there. Couple this with the already-present stereotype of librarians as ivory-tower, nogoodnik, liberal firebrands, and you can see where one might seek caution.

But caution is not cowardice. There are a great number of ways to show your support for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender youth without placing yourself too deeply in their personal lives. Add *Luna* and the Geography Club series to your YA (young adult) reading circle. Reach out to local gay-rights groups to create and cosponsor programming for YAs. Here’s a bold step: take *Heather Has Two Mommies*, *Daddy’s Roommate*, and any other children’s books with gay themes out of the moldering Parenting section (or the death row of Special Collections), and put them in the general collection.

The argument that is often voiced by anti-homosexual protestors is that if we even broach the subject of homosexuality children will be confused. This is actually true. A child encountering the new information that there are men and women who are involved with persons of the same gender may indeed cause them to ask questions. Now wouldn't it be wonderful if there were a place where they could learn about things on their own or with expert guidance? Perhaps somewhere with a great many books and electronic resources, some sort of information depository. But whatever would we call it?
I looked at the pile of battered, beat-up, old wooden frames. Several were gouged and splintered, and in some the glass was cracked. “Leo, these old frames have seen better days,” I told Leo Darmofal, Marine Corps veteran and historian for the Perrysburg American Legion Post 28. “They look like scrap wood, ready for the Goodwill bin. I think we should mount the photos in new frames.”

“No, we’re not doing that. At the meeting the men decided to keep the old frames,” Darmofal said adamantly. “They’ve been hanging up there all those years and we don’t want them changed.”

With that unambiguous end to the conversation, I surveyed the old casings to see how they best could be salvaged in reorganizing Post 28’s extensive photographic collection.

A Source of Local History
American Legion posts are an often-overlooked potential source of local history materials. Established in 1919, the American Legion currently has sixteen thousand local chapters, or posts. It has been a presence in cities and towns since the early 1920s, when posts began to sprout up throughout the country. There is a good chance that at least one post can be found within your public library’s jurisdiction.

The American Legion was originally established to act as an advocate for veterans, promote patriotism, and acknowledge the responsibilities of citizenship. It also has a history of community involvement and serves a social function within its communities. The American Legion post may have been the first—sometimes the only—community center in many small towns and villages. The tradition of community service, formal record keeping, local membership, and indigenous longevity all brand the American Legion a likely source of local history.

Recently, our town’s local post generously allowed the Way Public Library (WPL) in Perrysburg, Ohio, to borrow and copy their extensive photographic collection, which dates back to World War I. With the proper approach, local post archives also could be made available through your public library.
Sharing Common Ground
An analysis of public libraries and posts supports the idea of mission similarity. Both institutions serve as community centers, foster learning, and sponsor and perform a variety of roles in local activities. Through their separate efforts, they work to enrich their communities in their own unique ways. As partners, however, local posts and public libraries can support and promote one another’s endeavors and, on special occasions, work together on programs or projects.

An example of a basic cooperative effort is the sharing of post records. The American Legion Officer’s Guide states that copies of post minutes and news should be deposited in the local library. This ensures that valuable records are not lost through fire or other calamity, as well as provides public access to information about the American Legion.

Mutual advocacy between the public library and the local post can create new opportunities for accomplishing the missions of each organization. Mutual advocacy, however, implies relationship. That was the key that made the loan of this collection to the library possible. Here is how it happened.

Partnering: The Public Library and the American Legion
In my role as local history librarian, I became acquainted with Darmofal, the historian for Perrysburg Post 28. He occasionally volunteered for special projects at our library, and our shared affinity for history, plus the similar roles we performed within our respective organizations, created a natural kinship. These shared philosophies led us to discussions of ways in which the library and Post 28 might work together. During the next three years, WPL and Post 28 embarked on a series of collaborative programs held at the library:

- In 2002, on the fifty-seventh anniversary of the Battle of Iwo Jima, two Marine Corps veterans and Legionnaires shared first-person accounts of their experiences in this historic turning point of WWII.
- WPL and Post 28 cosponsored a Veterans Recognition Day in 2003. Local Legionnaires from each branch of the service were selected to speak about their experiences in the armed forces.
- In 2004, WPL and Post 28 worked together on a program to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of D-Day, the Allied invasion of Normandy. Local veterans of the invasion were invited to participate. As a result, the History Channel, which had sponsored a contest for public libraries creating events paying tribute to the famous invasion, awarded WPL $1,000. The library split the winnings with Post 28. The national recognition received for the program was a great source of pride in the community.
- In August 2005, Post 28 and WPL conducted a program to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of V-J Day, the United States’ victory over Japan. In addition to the public program, WWII veterans—and those who were civilians during that time—participated in videotaping oral histories recalling where they were and how they felt on hearing the news that Japan had surrendered.

Each of these programs drew large audiences from all age groups, both locally and beyond the traditional borders of the library and Post 28. The accompanying media attention increased the visibility of both organizations and generated communitywide goodwill. WPL also collaborates with Post 28 on other projects:

- Legionnaires regularly give flag-etiquette demonstrations to local scouting groups at the library.
- A special program to commemorate the September 11, 2001, attacks was held at WPL with Post 28 color guard participating in the ceremony.
- Each year, WPL acts as a community clearinghouse for collection of torn, soiled, or otherwise unusable American flags. The flags are later delivered to Post 28 for their annual flag-disposal ceremony each June.
- WPL provides audiovisual equipment support for the annual Veterans Day dinner and other special events at Post 28.

These programs and projects have provided special learning experiences for the community. Each programming event was videotaped, and copies were placed in Post 28’s archives as well as in WPL’s collection. The community could view local history as a component of world history and gain new perspective on its military veterans. Finally, the stream of cooperation and mutual support also led to a close and supportive relationship between WPL and Post 28.

Perrysburg Veterans Photographic Collection Project
On various visits, I had begun to notice the numerous photographs lining the walls of Post 28’s private office and conference rooms. Elsewhere, photo-filled frames
A trove of photos was discovered behind a temporary wall. Together, the collection created a chronology of Post 28’s history and, to a lesser extent, revisited various chapters of our city’s history in pictures.

There were photographs of Memorial Day, Fourth of July, and Veterans Day parades. Taken over a period of years, many of the photos of our town’s main business district, with its bygone buildings and businesses, furnished glimpses of the past. Photos of baseball teams and of student essay and oratorical contest winners that Post 28 had sponsored over the years were found. Various post meetings were visually documented, depicting members from different eras in Post 28’s history. Many of these photos contained images of local politicians, most now passed from the scene.

**Military Portrait Collection**

The lion’s share of the collection consisted of photographs of local veterans in military uniforms, representing twentieth-century conflicts, with the emphasis on WWI and II.

A one-of-a-kind item was a twenty-by-forty-eight-inch framed photograph of Perrysburg-area WWI veterans. The photo showed one hundred soldiers, each one identified by name. However, the crown jewels of the collection were the WWII military portraits. There were nearly 180 three-by-five-inch images of local WWII veterans in military uniform. Later research established that Howard Sweet, one of the past post commanders, originally curated the photographs during WWII. He also had had the foresight to write the names on nearly all of the photographs, although the script on many had faded over time. He would have made a good librarian.

Through the years, Post 28 had accumulated a sizeable archive. I don’t think they realized the value of the collection to the community in local history terms. Observation indicated that this collection was due for professional preservation. It was not only important to Post 28, but to the community as well, that this collection not be lost.

Darmofal introduced the idea to Legionnaires at a regular meeting. Due to the relationship WPL and Post 28 had developed over the past few years, the group unanimously agreed to the project. The collection was moved to the library.

The WWII photographs, the heart of the collection, were most in need of rescue. The wooden frames were of various sizes, colors, and conditions, and the images they held were discolored and slowly fading. Sixty years ago, the photos had been glued to ordinary cardboard inside the frames. Darmofal and I began the painstaking task of separating the photos from the cardboard. A typed label with name and military branch was then affixed to the front of each photograph.

**Copy Process**

The military portraits were digitally scanned and stored on WPL’s file server, readying them for the day they would be accessible through the library’s online catalog. Each photograph was also hard-copied several times: once for a second framed set for the library, and again for incorporation into a booklet, allowing easy browsing of the photos. One copy of the booklet would be placed in Post 28’s archives, and a second copy in WPL’s local history collection.

Most of the military photographs were in black and white. Some had been sepia-toned, and a few were in color. Using the color option on WPL’s copy machine created the best results. It reproduced black and white more clearly, and captured the browns in sepia tone. The finished copies retained the vintage look of the photographs, and were barely distinguishable from the originals.

**An Epiphany Moment**

Soon after the WWII military portrait copy-and-preservation project began, the decision was made to display the photographs at WPL before reframing them. These photographs had never been seen outside of Post 28. This was an opportunity to share them with the community.
In a moment of inspiration, the idea came up of expanding the collection. There were already 180 photos; why not see if more could be obtained? The parameters were simple. Any military service veteran who lived or currently lives in Perrysburg or Perrysburg Township was eligible. Any military-dress photo of the subject was acceptable.

The project was announced to the community through the Perrysburg Messenger-Journal; the county newspaper, the Sentinel Tribune; and Post 28’s newsletter. In the same release, the library announced that the existing photographs as well as those that had been newly collected would be on display at WPL before they were reframed and returned to Post 28. As an added inducement, the library announced it would make complimentary copies of photographs for family members.

