

# PUBLIC LIBRARIES

PUBLIC LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 46 • NUMBER 3 • MAY/JUNE 2007 • ISSN 0163-5506



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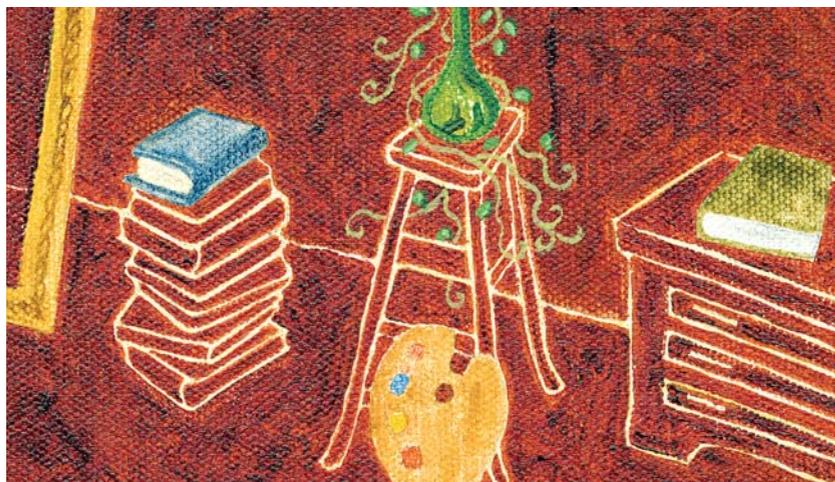
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# PUBLIC LIBRARIES

PUBLIC LIBRARY ASSOCIATION  
VOLUME 46 • NUMBER 3 • MAY/JUNE 2007  
ISSN 0163-5506



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DENISE AGOSTO

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## EDITORIAL

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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) 692-4695; fax: (847) 692-3877.

## PRODUCTION

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

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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](http://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.

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1992.

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## Editor's Note

Whenever I'm asked about *Public Libraries*, I explain that the journal is all about ideas. Information, knowledge, case-studies, best-practices, in short, ideas to help our readers better serve their patrons. In this issue you'll find a little bit of each of those ingredients. In "CLASS, The Future of Adult Programming," Lori Brack and Joe McKenzie detail their library's successful curriculum of adult lifelong learning classes; in "OODA Loops, Maneuver Theory, and the Tactics of Survival," Jim Jatkevicius presents a compelling case for getting inside the competition's mindset to increase the relevancy of public libraries, and in "Why Do Teens Use Libraries," Denise Agosto presents the results of a survey of teen library users.

Also with this issue we welcome a new columnist, Lee Price (Bringing in the Money) and we say good-bye (and thanks for her year's worth of thoughtful and informative columns), to PLA President, Susan Hildreth. We also welcome and look forward to working with incoming PLA President, Jan Sanders, starting with the July/August 2007 issue.

As always, please feel free to send comments and questions to me at [khughes@ala.org](mailto:khughes@ala.org).

Thanks for reading!  
Kathleen M. Hughes  
Editor, Public Libraries

Kathleen is reading *Nobody's Perfect: Writings from the New Yorker* by Anthony Lane.

# Readers Respond

## Rural Libraries Vibrant and Efficient

The article appearing in *Public Libraries*, March/April 2007, pages 7–11 (From the President, "Rural Libraries: The Heart of Our Communities") was disturbing. I'm the director of a rural library in Ohio serving a school district population of 6,104. Serving in this capacity for the past six years has provided insight into the needs of small libraries. For the past four years I've also served on Ohio Library Council's Small Libraries Division which has provided ample opportunity to listen to the concerns of librarians serving rural and limited populations across the state.

Your article was disturbing in this way: Page 8, Third Column, Second paragraph, the statement that reads as follows:

"How can we move rural libraries from a negative, deficient place to a positive, strong position in their communities?"

continued on page 9

# YOUR LIBRARY IS AN INVALUABLE COMMUNITY RESOURCE!

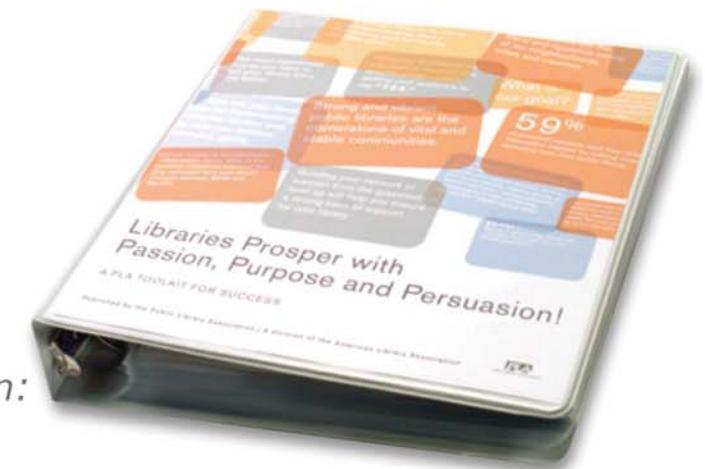
## BUT DOES THE PUBLIC KNOW THAT?

Make your library's message known with PLA's newest publication:

### *Libraries Prosper with Passion, Purpose and Persuasion: A PLA Toolkit for Success*

As competition for dollars continues to intensify, library staff and trustees must learn to connect the library directly to what the community values most. Through an effective, sustained advocacy effort, libraries can be positioned—and remain—top-of-mind for the public and funders. Creating an advocacy plan for your library is the first step.

*Libraries Prosper with Passion, Purpose and Persuasion: A PLA Toolkit for Success*, provides step-by-step instruction for the entire planning process, including goal setting, audience analysis and identification, message and strategy development, and tool and tactic evaluation and selection. Easy-to-use worksheets as well as



sample documents and templates make this interactive Toolkit a "must have" publication for every library.

*Libraries Prosper with Passion, Purpose and Persuasion: A PLA Toolkit for Success* will be available for purchase beginning at ALA Annual Conference! Visit the PLA booth at the ALA Pavilion in the Exhibit's Hall to preview a copy of the Toolkit. The Toolkit will also be available at the ALA Store during Annual Conference for \$100 (\$90 with ALA member discount). Following the conference, the Toolkit will be available at the ALA Online Store.

Visit [www.pla.org](http://www.pla.org) for more information.

# News from PLA

## 2007 PLA Election Results

### Vice-President/President-Elect

Carol L. Sheffer

### Issues and Concerns Cluster— Steering Committee Member

Marcia A. Warner

Michael A. Golrick

### Library Development Cluster— Steering Committee Member

Sara E. Dallas

Irene (Renee) S. Blalock

### Library Services Cluster— Steering Committee Member

Audra L. Caplan

Lillian Snyder

## PLA Offers Field Guide to Emergency Response

Every year across the country, hundreds of museums, libraries, archives, and historic sites experience emergencies large and small. The Field Guide to Emergency Response can help anyone respond with the best professional step-by-step advice on what to do immediately after a disaster. This handbook explains initial steps to take, essential responses to functions, and conditions you are likely to encounter. The instructional DVD illustrates typical problems after a disaster and demonstrates basic salvage techniques.

The Field Guide is available via the ALA Online Store ([www.ala.org](http://www.ala.org)). Price: \$35.00, ALA Member Price: \$31.50, 58 pages, Softcover, ISBN-13: 978-0-8389-8426-0, ISBN-10: 0-8389-8426-6, © 2006.

## January/February 2008 Issue of *PL* to Focus on Services to Teens

Each year, the January/February issue of *Public Libraries* focuses on a theme. For 2008, the theme is “Services to Teens.” So, now’s your chance to tell the library world about your library’s unique, innovative, or cutting-edge programs for teens. We’re looking for feature-length articles and shorter opinion pieces, so send in those manuscripts! *PL* is a refereed journal and all manuscripts go through a peer-review process prior to acceptance. For submission instructions and more information, visit [www.pla.org](http://www.pla.org) or send an email to *PL* Editor, Kathleen Hughes, [khughes@ala.org](mailto:khughes@ala.org).

## Save the Date! PLA 2008 National Conference

The best conference for the public library world will be held in Minneapolis, March 25–29, 2008. Don’t miss this opportunity to connect with the best and brightest as public librarians and public library workers come together to trade ideas, learn from the industry’s leaders, evaluate current practices, conduct business, and renew their energy and enthusiasm. PLA 2008 will host more than 150 continuing education programs, talk tables, preconference programs, a bustling exhibits hall, social events,



author events, tours, and more! Join PLA today to get the latest conference information sent directly to you, plus you’ll get substantial registration discounts. Visit [www.placonference.org](http://www.placonference.org) for more information.