**The Display Stage**

Using a table-style glass display case that was placed in the main aisle of WPL, approximately thirty photographs could be on view at a time. The group was rotated alphabetically every few weeks. The combined print publicity and library display resulted in an overwhelming response, and new photographs began streaming in from former area veterans or their surviving family members. Instructions were provided for a mail-in process, and word spread so widely that WPL received photos from all over the United States.

In the meantime, the WWI soldier collage was sent to a commercial reprographics company. It was copied in its entirety and put out for public view as well.

As a result, the military display began to generate communitywide attention and considerable traffic to WPL. These photographs, which had languished untouched and unavailable for sixty years at Post 28, had never before been publicly exhibited. Local residents with ancestors in WWI and II often found themselves intently eyeing family photographs that they never knew existed. It brought tears to some and delight to others. Those researching genealogies were especially pleased.

The project began in December 2004. Photographs were collected and displayed until August 2005. The long-range plan was to have the photographs framed by early August so that the photo collection could be unveiled in time to coincide with a library and legion program commemorating the sixtieth anniversary of V-J Day.

**The Preservation Process**

At the conclusion of the display phase of the project, the photographs entered the preservation stage. Darmofal and I consulted with Eric Honeffer, document conservator of Bowling Green State University Archival Collections. Honeffer generously shared his professional expertise and recommended the best methods to preserve the photographs. The following specifications were determined:

- photos would be mounted on black, chemically stable, conservation mat board;
- photo corner clips would attach the photo to the mat board;
- frames would be low-weight aluminum, in a dark brown resembling natural wood;
- ultraviolet-filtered glass to prevent sunlight damage would be used; and
- frames would be configured to prevent photos from touching glass.

The photographs were mounted alphabetically and divided by conflict. Each photograph-mounted sheet, containing about twenty-five images, was professionally framed at a local craft shop. The end result was a dozen two-by-three-foot frames filled with photographs of area service veterans from WWI to Iraq.

The total cost for the project was approximately $1,100, which was split between the Perrysburg Legion Post 28 and the Perrysburg Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 6170. WPL paid a like amount to copy and frame its own set for the local history collection. As had been hoped, the gallery of photographs made its debut on August 11, 2005, at a program commemorating the
sixtieth anniversary of V-J Day cosponsored by the library and legion.

The project began with 180 photographs. At present, the total is nearly four hundred, and the collecting continues. As long as Perrysburg residents continue to serve their country, the project is never finished. Photographs will be placed in overflow frames as the collection expands.

What Has the Alliance Accomplished?
What has this project achieved for WPL? The high point of any local history collection is its photographs, and real treasures were added to the library’s collection. The project has also advanced WPL’s reputation as having archival professionals who are well-versed in the knowledge of local history materials as well as being stewards of a rich local history repository. Veterans and veteran’s family members come forward frequently (many from outside WPL’s prescribed boundaries) with their scrapbooks and photo albums, wanting to tell their stories. Others bring military memorabilia to donate. Uniforms, photographs, film, combat ribbons and medals, and other military-related items have been collected. In all, the project has built emotional capital and good will in the community.

What has the project achieved for Perrysburg American Legion Post 28? Through the publicity associated with the project, the community has gained insight into Post 28’s civic work and service, and (hopefully) erased the misconception that the American Legion is only about veterans’ issues. In addition, the post has come forth as an active, vibrant organization where purposeful objectives for the common good are accomplished. New Legionnaires have been attracted to the post, and the interest of inactive Legionnaires has been renewed. It has also become renowned as having one of the most prominent historical collections of any post in the area.

Lest we forget, the project has honored our local service veterans.

Darmofal summed up the efforts from his point of view as a Legionnaire and the historian for Post 28:

These veterans have acted as defenders of our freedom as well as being family, neighbors, and friends to many in our community. This project stands as a permanent visual reminder of their ongoing commitment and our grateful acknowledgement of their service.

A Common Thread
Investigate the American Legion post in your town for local history. Discover how rewarding a library-Legion affiliation can be. By and large, Legionnaires are a modest group, not absorbed with self-promotion. It may take some initiative to build a bridge to them and develop a relationship.

Public libraries and American Legion posts share common goals in their quest to enhance public quality of life. Working together has the potential to increase value and status in the community and to imbue the service each contributes with greater distinction. Remember the mismatched, battered, garage-sale-quality frames with the cracked glass that faithfully held those wonderful WWII portraits for so many years? Those same frames Post 28 initially wanted to keep? Having fought the good fight for sixty years, they have now been retired from duty.

Resources

A PARTNERSHIP Plan
THAT CAN WORK FOR ANY LIBRARY, ANY COMMUNITY

PEGGY L. BARRY is Community Services Manager at Naperville (Ill.) Public Library; pbarry@lib.naperville.il.us.

Peggy has just finished reading two thought-provoking books: My Sister’s Keeper by Jodi Picoult and Ping, A Frog In Search of a Pond by Stuart Avery Gold.

Tak ing advantage of September as National Library Card Sign-Up Month, PLA’s Smartest Card campaign, and their own goals and policies, the Naperville (Ill.) Public Library (NPL) initiated a simple, easy, win-win community partnership program. “Show Us Your Library Card, Naperville!” is a new program NPL developed to increase the library’s community partnerships and presence. The premise is to encourage local merchants and businesses to partner with the library by giving discounts to shoppers or clients for merely showing their library cards.

Planning Process
Development of the campaign began in our Community Services Department, which is composed of personnel conducting public relations, programming, fund-raising, community outreach, and graphics functions. The formal plan they created was then shared with NPL’s core executive team for review. The team assessed the plan for:

■ service and benefit to NPL cardholders;
■ timing and cost;
■ potential to increase or improve relationships with local businesses and neighbors;
■ positive media coverage; and
■ exposure within the community.

Everyone concerned was especially excited that this type of campaign would provide a means for smaller, independent businesses to lend support to the library—those who did not have the capability of participating in the much larger summer reading program. The consensus was to move forward with the idea, but on a limited scale the first year. If it proved successful it could be expanded in subsequent years.
Implementation

Because only the downtown businesses would be targeted this inaugural year, the business membership organization, Downtown Naperville Alliance (DNA), was approached for use of its mailing list. A cover letter (see appendix A) explaining the program was sent to the entire list, along with a postcard that they could return if they were interested in participating (see page 50). Recognizing that many of Naperville’s downtown businesses were inundated with plans for a special event coinciding with a Harry Potter book release, the response deadline was extended by two weeks. Thirteen businesses had signed on by the original deadline.

Personal calls to established library partners resulted in the addition of seven more businesses to the campaign. By the final deadline, twenty-two businesses were on board. A simple partnership agreement (see appendix B) listing the rights, benefits, and obligations of both parties was executed with each business. Logos and Web-site addresses were secured from each of the partners for use in the promotional phase.

Promotional Support

A variety of full-color, high-quality print pieces were designed and produced for the campaign. The vibrant, primary-color palette for all of these came out of PLA’s Smartest Card graphic. The brochure was a four-color tri-fold on glossy paper. It listed participating merchants, business locations, and what discount or deal each would be offering to library patrons throughout the month. The brochures were made available in all three library buildings and at each participating business. Large, color twenty-by-twenty-four-inch posters duplicated the brochure design and were displayed in the lobby of each library building. Two smaller, letter-sized custom posters were reproduced for each partner to place in a window or on the counter. These were personalized to highlight the specific offer available from that particular business. Posters and brochures were generally delivered to participants, although a few who requested personal visits were happily accommodated. In addition to print pieces, the program was promoted in the library’s fall program guide, the local daily newspapers, and announced at DNA meetings.

A plastic card-sleeve imprinted with the Smartest Card logo, seen at an ALA preconference session in June 2005, was the inspiration for the “Show Us Your Library Card, Naperville!” idea. Naperville already had a very popular imprinted card case in place for distribution through the library circulation desks. A decision was made to create a comparable, custom-imprinted plastic sleeve. It would house a business card–sized advertisement for distribution at Naperville’s annual Last Fling parade on Labor Day. The very popular library book cart drill team performs in the parade each year, accompanied by staff taking advantage of the captive fifteen thousand viewers to conduct targeted marketing. In 2005, the new “Show Us Your Library Card, Naperville!” campaign was highlighted. Keeping with the color palette and design established for the campaign, a three-and-a-half-by-two-inch, four-color imprinted card was inserted into the complimentary blue plastic sleeves imprinted with the library’s logo and tag line. Volunteers generously donated the hours necessary to insert each card into a sleeve to prepare them for distribution along the parade route. Following the parade, the remaining pieces were distributed at public-service desks and outside presentations throughout the month of September.

How It Worked

Those who partnered with the library for this inaugural campaign were quite a varied group. Businesses...
included a framing shop, pharmacies, restaurants, a clothing retailer, herbal remedies and acupuncturist, bookshops, a jeweler, candy shops, a home décor store, gift shops, fitness training, a cell phone vendor, and account services. The broad scope of participating businesses confirmed the premise that this campaign could accommodate any type of business, service to retail, large or small. The owners were at liberty to select what offer or discount worked best for their individual businesses. The offers were as diverse as the participants. Examples included 10 percent off an acupuncture treatment; 20 percent off a book purchase or jewelry item; free drink with purchase; 10 percent off every purchase; $5 off phone accessories or free car charger; 10 percent off drapery valances; free mat with framing; or 10 percent off other products. It was merely what worked best for each individual vendor. It was simple for the library patrons to take advantage of these offers. All they had to do was show their NPL card at the time of their purchase, and the discount or free reward was given.

Response
Comments from both merchants and patrons throughout the month showed that the campaign was working well for all concerned. At the conclusion of the program, a letter of appreciation with a survey (see appendix C) was sent to each of the campaign partners. Nine of the twenty-one businesses responded. All the respondents said they would participate again, and that the month of September worked well for them. One even suggested that the campaign be conducted during National Library Week in April in addition to the month of September. All were pleased with the print publications and promotional efforts. It was reported that the estimated number of times customers took advantage of the promotion ranged from none to more than one hundred. Sample comments from campaign partners included:

■ “September is a slow month for us, so this helped bring in more business than usual.”
■ “This was a great promotion. We really enjoyed it and hope that every year it becomes more popular.”
■ “We had no one show their card. But, it’s new. People will figure it out!”
■ “I think a month is the ideal time frame.”
■ “We definitely plan on being included in the program next year.”

What Was Learned
Based on staff observations, patrons comments, and participant feedback, the following recommendations are under consideration for 2006 and subsequent years:
Expand the campaign, extending the invitation to approximately 1,500 businesses citywide. This is something Naperville is ready for, but the idea of a limited, targeted area worked well here and is a viable option for anyone.

Allow at least four weeks for the businesses to respond to initial solicitation of interest. For some it may be a busy season, or they may need to check with a corporate office, so give sufficient time for them to respond.

Revise the letter of invitation to be more direct and concise. Business owners and managers have many demands on their time, so try to take up as little of it as possible.

Be prepared to accommodate responses by postcard, fax, e-mail, or phone. Keep in mind that not everyone uses the same primary means of communication.

Be prepared to suggest discount ideas for the variety of businesses that may participate. As responses came in, so did requests for recommendations.

Personally deliver fliers and posters to forge a bond with each vendor as well as to get signatures on the partnership agreement. While personal delivery is more staff intensive, the interaction with the businesses and establishment of a personal relationship will foster future support.

Consider a specialized campaign print piece available for insertion into all materials checked out during the program. Whether it is a bookmark or a brochure, this is certainly not a marketing opportunity to miss.

Increase promotional efforts with the following additions:

- Distribute the print pieces for “Show Us Your Library Card, Naperville!” at all community-presence visits during August and September, including, but not necessarily limited to, high-school orientations, speaking engagements, community special events, and parades.
- Pursue contact with local service clubs and organizations utilizing partners in this campaign who also are club members in order to make a presentation for additional partnerships, distribute print publications, and place table toppers at their regular meetings.
- Make an announcement and have brochures available at all library programs.
- Insert the brochure into the Chamber of Commerce’s monthly information packet for September that goes directly to more than four thousand individual members and corporate representatives in the Naperville area.
A PARTNERSHIP PLAN THAT CAN WORK FOR ANY LIBRARY, ANY COMMUNITY

Feature

■ Secure feature story space in the Naperville Area Chamber of Commerce’s weekly e-newsletter, quarterly print publication, and on their Web site throughout September.
■ Negotiate with local print and electronic media to trade out advertising for inclusion in the campaign.
■ Cross-promote this campaign with other library promotions throughout the month by imprinting the campaign image on envelopes and other correspondence sent in September.
■ Secure mailing lists from both DNA and the Naperville Area Chamber of Commerce in February in order to begin review, assessment, and careful culling of the lists for duplication and discrepancies beginning in March.
■ Encourage library staff to mention the campaign and funnel contact information of potential participants throughout the year by sending out a quarterly e-mail reminder.

■ Prepare a detailed calendar, allotting sufficient time for both the library and businesses to plan. This should include a schedule for staff visits to partnership sites.

Conclusion
In a city of tremendous library use and support where community involvement is especially valued, NPL developed a successful partnership program that proved to be of mutual benefit to card-carrying patrons as well as to the downtown business community. Those here at NPL recognize and appreciate the support received from the residents, businesses, and community at large.

Keep in mind that this partnership program’s basic structure should be adaptable to larger and smaller libraries and their communities. I encourage you to give it a try!

Appendix A. Program Cover Letter

May 24, 2005

Dear Downtown Business Owner/Manager,

The Naperville Public Library currently has more than 83,000 registered cardholders, but with your help, we think we can do even better. The level of business and personal involvement in Naperville is high and has resulted in many of you already having partnered with the library at some time in the past. Right now, we are working on a fall promotion and partnership designed to enhance your business and, at the same time, promote library-card registration.

Show Us Your Library Card, Naperville!

As designed, this partnership opportunity is both simple and flexible, while at the same time presenting an opportunity for increased patronage at both your business and the library.

How does it work?

In September, National Library Card Sign-Up Month, your business may choose to offer discounts or giveaways each time a customer presents their Naperville Public Library card. The library will provide you with one or more colorful posters to advertise the details of your participation. For instance, if you own a restaurant, you may want to choose to offer a free drink with a sandwich or 10 percent off a dinner entrée. Maybe the “buy one get one free” concept would work best at your establishment. It’s entirely up to you what offer you make to library-card patrons who visit your business.

In addition to the posters mentioned above, promotional efforts encouraging customers to visit participating businesses will include fliers at those businesses as well as our three facilities, a descriptive brochure listing every participant’s offer, coverage in more than eight thousand library fall program guides, press releases, prominence on our Web site, and a feature story in our e-newsletter, sent to nearly 34,000 subscribers. We will be glad to lend design support to any additional advertising you may choose specific to your business’ participation. In addition to exposing the community to the mutual support between the library and Naperville’s business community, our hope is that people wishing to receive discounts and rewards will visit the library to obtain or renew their card.

Sincerely,

Peggy L. Barry
Community Services Manager

Appendix A. Program Cover Letter

May 24, 2005

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Sincerely,

Peggy L. Barry
Community Services Manager
Appendix B. Naperville Public Library (Partnership/Sponsorship) Agreement

This (Partnership/Sponsorship) Agreement is entered into by and between the undersigned (“Partner”/“Sponsor”) and the Naperville Public Library (“Library”).

The undersigned (Partner/Sponsor) is committing support to the Library in the following total amount/value:

$ ______________________________  Cash/Check    In Kind

for

___ Summer Reading Program   ___ Winter Reading Program   ___ Teen Read Week
___ Show Us Your Card Campaign ___ Fall Program Session   ___ Winter/Spring Program Session

Terms:  Duration:

_____________________________________________   ____________________________________________

(Partner/Sponsor) obligations:  Library obligations:

_____________________________________________   ____________________________________________

(Partner/Sponsor) rights and benefits:  Library rights and benefits:

_____________________________________________   ____________________________________________

(Partner/Sponsor) Name:  __________________________________________

Contact Name: _______________________________  Title: _______________________________________

Address: __________________________________________ City: ____________________ State: ______ Zip: ______

Phone: __________________________ Fax: ___________________________ E-mail ___________________________

This agreement will be governed and construed in accordance with the laws of Illinois. This agreement constitutes the entire agreement between the parties and may not be modified, amended, or changed except by a writing signed by all parties to this agreement. This agreement will be binding upon and inure to the parties hereto and their respective successors and assigns, provided that neither party hereto will have the right to assign this agreement or assign any duty, service, or responsibility hereunder without the prior written consent of the other party. Each party in this agreement warrants and represents that the individual signing this agreement has the authority to bind his or her respective company or person.

(Partner/Sponsor) Signature:  Date:

_____________________________________________   ____________________________________________

Library Signature:  Date:

_____________________________________________   ____________________________________________

Title:  __________________________________________
Appendix C. Program Survey
Show Us Your Library Card, Naperville!

Naperville Public Library
September 2005

1. The Naperville Public Library hopes to make this an annual promotion. Would you be willing to participate again?
   Yes _____ No _____ If “no”, why not? _____________________________________________________________

2. Because it is National Library Card Sign-Up Month, September works for us. Does it work for you?
   Yes _____ No _____ If “no”, why not? _____________________________________________________________

3. Is one month a good length of time to run this program?
   Yes _____ No _____ If “no”, why not? _____________________________________________________________

   Would a single week such as April’s National Library Week work better?
   Yes _____ No _____ If “no”, why not? _____________________________________________________________

4. Were you satisfied with the print publications (flyers, brochure, posters) and promotions (Web site, newspaper articles) provided by the Library?
   Yes _____ No _____ If “no”, why not? _____________________________________________________________

5. How many times do you estimate customers took advantage of the Show Us Your Library Card, Naperville! promotion during the month? __________

   Additional comments: __________________________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________________________________________

Thank you for taking this survey and for partnering with the Naperville Public Library to benefit your customers and our patrons.
Geared toward women, the romance novel is a form of literature that presents a love story with a central female character and a focus on that character’s emotional state. Feminist scholarship and library-related literature from the 1980s and 1990s suggests a bias against romance novels on the part of librarians. The literature suggests that the reasons for these attitudes include the marketing of romance novels as commodities rather than literature, the presence of sexuality in the novels, and concern on the part of feminists that romance novels send the message that the key to a woman’s happiness is found in being dominated by a man.