## Talk Table Opportunities at PLA 2008

Considering facilitating a Talk Table at PLA 2008? Proposals are due by July 1, 2007! Talk Tables, a very popular feature of PLA conferences, provide conference attendees with opportunities for informal, small group discussions on library topics of current interest. These are not formal presentations and facilitators should only plan to showcase model programs or report on projects or studies briefly (5–10 minutes) and then to stimulate discussion. The facilitator’s role is to ensure that the discussion stays lively and relevant to the topic and to ensure all attendees the opportunity to speak. In addition, Talk Table facilitators are encouraged to develop one-page handouts for attendees. AV is not provided. Visit [www.placonference.org](http://www.placonference.org) for the online application and for more information.

## PLA Award Winners Represent Innovation, Commitment to Library Service

The Public Library Association (PLA) recognizes the best in public library service annually with eight awards for individuals and libraries. The

2006 winners represent the commitment public libraries and public library staff members have to providing creative services, breakthrough programming, access to information, and innovative technology. PLA, along with the award sponsors, will recognize all of the award winners on Monday, June 25, 2007, as a part of the PLA President's Program, featuring Elizabeth Edwards, at the 2007 ALA Annual Conference in Washington, D.C.

### Advancement of Literacy Award

The Jacksonville (Fla.) Public Library Foundation received the Advancement of Literacy Award, sponsored by *Library Journal*, for its ongoing commitment to literacy. To address statistics that showed 20 percent of Jacksonville adults were low-level readers, the Foundation developed an initiative to increase support and funding of adult literacy programs. According to Carol Simmons, chair of the Advancement of Literacy Award Jury, "Since 1986, the Foundation has provided funding for literacy programs and staff training, and has taken on an important role in encouraging collaboration among a variety of agencies. We commend the Foundation for its support of lifelong learning in Jacksonville." Read more about the Jacksonville Public Library Foundation online at <http://jpl.coj.net/library/found.html>.

### Allie Beth Martin Award

Barry Trott, adult services director at the Williamsburg (Va.) Regional Library, received the Allie Beth Martin Award, sponsored by Baker and Taylor, for his contributions to readers' advisory services. In addition to building an active readers' advisory department at the

Williamsburg Regional Library, he implemented "Looking for a Good Book?," a service that provides readers with customized suggestions based on answers to an online questionnaire. Trott also is the chair of the Reference and User Services Association's (RUSA) Readers' Advisory Committee, the editor of the RA column for *RUSQ*, the official journal of RUSA, a writer for *NoveList*, and an editor for Libraries Unlimited's *Read On* series.

### Highsmith Library Innovation Award

The Athens-Clarke County (Ga.) Library received the Highsmith Library Innovation Award for its innovative services for the Hispanic community. Recognizing a rise in the Hispanic population, the Athens-Clarke County Library partnered with local groups, including the Mexican Consulate, to establish a new branch providing targeted services such as family literacy, GED completion, computer instruction, and health information, in a Hispanic neighborhood. Athens-Clarke County Library also created *Familia a Familia*, a program that pairs local families with Hispanic families. *Familia a Familia* is designed to cultivate cultural understanding and realize barriers that may exist to new Americans as they assimilate into the community. For more information about Athens-Clarke County Library, visit [www.clarke.public.lib.ga.us](http://www.clarke.public.lib.ga.us).

### Gordon M. Conable Award

Ken Verdoia was honored with the first-ever Gordon M. Conable Award, sponsored by LSSI, for his commitment to intellectual freedom. As a Salt Lake County Library Services Trustee from 1999–2006, he promoted open access to electronic

## On the Agenda

### 2007

#### ALA Annual Conference

June 21–27  
Washington, D.C.

#### PLA Boot Camp 3

Oct. 29–Nov. 2  
Salt Lake City

### 2008

#### ALA Midwinter Meeting

Jan. 11–16  
Philadelphia

#### PLA 12th National Conference

March 25–29  
Minneapolis

information, library materials, and services. During his seven years of service to the library, Verdoia ensured that policies to protect children from unsuitable online content did not lead to filtering Internet access. He also encouraged the library's marketing department to develop a campaign emphasizing that parents are responsible for choosing appropriate materials for their children at the library and advocated for expanding library services to the Hispanic community.