To counter this negative perception, some library and information science (LIS) authors and practitioners have worked to foster positive views of the genre. Many female, and some male, librarians admit to reading romance novels, while others proudly admit to writing them. Scholars such as Mary K. Chelton and sociologist Janice Radway articulate the appeal of romance fiction to its readers, and others view romance as a staple of genre literature no different than mysteries or science fiction. While romance novels and their readers have been addressed in the research literature, the attitudes of working public library staff toward romance fiction and its readers have not been given similar attention.

This paper presents the results of a research study on library staff attitudes toward romance fiction and its readers. Participating in the survey were Missouri library directors, a body composed of both MLS-degreed librarians and individuals who perform all the functions of a librarian though they do not hold the accredited degree, as is particularly common in rural areas of the state. The study was exploratory in nature, because the bulk of library literature on romance is comprised of anecdotes and assumptions; there is very little research on the actual attitudes and practices of library staff toward romance. Based on answers to the survey questions and written respondent comments, answers to the following questions were explored:
1. Are romance novels a significant element of the collection, as indicated by collection development funding and cataloging practices?
2. How do public librarians and library staff perceive romance readers?
3. Do public librarians and library staff feel that romance reading is detrimental to women?

Background
A review of academic and library literature regarding romance novels reveals two camps: opposition and support. Academics and librarians stand on both sides of this debate, but time seems to have softened opposition to romance. Academic articles from the 1960s through the 1980s were generally scornful, focusing on the negative elements of romance, and making a clear distinction between romance and "high" culture. Authors provided multiple reasons why the romance novel was inappropriate or inadequate reading material, the majority feeling that romance novels were less worthy of the reader's time than other works of fiction. In addition, romance was often deemed pornographic for its inclusion of sex between hero and heroine, and for its focus on the heroine's sexual satisfaction. Feminist critics expressed other concerns. They maintained that romance novels "perpetuated patriarchal structures" that were ultimately detrimental to women's happiness. The novels portrayed women being economically and socially rewarded for their appearance and passivity, and indoctrinated women to believe that their lives revolved around men. According to the critics, female readers of romance novels were not able to organize and protest the social conditions that encouraged their use of romance as escape or pain killer. Rather, women became reconciled to insensitive or abusive male behavior through the narrative structures of romance.

Inspired by Radway's groundbreaking work in the late 1970s, recent work on romance has taken a different perspective. Romance has been reestablished as popular literature, and female readers are viewed as deriving particular satisfaction from the novel's portrayal, or remaking, of the world. A point noted by Radway and acknowledged by her successors is that reading romance provides an escape from the strains of family life, a means of recovering and recharging. Romance novels portray a world in which feminine values, such as community-building and expression of emotion, are appreciated, where heroes are able to use emotional language, and where heroes nurture the heroine. In doing this, the romance novel itself becomes a source of affection and nurturance for those women who cannot find it elsewhere. It also allows women to explore their sexuality and demand orgasmic parity with men in their sexual relationships.

Romance novels themselves have undergone significant change throughout the 1990s and on into the new century. The incorporation of feminist mindsets, women working outside the home, and women making substantial achievements has been noted in some analyses. Romance novels are lauded for portraying strong female characters who are willing to pursue their goals. They show women who engage in meaningful, personalized work. Romance, in fact, acts as a "site of resistance," where women challenge both patriarchal oppression and academic feminism.

The first romance-related articles published in library and information science (LIS) literature in the 1980s substantially align with the articles in academic literature. Librarians deplored romance fiction, but tolerated its inclusion in the collection. In 1980, Rudolph Bold recommended that libraries should stock romance novels, even while denigrating the genre's literary quality. According to Bold, librarians ought to realize that their own superior literary standards might be "unattainable" for some members of the community. Roger Sutton's 1985 article "Librarians and the Paperback Romance: Try to Do the Right Thing" refers to teen paperback romances specifically as having the "trappings of mush"—"hyperbole . . . throbbing [and] heat." Sutton described the genre in terms of poor writing, minimal characterization, and bare-bones plots. His language suggested that librarians are forced to accept these kinds of books only because of reader demand. The days of "uplifting" collections, he wrote, are gone. As late as 1995, Shelley Mosley, John Charles, and Julie Havir suggested that librarians had treated the censorship of romance novels as a "social obligation."

Disdained for its supposed deleterious effects on its readers, romance fiction is also scorned in research collections. Alison Scott refers to romance research collections as "a valuable, endangered species of research material, and a class of book that constitutes a major portion of the contemporary bibliographic marketplace in North America." There are collections that support research in science fiction, detective fiction, westerns, and other genres. Romance, as a contemporary literary form, is ignored.
 Nonetheless, support for the romance genre has gained strength. In 1984, two Illinois public librarians discussed patron and staff support for their library’s romance collection. Publishers Weekly forcibly brought romance novels to librarians’ attention in 1989 and 1991 with articles discussing the romance genre and its appeal. Mary K. Chelton explored romance’s audience appeal in 1991. In a 1991 editorial, Francine Fialkoff cited format and item cost as reasons why Library Journal (LJ) did not regularly review romance novels. However, two years after Fialkoff’s editorial, LJ initiated a regular romance-review column. Librarian-authored romance readers’ advisory tools, such as Kristin Ramsdell’s Happily Ever After (1987), Romance Fiction: A Guide to the Genre (1999), and Ann Bouricius’ Romance Reader Advisory (2000), suggest an increased tolerance for romance among some members of the profession.

The stigma attached to romance novels in libraries and the academic literature seems to be at odds with publication statistics suggesting that romance novels enjoy phenomenal sales, and that romance publishing is a booming industry. Romance fiction generated $1.41 billion in sales in 2003, accounting for 49 percent of all popular paperback fiction sold in North America.

While sales of romance fiction suggest a substantial reader base and demand for the genre, the Romance Writers of America (RWA) reports that only 14 percent of romance readers obtain romance novels by checking them out from the library. This figure does not take into account those readers who may use multiple sources to acquire reading material. However, it does raise an interesting question. Do women avoid checking romance fiction out of libraries because of the censure attached to being a romance-fiction reader? Former librarian Jayne Anne Krentz introduces her work Dangerous Men and Adventurous Women with a powerful statement about the negative public aspects of being a romance reader: “Few people realize how much courage it takes for a woman to open a romance novel on an airplane. She knows what everyone around her will think about both her and her choice of reading material.”

Academic and library literature portray romance novels as simultaneously patriarchal, pornographic, empowering, escapist, stigmatizing, liberating, and scorned. However, the authors of this academic and library literature do not speak for the entire library profession. No prior research has investigated the feelings of librarians or library staff toward romance novels, and whether those feelings might extend to the patrons who choose to read them or to the development of a romance collection.

Method
To determine their views, Missouri public library directors were surveyed about their beliefs and practices with regard to romance novels and romance readers. A purposive sample of public libraries was chosen from the 2003 Directory of Missouri Libraries to ensure representation from urban, suburban, and rural libraries. The sample included primary library facilities (central or main libraries) and branch outlets, but did not include bookmobiles or deposit collections.

The survey instrument (available from the lead author) included questions that explored respondents’ attitudes toward romance novels and romance novel readers. Attitude-oriented questions were developed based on beliefs articulated in academic and LIS literature, and respondents were asked to respond on a Likert-type scale as to whether they strongly agreed, agreed, had no opinion, disagreed, or strongly disagreed. For instance, a survey statement based on research suggesting that women learn attitudes and behaviors from romance narrative was constructed as, “Romance readers learn attitudes and behaviors from romance novels.” Respondents chose a level of agreement with the statement per the above-mentioned scale. Other survey questions asked about library practices with regard to the collection development and cataloging of romance novels, including the percentage of the budget devoted to romance purchases and whether romance novels were fully cataloged. No attempt was made to collect romance circulation data. Practitioners indicated that it would be difficult to disaggregate romance circulation data from general fiction circulation data. However, the authors did look at respondents’ perceptions of romance circulation. In addition to these questions, respondents were asked whether they read romance novels themselves. General demographic questions included sex, age, and education level.

Survey response variables were generally categorical or ordinal, with the exception of questions asking for romance collection size. Basic descriptive results are presented for the answers to closed-ended questions. The survey also included a few open-ended
questions, such as “If you were speaking to a patron at your library, how would you describe the romance genre?” and “Please describe the kinds of comments that are made about romance-reading patrons.” Additional space was provided for any comments or concerns that respondents might wish to express. A qualitative analysis of these responses was conducted using NVivo software.

Results
General demographic information is provided in table 1. Of the seventy-seven surveys received, twenty-six (34 percent) were from rural libraries, nineteen (25 percent) from suburban, and thirty-one (40 percent) urban; one respondent (1 percent) did not indicate region. Females constituted the majority of library-staff respondents. Despite the use of age-range categories as opposed to asking for a specific age, age information was provided by only sixty-eight respondents (88 percent). The largest number of respondents fell in the fifty- to fifty-nine-year-old age range, with the second largest number in the forty- to forty-nine-year-old age range. Respondents were less reticent with their education information. All seventy-seven answered this question. Of those, seventy-four (96 percent) had some post-secondary education, and thirty-seven (48 percent) had either a master’s or educational specialist degree.

Collecting and Cataloging Romance
When asked how many paperback and hardcover romance novels were in their collections, fifty-three respondents (69 percent) provided responses. The mean paperback collection was 2,819; the mean hardcover collection was 2,995. Paperback collection sizes ranged from 50 to 35,000. Hardcover collection size varied between 7 and 25,000. Collection sizes varied considerably between suburban, rural, and urban libraries. The average collection size for suburban libraries was 1,697 romance novels; for rural libraries, 3,099 novels; and for urban libraries, 13,022 novels. Even after eliminating from analysis three libraries with extraordinarily large collections (reducing the mean urban-library collection to 3,462 romance novels), urban libraries stocked more romance novels than did their rural and suburban counterparts. This may be attributed to urban libraries’ roles as regional repositories. Regardless of whether their service area was suburban, rural, or urban, respondents generally reported that romance novels were popular, high-circulating items (table 2). Approximately 85 percent of urban library respondents agreed or strongly agreed, compared to 65 percent of rural and 63 percent of suburban respondents. If collection size is a function of demand, that and respondents’ indications of romance circulation popularity suggest that romance readers may be making their presence felt in urban areas more so than in rural or suburban areas.

Two avenues of romance acquisitions have been addressed in LIS literature: purchasing and donations. Most respondents (fifty-six, or 73 percent) indicated they use both methods. Another fifteen (19 percent) obtain romance novels only through purchasing, while six (8 percent) depend solely on donations. These donations-only libraries include two suburban libraries (11 percent of all suburban library respondents) and four rural libraries (13 percent of all rural respondents). One suburban library respondent stated that the library neither purchased nor received donated romance novels. Urban library respondents were more likely to develop romance collections by purchasing only; 35 percent of all

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<th>Table 1. General Demographic Information</th>
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<td><strong>Library Location Type</strong></td>
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<td>Urban</td>
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<td>Suburban</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some graduate education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s/educational specialist degree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
urban libraries did so, compared to 17 percent of all suburban, and 3 percent of all rural respondents.

Only fifty-seven (74 percent) of the total respondents answered the question regarding what percentage of the library’s collection-development funds was allocated to purchase hardcover and paperback romance novels. Eleven respondents (19 percent) indicated that no funds were allocated for the romance collection; in contrast, thirty (53 percent) indicated that more than 2 percent of the collection-development budget targeted the library’s romance-novel section. The remaining sixteen respondents’ libraries (28 percent) allocated up to 2 percent of the collection development budget for romance acquisitions. Despite the apparent popularity of the romance genre in urban libraries, nine urban library respondents (40 percent) indicated that no funding was allocated to purchase romance novels, while only four rural libraries (20 percent) did not allocate funds for the purchase of romance novels.

Given the unit-cost difference between a paperback novel and a hardcover book, low levels of funding for romance fiction is understandable. Tight budgetary times, a steady supply of donated romance titles, and the low status of romance fiction and its readers all combine to create a climate that makes it easy to understand the attraction of developing a romance collection exclusively from donations. However, a collection developed in this manner is problematic for romance readers. Donations may not include all of the titles in a series—a must for those readers who use series numbers to track their reading. Author representation is limited to those authors read by the individuals who donate the romance novels, as is the degree of sensuality. Donated titles are not necessarily recently published romance fiction. The titles may be duplicates of books already in a library’s collection, or simply out of date. Readers of popular fiction, for example, are able to rely on public libraries for access to the most recent titles. Romance readers, however, may not have the same luxury. To some extent, these circumstances may explain why RWA reports that only 14 percent of the romance fiction read is checked out from libraries and why so many romance readers purchase their books.28

Because the majority of romance novels are in paperback format, they are often thought of as ephemeral. Paperback romance novels have a shorter shelf life than hardcover titles, and some libraries have wrestled with the issue of whether that shorter shelf life outweighs the expense of cataloging. Participant responses suggest that this question has largely been answered in favor of cataloging romance fiction; sixty-eight (93 percent) indicated that their libraries cataloged romance fiction, whether paper or hardcover. This cataloging rate was consistent among suburban, rural, and urban libraries. Some libraries deal with ephemeral items with minimal cataloging—basic bibliographic description without assigning subject headings. The data suggest that minimal cataloging was not the case for romance fiction. Of the sixty-eight libraries that catalog romance novels, sixty-two provide full cataloging.

**Readers’ Advisory Practices**

A critical aspect of public libraries’ provision of fiction is advisory services for the readers of that fiction.

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### Table 2. Librarians’ Opinions about the Statement “Romance Novels Are Very Popular, High-circulating Items at My Library,” Broken Down by Library Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library Type</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3. How Libraries Acquire Romance Novels, Broken Down by Library Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library Type</th>
<th>Purchase</th>
<th>Donations</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>None</th>
<th><strong>TOTAL</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Previous research in readers’ advisory suggests that most librarians rely upon their own reading experiences to recommend books, despite the existence of many reader-advisory tools to facilitate the process.\textsuperscript{29} The high percentage of romance book sales clearly indicates that romance fiction has a wide audience. A romance reader might well expect that employees at the public library would be able to recommend romance novels and identify read-alike authors and titles. She might also expect to be able to discuss the elements of appeal of romance novels with the staff at the public library. Is this the case?

While public libraries seem to go out of their way to provide catalog access to romance novels, public library directors and staff may be less oriented toward interpersonal communication with romance readers. When asked whether they read romance novels, most respondents (58 percent) said they did so “rarely” or “never”; the other 42 percent did so “sometimes” or “often.”

Despite the otherwise strong support indicated for romance fiction in urban libraries, urban library respondents were slightly more likely to answer that they “never” or “rarely” read romance—62 percent of urban respondents answered that they read romance “never” or “rarely,” compared to 42 percent of suburban and 61 percent of rural respondents. When asked whether they read romance for work-related or personal reasons, thirty-one of the fifty-two respondents (68 percent) who answered indicated doing so for personal reasons. This led to the conclusion that most are not reading romance with the intent of discovering appealing titles to share with romance-reading patrons.

These indications that library directors and staff may not be reading romance as part of their readers’ advisory work is supported by the respondents’ statements when asked if they discuss romance with others. Previous research suggests that women develop the romance reading habit primarily from female friends and family members who recommend romance novels and create a romance reading community.\textsuperscript{30} Regardless, 72 percent of survey respondents said they never or rarely discussed romance novels with family or friends. They were somewhat more likely to discuss romance novels with colleagues: 65 percent do so “never” or “rarely,” while 35 percent do so “sometimes” or “often.” This difference is not statistically significant, but it does suggest that the surveyed library directors and staff are more comfortable talking about romance as it relates to the provision of reading materials than discussing their own personal reactions to novels.

Emotional content is one of the critical elements of a romance novel’s appeal.\textsuperscript{31} Library staff may well be uncomfortable talking with patrons about passion or arousal—the emotions a romance novel elicits—which would be a considerable barrier to romance readers’ advisory services.

\textbf{Attitudes toward Romance and Romance Readers}

To determine attitudes toward romance novels and romance readers, respondents were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with six statements stemming from academic studies of romance (see table 6). Respondents chose responses on a five-choice Likert-type scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” The “no opinion” option was frequently selected, which may suggest that the surveyed library directors and staff preferred not to give an opinion, did not spend time pondering traditional romance stereotypes, or may have felt that a single-answer choice was inappropriate for the question. One respondent wrote: “I think romance novels are pornography for some women, so I could not honestly disagree or agree,” emphasizing the fact that readers are different, and that they read for different purposes.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{Library Type} & \textbf{Never} & \textbf{Rarely} & \textbf{Sometimes} & \textbf{Often} & \textbf{TOTAL} \\
\hline
Urban & 9 & 7 & 5 & 5 & 26 \\
Suburban & 4 & 4 & 7 & 3 & 18 \\
Rural & 8 & 11 & 10 & 2 & 31 \\
No Response & 1 & & & & 1 \\
\hline
TOTAL & 21 & 23 & 22 & 10 & 76 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Librarians Reading Romance Novels}
\end{table}

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{Never} & \textbf{Rarely} & \textbf{Sometimes} & \textbf{Often} & \textbf{TOTAL} \\
\hline
Friends/Family & 27 & 27 & 18 & 2 & 74 \\
Colleagues & 18 & 29 & 22 & 4 & 73 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Do You Discuss Romance Novels with . . . ?}
\end{table}
While some of the respondents understand and acknowledge that readers read for different purposes, the formulaic nature of the romance genre has historically led to the belief that all romances are the same, inferring that romance readers are incapable of dealing with nonformulaic materials. For instance, Linda Christian-Smith’s study of teen romance readers found that reading teachers viewed these books as second-class literature, and the readers as less capable than other students. Some romance readers internalize the stereotype and feel shameful about their reading choices. “Romance readers are expected to be simple-minded.” However, survey participants were mixed in their responses to the statement, “Romance readers are less educated than women who read other kinds of fiction.” While 25 percent of respondents agreed with this statement, a larger proportion, 44 percent, disagreed. “No opinion” was selected by 31 percent, providing an option for those who either did not speculate on the education levels of their patrons or who preferred not to indicate their view. On the whole, directors and staff in urban libraries seemed to have the most positive view of romance readers’ education: 65 percent of urban library respondents disagreed with the above statement, compared with 42 percent of respondents in suburban libraries and 29 percent in rural libraries.

Two statements investigated the idea that readers learn behaviors from romance novels. Some academics have suggested that romance novels teach women appropriate gender behaviors and how to interpret their partners’ behaviors. Other research indicates that women are more likely to practice safe sex if they see it modeled in a romance narrative. The majority of respondents, 59 percent, accepted the idea that “Romance readers learn attitudes and behaviors from romance novels.” Another statement related to learning from romance novels was “Romance novels are instructional manuals on how to ‘catch a man.’” Agreement (30 percent) and disagreement (27 percent) were relatively evenly distributed, with 42 percent having no opinion on this question. It is possible that some respondents who were not romance readers felt unable to comment on this statement.