### Baker and Taylor Entertainment Award

The L.D. Fargo (Wisc.) Library received the Baker and Taylor Entertainment Award, which provides a public library with a grant to build a collection of audio and

video products. According to Chet Mulawka, chair of the Baker and Taylor Entertainment Award Jury, “[We] choose L.D. Fargo Library in order to support its dedication to the development of early literacy skills. The grant will help the library purchase materials that will be used by individual borrowers as well as local daycare facilities and library programs.” Visit [www.lakemills.lib.wi.us](http://www.lakemills.lib.wi.us) for more information about the L.D. Fargo Library.

### Charlie Robinson Award

Sandra Feinberg was recognized with the Charlie Robinson Award, sponsored by Baker and Taylor, for her achievements as the director of the Middle Country (N.Y.) Public Library. Since 1991, Sandra’s visionary leadership has resulted in the expansion of the Middle Country Public Library in size and services, as well as financially. Feinberg’s dedication stems from her belief that public libraries should be family and community-centered institutions. Under her direction, the Middle Country Public Library’s early childhood literacy program became a national model for urban, rural, and suburban libraries.

### EBSCO Excellence in Small and/or Rural Library Service Award

Kenai Community (Alaska) Library received the EBSCO Excellence in Small or Rural Library Service Award. As a library serving a population of less than 10,000, Kenai Community Library demonstrated a commitment to its patrons by recognizing a need for greater access to health information. In response to Alaska’s high suicide rate and statistics that showed 18 percent of Kenai adults

had been diagnosed with three or more chronic diseases, the library developed a program that included a collection of health information services, a series of health presentations, and three Web pages dedicated to health issues. Find out more about the Kenai Community Library at [www.kenailibrary.org](http://www.kenailibrary.org).

### DEMCO New Leaders Travel Grant

Four new librarians were awarded DEMCO New Leaders Travel Grants for their dedication to the profession, financial need, and desire to contribute to their libraries through training. Janet Eldred, Lise Chlebanowski, and Susan Fisher each received a \$1,500 grant. Terri Romberger received a \$500 grant. The awards will be used to offset the cost to attend the PLA National Conference or the PLA Spring Symposium.

### Public Libraries Feature Article Contest

This contest awards cash prizes to the authors of the best feature articles, written by public librarians, and published in the previous year’s issues of *Public Libraries*.

The first prize award of \$500 goes to Meagan Albright, youth services librarian at the Alvin Sherman Library (a joint use public library) at Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, for her article “The Public Library’s Responsibility to LGBT Communities: Recognizing, Representing, and Serving,” which was published in the September/October 2006 issue. Second prize of \$300 goes to Mary Cospier LeBoeuf, director of the Terrebonne Parish Library System in Houma, Louisiana, for her article, “Ill Winds: Hurricanes

and Public Libraries Along the Gulf Coast,” which was published in the May/June 2006 issue.

PLA congratulates all 2006 award winners. Visit [www.pla.org](http://www.pla.org) for more information about the awards, the awards’ selection process, and the PLA President’s Program at ALA Annual Conference. Nominations for 2007 awards will be accepted beginning in August 2007. 

### Erratum

In the March/April 2007 issue of *Public Libraries*, an errant quotation mark may have obscured the designation of a direct quotation in the article, “Consequences of Promoting the Public Library’s Educational Role.” On page 58, the Thomas Augst quote (reference number 29) actually is as follows:

“As Carnegie. . . declared in 1900: ‘I choose free libraries as the best agencies for improving the masses of people, because they give nothing for nothing. They only help those who help themselves. They never pauperize. They reach the aspiring, and open to these the chief treasures of the world—those steeped up in books. A taste for reading drives out lower tastes.’ As Carnegie’s comment succinctly summarized, the ‘agency’ of the public library was moral uplift and social control. . . These public libraries were not only ‘instruments’ of social control, but also the nineteenth century’s most impressive symbols of what Astor termed the ‘general good of society,’ of liberal capitalism’s capacity to create ‘civilization.’” 



**SUSAN HILDRETH** is the State Librarian of California; shildreth@library.ca.gov.

Susan is currently reading *Thirteen Moons* by Charles Frazier.