Romance novels written prior to 1990 tend to portray women as passive recipients of male love, while more recent novels have portrayed their heroines as active and empowered. Two statements dealt with the portrayal of women in romance novels. Sixty-one percent of respondents disagreed with this statement, “Romance novels suggest that a woman’s happiness is bound up in the traditional roles of wife and mother.” Only 11 percent agreed, and 28 percent had no opinion. [However, there was not overwhelming support for the corollary view that “Romance novels show women as strong, active characters who forge their own destinies.” Forty-seven percent of respondents said they had no opinion on this statement, but 41 percent agreed that romance novels did portray women this way, and 12 percent disagreed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6. Attitude Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romance readers are less educated than women who read other kinds of fiction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romance readers learn attitudes and behaviors from romance novels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romance novels suggest that a woman’s happiness is bound up in the traditional roles of wife and mother.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romance novels show women as strong, active characters who forge their own destinies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romance novels are pornography for women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romance novels are instructional manuals on how to “catch a man.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The inclusion of sexual tension and sexual encounters in many romance novels has led some academics to suggest that romance plays a role in women's sexual lives, either as a surrogate for a satisfactory relationship with a significant other or as a tool for women to explore their own sexuality and sexual responses. Some authors go further, and portray romance novels as pornography for women, suggesting that romance novels serve the same role for women that traditional pornographic materials do for men. This opinion was not widely shared among respondents to this survey, 67 percent of whom disagreed with the statement “Romance novels are pornography for women.” Only 5 percent of respondents agreed with the statement, while 27 percent indicated having no opinion. Some of this strong disagreement may come from the negative associations of the word “pornography” as exploitative and demeaning.

Additional Comments
Based on their responses, library directors and staff who took part in this survey appear less judgmental toward the literary merit of romance novels and more concerned about patron satisfaction. In addition to statistical data, respondents were given the opportunity to offer general comments. Two categories emerged from analysis of the open-ended responses; they suggested an essential conflict between personal attitudes and professional ideology. Some respondents seemed to regard romance as low culture, with such statements as “I wish they’d grow up to read real literature,” and “Staff have labeled the romance paperbacks with a red dot for shelving purposes. They would joke about the Red Dot District.” However, other respondents seemed to have been trained by the library profession to avoid being viewed as making judgments about patrons based on their reading choices. “We try very hard not to judge by reading preference,” commented one respondent while another simply stated, “It isn’t allowed.”

Whether or not it is allowed, library directors and staff do make judgments about female patrons based on their reading interests. Some respondents indicated their opinions by commenting that romance readers are “wasting time on romances” and others noted that withering comments are “made about the books such as calling them bodice rippers.” Michael Harris argues that this is a long-standing issue in librarianship:

One fundamental missing link in our understanding of Western library service . . . lies in a deep reading of the ways in which librarianship, a feminized but male-dominated profession, has come to the unflinching conclusion that it can distinguish between high and low culture; between those books that are “priceless” and those that are “trash,” between good and bad—books and readers.

Respondents’ comments seem to suggest that Harris is correct in his assumptions that women library staff judge books written by women for women readers as less worthy and low culture—a waste of women’s time “like TV soap operas.” “Patrons request them and consider them literature,” wrote one respondent, clearly implying that librarians do not.

Other comments on survey forms indicate a lack of knowledge and understanding of readers and their reading, of how individuals use print for their own purposes, and how readers interact with texts. Library professionals and paraprofessional staff seem not to have been sufficiently instructed in readers’ advisory and reader motivations. Four respondents described romance fiction as “guilty pleasure,” “brain candy,” “light fiction for female readers,” and “escapist books mostly for women.” One respondent noted that romance fiction is “treat[ed] as any other reading interest with no value placed on it particularly.” Yet the terms used by respondents to describe romance fiction are value laden and convey meanings about both the romance genre and its readers who “want a simple, easy-to-follow plot without too many characters—just a relaxing read, soon to be forgotten, and certainly not about real life.”

Discussion
The views and practices of the surveyed public-library directors and staff provide some indication of the level of romance novel acceptance in public libraries. Given the genre’s popularity and perceptions of strong circulation, romance fiction seems to have earned a place as a staple in public library collections. Most libraries include some romance, and some libraries have very large collections indeed. Romance novels are generally included in the catalog, receive full cataloging, and command a percentage of the purchasing budget. Though a substantial percentage of romance fiction is donated, most libraries purchase at least some romance titles. Some of this investment is in the form of hardcover and trade paperback romance novels with cover artwork that, to an extent, disguises the genre and protects its readers. While hardcover or trade paperback books may be less stigmatizing than the traditional clinch-cover paperback romances, they offer romance readers a limited selection of
authors. Romance authors who achieve this status may be marketing to a different audience than the traditional notion of the romance reader.

Purchasing and cataloging indicators suggest that the surveyed library directors and staff are comfortable with the idea of romance novels in the library. However, they may not be comfortable discussing their own responses to romance fiction. While 55 respondents (71 percent) had read a romance novel at some point, only 21 respondents (27 percent) said they read romance for work-related reasons, which would presumably include discussing novels with patrons. Only 26 respondents (34 percent) discussed romance novels with their colleagues “sometimes” or “often.” This suggests that library directors and staff may not be able to help romance reading patrons seeking readers’ advisory assistance.

The general trend in academic and library literature about romance novels and romance readers has been to become somewhat more accepting of the genre as more is understood about the relationship of women readers to romance texts. A trend noted in recent romance novels is the movement of the heroine from passive victim to active agent, and the incorporation of elements of feminist viewpoints. While there are no previous studies of public librarians’ attitudes to which the present study might be compared, looking at the results of this research in the context of the academic and library literature suggests that attitudes may be changing. While some librarians are wary of romance novels, romance is no longer a whipping-boy genre to be scorned with impunity.

The results and limitations of this study suggest possibilities for further research on romance readers and their texts, and the attitudes of librarians who interact with romance readers as library patrons. Because this research focused on the romance genre, survey participants were not asked their opinions about other genres and their readers. Do they hold similar kinds of
attitudes toward readers of fantasy, science fiction, westerns, mysteries, and other genres. This study was carried out in a midwestern state. If the study was replicated in another state or the geographic region was broadened, would the results be significantly different? What role does geographic location play in the responses of library staff? And while the number of MLS-holding (as opposed to nondegree) librarians was too small to meaningfully analyze, it might be interesting to know if the process of library school education has an effect on professionals’ willingness to discuss romance novels. How is romance handled in library education generally? How is it addressed as a genre in collection development or readers’ advisory courses? Are library school faculties inadvertently influencing students toward a lack of respect for the genre?

Does the age of the library staff or of romance readers make a difference in attitudes? The feminist movement, culminating with congressional approval of the Equal Rights Amendment in 1972. The feminist movement, culminating in Congressional approval of the Equal Rights Amendment in 1972 (although it was never made a part of the U.S. Constitution), changed the way women looked at the world and how the world looked at women. What is the role, if any, of generational difference? Do specific subcategories of romance fiction appeal to specific age groups of women? Have female romance readers “grown” with the genre, moving from the early Harlequin series to the more sexually explicit series published in the late 1990s and that continue along the same path in the present day? In her research on female romance readers, Radway used qualitative methods of data collection and analysis to investigate how women felt about their reading. Interviews, observations, and focus groups would enable librarians to explain their interactions with romance readers and romance fiction in their own words. 

References


**The Whole School Library Handbook**


This book is a valuable addition to the literature on school library media. It touches upon every aspect of library media programs and library media centers. To prospective library media specialists, the book is a convenient one-stop resource that provides a general grasp of the field; to practitioners, it is a good book to gain professional growth. There is no doubt that the work will prove to be very useful to library professionals and library students.

A number of books on school library administration are currently available; however, few cover such an array of information in a single book. *The Whole School Library Handbook,* a total of fifteen chapters, is comprised of journal articles or book excerpts, written by well-known professors in the field and media specialists in K–12 educational settings. The chapters on materials, evaluation, technology, operations, programs, promotion, funding, and issues are particularly detailed. Other chapters include those on history, guidelines, credentials, diversity, and librarians. The information provided is current and reliable, and a majority of articles and excerpts were published between 2000 and 2005. The contributors include professors such as Blanche Woolls, David V. Loertscher, Keith Curry Lance, and Ross Todd; library media personnel Doug Johnson and Alice H. Yucht; and other well-known experts in the field. Although the chapters consist of individual articles and excerpts, one would not have difficulty obtaining central and organized thoughts and themes after reading the book.

Besides discussing the topics usually found in texts for school media, the book provides suggestions about applying for grants in the field, obtaining a school library position in an international setting, and developing an electronic library collection. It also gives tips for incorporating comic books and graphic novels into libraries, finding funding, and designing and remodeling libraries. In addition, the book offers author guidelines for *Knowledge Quest,* *Library Media Collection,* and *School Library Journal.*

It includes addresses of databases and e-book publishers; Web addresses of school-library organizations on national, state, and local levels; a list of NCATE/ALA schools; and addresses of the education departments in...
fifty states. A list of AASL, ALSC, and YALSA past presidents, 1951–2006, is also provided. Library media specialists who seek higher certification can find information on national board certification in the book as well. In short, the book is timely, valuable, and comprehensive. It is recommended to every faculty member, practicing or prospective library media specialist.—Shu-Hsien Chen, Retired Professor, Queens College, City University of New York, Flushing

**Serving Homeschooled Teens and Their Parents**


**Serving Homeschooled Teens and Their Parents**, as with all the books in the Libraries Unlimited Professional Guides for Young Adult Librarians series, addresses “real-life library issues with answers and suggestions for frontline librarians” (ix). Lerch, a young adult (YA) librarian, and Welch, a homeschooling parent, encourage librarians to view the estimated 3 percent to 4 percent of children educated at home as a distinct population segment, calling for a parity of service between homeschooled teens and the public education community. The authors provide a detailed explanation of how to expand existing teen services, collections, and programs to help meet this population's needs.

Early chapters provide background on the growth of the homeschool movement and the standardized test scores, college admissions statistics, and increasing diversity by race, religion, and economic background of these students. Lerch and Welch provide an overview of adolescent development theory and its relevance to YA librarianship. However, the book’s dominant focus is on tailoring service to homeschoolers, particularly the chapters that highlight planning, collection development, programming, and marketing. The last chapter is a core-collection bibliography that includes articles, Web resources, distance-education opportunities, driver's education, GED information, and sources for school supplies. A directory of homeschooling organizations in each state concludes this nuts-and-bolts chapter. Useful templates for programming, planning, and feedback are available throughout. Most chapters include lists of professional resources for further reading. An appendix includes the successful Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant application written by the Johnsburg (Ill.) Public Library District to establish a homeschool resource center.

While potential conflicts related to serving this group are mentioned, little space is devoted to considering these philosophical debates. Rather, this guide’s focus is on providing quick-and-easy tools for serving the homeschooling population. Most public libraries will find **Serving Homeschooled Teens and Their Parents** to be a useful addition to their professional development collections.—Ernie J. Cox, Librarian, St. Timothy’s School, Raleigh, N.C.

**Yahoo! to the Max**


These days, search tools offer so many features that they require a manual to operate them. Sometimes the help files aren't enough, and usability experts tell us that searchers detest reading online, opting instead to print hardcopies of documents. For this reason, books such as **Yahoo! to the Max** serve a useful purpose.

Without a doubt, Yahoo! deserves book-length treatment. Since its inception in 1994, Yahoo! has become a cultural milestone in the Cyber Age. It has evolved from a bare-bones taxonomy and subject directory to a full-fledged information portal and search engine (search.yahoo.com). Competition between search engines is fierce, and Yahoo! continues to roll out innovations at an overwhelming pace.

Randolph Hock is well qualified to write this book and provide an overview of Yahoo!’s most salient features. He heads his own company, Online Strategies, which offers training and instruction on Web-based research. What’s more, he has authored other popular books for CyberAge Books, an imprint of Information Today: **The Extreme Searcher’s Guide to Search Engines** (1999 and 2001) and **The Extreme Searcher’s Internet Handbook** (2004).

As a Web or portal manual, **Yahoo! to the Max** can be read from cover to cover, or it can be consulted as a reference book. Readers are exposed to the scope and depth of Yahoo!’s features in the book’s nine chapters. Topics covered include an overview (and history of Yahoo!), searching and browsing, My Yahoo!, groups, news, communications, shopping and auctions, finance, and other “seriously useful” stuff (for example, Yahoo! Desktop Search, Yahoo! mobile services, music downloads, people search, and photos). Overall, the book’s content is chunked nicely into manageable bits, and the screenshots will appeal to visual learners.

Endorsed by respected online gurus—including Chris Sherman of
Search Engine Watch and William Hann of FreePint—this book is handy (add the tool to your search kit) and a crisp overview of Yahoo! services. It will benefit both novice and experienced Web searchers in addition to librarians, students, teachers, and other users. In other words, Yahoo! to the Max is a worthy addition to any public library collection. Thankfully, Hock and his publisher had the foresight and wisdom to know that this book would be outdated by its release date; the Extreme Searcher's Web page will keep readers up-to-date with the mercurial Yahoo!—C.
Brian Smith, Arlington Heights (Ill.) Memorial Library

Redefining Literacy for the 21st Century

David E Warlick. Worthington, Ohio: Linworth Pub., 2004. 128p. $44.95 (ISBN 1-58683-130-5) LC 2003023073. "For the first time in history, we cannot clearly describe the future for which we are preparing our children" (x). This is the educational challenge that Web technology consultant Warlick states we are failing to answer adequately in our preoccupation with standardized testing and pre-digital literacy.

In this provocative yet pragmatic book, Warlick observes that information has replaced iron and cotton as the new raw material, with data mining to create multimedia products as the manufacturing process. In response, he argues, we need to reclaim the vocational-education model and teach our children to be inquisitive, skillful, and ethical information workers.

Despite advocating that curricula be rebuilt around the use of information technology, Warlick believes education should be based on the personal relationships of the classroom, not upon that technology. Hence, instead of merely rehearsing now-familiar info-literacy concepts, he describes a new kind of authentic assignment, one that obliges students working in teams to create accurate, compelling multimedia products in real-world formats for real audiences—their own schoolmates, faculty, parents, and community.
Three core chapters demonstrate the “3Es” of Warlick’s redefined literacy. “Exposing the Information” describes the investigative strategies students must learn in order to find and evaluate online information. “Employing the Information” details what can be done by students with the text, image, audio, and video technology currently available to teachers and school library media specialists. “Expressing Ideas Compellingly” explores the basics of crafting an effective multimedia message.

Some readers may be alarmed that Warlick anchors this redefined literacy in the creation of information products, rather than in the ideal of creative, original thinking. However, his concern is that, with the availability of a global, interactive, online library, we no longer control the information. Our children control it, so we must teach them to do so “in positive, productive, and personally meaningful ways” (22).

While this book is clearly written for primary- and secondary-school educators, public librarians and anyone else concerned about the literacy of twenty-first century children will find it a startlingly fresh examination of a problem we thought we knew.—Michael Austin Shell, Librarian Senior, Main Library Reference, Jacksonville (Fla.) Public Library

Collection Management for Youth: Responding to the Needs of Learners


This book is designed specifically to assist school library media specialists with collection management for youth and is a great resource filled with charts, tables, and sample worksheets. The first part describes the theoretical foundation for learning-centered collection management. Education has shifted to a learner-centered environment and, as a result, collection development must address the relationships between the media center and those who play a role in the school district and the community. Strategies are given for selecting resources for learning. Basic budget models, future budgeting considerations, and the how-to of creating a budget for maximum learning effectiveness are also discussed. The last part of this book contains a fabulous information guide of eleven tools that will encourage collaboration and aid in implementation of the learner-centered collection-management concepts. The authors of this book have done an excellent job in presenting their latest research findings on the learner-focused model for library media centers. This book is highly recommended for librarians who are responsible for collection management.—Susan McClellan, Director, Avalon Public Library, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Essential Dewey


Most public librarians have a reasonable knowledge of the Dewey Decimal classification system, both from formal training and from practical use. But when it comes to constructing Dewey numbers, how much do you know? Unless Dewey classification is part of your regular duties or you’ve recently had a course in cataloging and classification, you may need a refresher. If so, Essential Dewey is an excellent choice.

Essential Dewey should be treated as a companion to the four-volume Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) and is best used with a copy of DDC close at hand. Bowman, a seasoned cataloging and classification instructor, approaches his topic with enthusiasm and humor, making this a surprisingly entertaining overview of a subject that has limited appeal for many librarians. Because Dewey is a synthetic classification system that has been amended and changed over time, there are rules for number-building, and then there are myriad exceptions to these rules. The first part of the book orienters readers to the basics—the hundred divisions of Dewey, number-building using standard subdivisions, and classifying books that cover one subject only. More complex Dewey classification practices, such as classifying books with compound subjects, preference order in classification, and the aforementioned exceptions to the basic rules, are covered in the second section.

Bowman’s overview of “anomalies and oddities” in Dewey, organized by the ten main classes, will be useful even for those with significant classification experience. Each chapter ends with a series of exercises intended to reinforce the examples presented. These exercises are helpful, particularly for library school students or staff unfamiliar with the process of constructing Dewey numbers. Even experienced catalogers may find themselves surprised at the answers to some of the exercises. Essential Dewey is an excellent addition to any cataloger’s bookshelf, right next to Bowman’s earlier book, Essential Cataloging. Highly recommended.—Nanette Donohue, Technical Services Manager, Champaign (Ill.) Public Library
Comprehensive Monitoring Service to Track ILS and Network Problems

www.polarislibrary.com

Polaris Library Systems announced a new service that expands its monitoring of integrated library system (ILS) servers to Web servers, e-mail servers, and all aspects of the library’s network, including switches, routers, firewalls, and filters. The new service—SiteScan Advanced—builds on Polaris’ SiteScan system that provides round-the-clock monitoring of more than fifty indicators of the health of ILS servers and alerts library staff and Polaris Library Systems’ Support when indications of a problem arise. SiteScan Advanced is ILS-independent and can be used by any library to protect the integrity of their network and their servers.

Polaris Library Systems is providing SiteScan Advanced through a partnership with Alternative Work Environments, a provider of public access, network support, and monitoring solutions for libraries.

The monitoring available with SiteScan Advanced can prevent outages and reduce the severity and duration of outages. In addition to monitoring critical systems 24/7, SiteScan Advanced also provides fault, failure, and problem identification; incident notification; daily, weekly, and monthly reporting; and network and server performance monitoring and trending.

Phoenix Public Library Streamlines Access to Electronic Resources with Custom WebFeat Solution

www.Webfeat.org
www.phxlib.org

Phoenix (Ariz.) Public Library has launched a WebFeat federated search solution that enables patrons to simultaneously search the library’s more than eighty online databases, including the library catalog, using a single intuitive interface. The library’s fully customized WebFeat search solution, dubbed “Article Searcher,” took just forty-five days to implement from initial design to system launch. Prior to the launch, patrons could only search library databases one at a time. Article Searcher streamlines access to a wide variety of research resources that the library offers—including thousands of full-text articles from popular newspapers and journals. In addition to advanced search capabilities, patrons can now easily search for articles from anywhere on the library Web site using a “Quick Search” box embedded in the navigational menu of each of the library’s Web pages.

Phoenix Public Library’s Article Searcher, powered by WebFeat, is available at the Burton Barr Central
Library and all thirteen branch libraries located throughout the city. Article Searcher may also be accessed remotely through the library’s Web site by patrons with a valid Phoenix Public Library card.

**Tech Logic Automatic Material Handling System**


Champaign (Ill.) Public Library will implement a Tech Logic multi-bin Automated Material Handling (AMH) sorting system. The library will use the AMH system in its new, 122,600-square-foot main library, scheduled for completion next year. Champaign Public Library’s new sorting system will include a hands-free book drop, horizontal and vertical conveyors, computerized controllers, and multiple Smart-Bin storage containers. Tech Logic’s conveyor systems include de-shingling capabilities to ensure that items don’t cluster, while Smart-Bins raise and lower their floors for easy loading and unloading.

After implementation of the new system, patrons will return books to the hands-free book drop, which will be built into the new library. (Conventional book drops are located outside a library facility, where items are subject to weather and theft. The hands-free book drop incorporates an open slot in the library’s wall; patrons can feed items through the slot without having to simultaneously lift a heavy bin door.) From the hands-free book drop, items will go onto a conveyor system and be transported to the multi-bin sorter. There, the system will sort items by location for easier and faster reshelving.

**OCLC Acquires the Assets of Openly Informatics**

[www.oclc.org](http://www.oclc.org)  
[www.openly.com](http://www.openly.com)

Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) has purchased the assets of Openly Informatics, a provider of linking software and services for the
library market. Openly Informatics’s 1.2 million-record database of linking metadata for electronic resources will be used to enrich OCLC WorldCat. OCLC WorldCat, in turn, will extend the Openly Informatics database by contributing metadata covering materials in other electronic formats, including electronic books, digital audiobooks, digital theses, and dissertations.

“One of our key objectives is to help libraries manage their digital collections as effectively as we have helped them manage their print collections,” said Mike Teets, vice president, OCLC Global Product Architecture. “This agreement with Openly Informatics is a fundamental component in our effort to build a union catalog of electronic content in WorldCat.”

Electronic Edition of Play Index Now Available

www.hwwilson.com

Play Index has just been released as a WilsonWeb online reference. Play Index covers virtually every important play ever written, from the works of contemporary playwrights to classic and historical plays in today’s collections and anthologies. Users will find working information for some thirty thousand plays published individually or in collections from 1949 to the present, including links to handpicked Web sites that often feature the full text.

Versatile searching helps users find plays with precision. Search by title, author, subject (for example, culture conflict, marriage), cast type, and more. A dropdown menu lets you search plays by twenty-four different styles and genres (for example, symbolism, experimental theater, comedy, melodrama, musical). Users can also limit results to plays with a specific number of male or female roles, by size of total cast, and propriety for grades pre-K–6, 7–12, or adult.

Entries include a descriptive annotation that summarizes the plot, indicates any musical requirements, and the number of sets. Links to related Web resources deliver more information about the play, often including the full text. Play Index also provides the full publication details users need to locate the play.

LexisNexis Creates New Interface for Congressional Research

www.lexisnexis.com


More than two hundred years of rich congressional archives can now be searched online within seconds. A new user-friendly interface and improved functionality allow users to easily search across different data sources, such as legislative histories, published or unpublished hearings, bills, and House and Senate reports—all within a single search.

LexisNexis has changed the way congressional information can be retrieved by simplifying its search interface and enhancing its controlled vocabulary indexing. Search options can be restricted by date, or Congress, as well as full text, or only metadata. Enhanced segment searching can pinpoint information by source, subject, title, witness, witness affiliation, or author. LexisNexis Congressional also provides the option of downloading large documents in different sections.

3M and FKI Logistex to Deliver Automated Check-in and Sorting Systems to Libraries

www.3M.com/us/library
www.fkilogistex.com

3M and FKI Logistex have formed an alliance to offer a full range of automated check-in and sorting systems to libraries in North America. This alliance makes it possible for libraries to design a complete materials-handling system that fully meets their individual needs.

Library solutions from 3M and FKI Logistex automate material-handling tasks such as sorting and return to shelf. Cost-effective, automated library solutions systems from 3M and FKI Logistex include:

- Automated check-in
- Automated checkout
- Reserve pickup
- Collection security
- Circulation materials sorting
- Interlibrary tote handling and buffer systems
- Customer reserve, storage, and retrieval systems
- Ergonomic transport devices
- RFID tracking
- Circulation materials conveying systems

Free Resources Available from EBSCO

www.LibraryResearch.com

EBSCO Publishing (EBSCO) announced the availability of
Library, Science and Technology Act (LSTA) Abstracts. This comprehensive library science database is available to any library, college/university, K–12 school, hospital, corporation, or other interested party at no cost.

LSTA is designed and offered to support the many areas of librarianship such as cataloging, classification, bibliometrics, online information retrieval, and information management. LSTA provides indexing and abstracts for more than six hundred periodicals, plus books, research reports, and proceedings. The database includes coverage dating as far back as the mid-1960s. EBSCO’s intention is to provide free access to LSTA on a continual basis.

LSTA will soon benefit from the addition of in-depth profiles for nearly three thousand authors covered in the database. LSTA’s author profiles (like author profiles available in other EBSCOhost databases) will include author name, contact information, and credentials, as well as journals included in the database where the author was published, and subject headings used to represent the author’s articles in the database. Though the profiles are not meant to be inclusive of a particular author’s works, they are a tremendous benefit to researchers seeking experts in a given area.

In addition to LSTA, EBSCO offers a suite of other free resources such as Success Stories from customers, Funding Guides, and Marketing and Promotional Tools. These additional free resources are made available as part of EBSCO’s “Customer Success Center,” which users can reach through a link from the LSTA Web page.

Any EBSCO database customer may also add LSTA to their current EBSCOhost profile if they so choose.

New Interactive LCD Solution for Meeting Room Booking and Schedule Viewing

www.netsimplicity.com

NetSimplicity announced the general availability of a new Interactive LCD Solution for its flagship room-scheduling software, Meeting Room Manager.

With the new Interactive LCD Solution, users can view meeting room schedules and book meeting rooms—on the spot. The solution provides interactive touch-screen computer panels that can be placed on reception desks, or wall-mounted outside meeting rooms or in lobbies. From each panel, users can find a scheduled meeting, see whether one or more rooms are currently available, and book those rooms from the touch-screen interface. Their attractive design creates a positive impression for staff and visitors.

The Interactive LCD Solution is fully integrated with NetSimplicity’s Meeting Room Manager, which enables users to view room schedules, book meeting rooms, and manage meeting logistics from any Web browser. Customers can optionally apply Meeting Room Manager’s security model to control who in their organizations has access to view room schedules, book rooms, and modify existing bookings—even from each LCD panel.

By synchronizing planned and ad-hoc use of meeting rooms, Meeting Room Manager with the Interactive LCD Solution makes it easy for everyone in an organization to find meetings and meeting rooms and avoid booking conflicts.

King County Library System Chooses AquaBrowser Library

www.TLcdelivers.com/aquabrowser

King County Library System (KCLS) in Seattle will use AquaBrowser Library with an Innovative Interfaces Millennium system.

AquaBrowser Library integrates with any library vendor’s catalog to offer a progressive interactive searching experience to patrons. AquaBrowser Library compares a user’s search terms to the metadata in a library’s catalog to create a visual map, a “word cloud” of associations, or overviews of areas of interest. A user can discover the sources behind these associations and broaden the scope of a search, or choose to refine a search.

KCLS joins a growing number of libraries that offer ABL with their Innovative Interfaces Millennium, Sirsi, Dynix, DRA, TLC, or other integrated library systems.

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Reinventing the search experience.

Take your users on a journey of discovery into your catalog with AquaBrowser Library®. Users can explore AquaBrowser Library’s “word cloud,” or they can choose to refine results. AquaBrowser Library is a visually stunning, captivating search experience—and there’s nothing like it out there.

Reinvent the search experience for your patrons.

AquaBrowser Library can be used with any integrated automation system.

www.TLCdelivers.com/aquabrowser
Treasure Long-Lasting Bindings?

Many books, particularly graphic novels, are notorious for poor binding quality—they’re always getting a bad wrap! And high levels of circulation can cut their shelf-lives short. BeeWee Bindings can last an eternity...well, at least for the lifetime of your collection.

So choose BeeWee Bound books with our lifetime guarantee—and rest in peace.