# Engaging Your Community

## A Strategy for Relevance in the Twenty-First Century

As PLA president and as a state librarian, I constantly talk about library services, trends, issues, and challenges. I am proud to be able to serve as a spokesperson for libraries, but of all the topics I touch upon regularly, I think the most important one is making sure that libraries are relevant in the twenty-first century. I believe that the ultimate goal of everything that I do is to ensure that relevancy. As an aside, although I have not been surprised by too much during my PLA presidential year, I have been amazed at the amount of contact with the press that I have had. I think that is positive—it shows that library issues are being considered by the media. Of course, some of the issues may be somewhat negative, but when you are in conversation about libraries, you can usually turn the discussion into a positive one highlighting the strengths and assets of library services. For those of you contemplating leadership roles in PLA, make sure you take advantage of the great media training offered by ALA!

Ensuring the relevance of public libraries in the twenty-first century is a challenge. I wanted to highlight recent efforts undertaken by PLA and the Urban Libraries Council (ULC) that support the relevancy and sustainability of libraries. PLA has made a valuable investment in its history of support for service planning in public libraries. Although those activities have occurred in a variety of ways throughout the years, the current approach is clearly documented in *The New Planning for Results: A Streamlined Approach* (ALA, 2001) by Sandra Nelson. The PLA planning process has long provided assistance for public librarians to envision, evaluate, and respond to community needs with distinctive programs and services. *The New Planning for Results* continues that effort and represents an all-in-one guide that outlines a tested, results-driven planning process, revamped and streamlined to enable librarians to respond quickly to rapidly changing environments. One of the key elements in this planning process is the involvement of the library's community. Library service plans are based on what the community wants and needs, not what the library staff determines is right for the community.

In addition, Sandra Nelson and June Garcia have been hard at work during the last year retooling and revitalizing the service responses that are a key element of this planning process. While I was preparing this article, seventeen proposed service responses were being discussed on PLA's blog ([www.plablog.org](http://www.plablog.org)) and were further refined after discussions held at the 2007 Midwinter Meeting. I believe the variety of these service responses, from expressing creativity through customer-created content to building successful enterprises for our communities' businesses and nonprofits,

demonstrate the uniqueness and depth of library services. These new service responses are thoroughly documented, with information on suggested target audiences, typical services and programs, policy implications, critical resources, and possible evaluation measures. The responses will give librarians a great opportunity to review their community service plans. Engaging your community and matching appropriate service responses with unique community needs is a key factor in remaining relevant and being successful in the twenty-first century.

*Editor's note: The 2007 Public Library Service Responses are now available as a digital download (electronic publication), visit [www.pla.org](http://www.pla.org) for more information.*

In my recent column on rural libraries, I introduced the concept of asset mapping, in which community activities and solutions to problems are based on the capacities, skills, and assets within that community, building on internal, existing strengths, and not depending on external resources outside of the community. This approach is very similar to the approach used in a recent Urban Libraries Council (ULC) report that takes a close look at the roles libraries can play in building community. This report is available at the **ULC Web site** ([www.urbanlibraries.org/files/ULC\\_PFSC\\_Engaged\\_0206.pdf](http://www.urbanlibraries.org/files/ULC_PFSC_Engaged_0206.pdf)). The report focuses on the efforts and programs of several branches of the Chicago Public Library. The researchers investigated the situations of new, renovated, and established branch libraries to determine how the social networks in the communities served were created, developed, and sustained to build successful libraries and communities.

The report states that “the researchers began with the premise

that successful community building involves discovering and mobilizing layers of assets already present in every community.”<sup>1</sup> Those assets include the skills and resources of individuals, the power of community relationships, physical infrastructure in the community, the local economy, and other community assets. Who is better prepared to identify all those resources than the local librarian? The local library has key assets that it can contribute to the community asset base as well—space, technology resources, community knowledge, and trust.

Key lessons were identified in this study:

- Get outside the doors. Successful community-library relationships are proactive.
- Find the leaders. A concerted effort to discover who's who in a community makes all the difference.
- Be creative about what the library can contribute.
- Discover and contribute to the unique capacities and conditions of the community.
- Support local businesses and institutions.
- Make the library building a community center.
- Create a community-minded culture among library staff and volunteers.
- Support library investments that jumpstart community redevelopment efforts.<sup>2</sup>

I believe these principles must be followed by all libraries, no matter what the size or location may be, to ensure library engagement and relevancy in the twenty-first century.

Finally, to remain engaged and relevant for our born-digital customers, we must embrace technology as

an integral part of how we participate in life. For many of us, including myself, technology has been added to my original set of skills but has not really become second nature to me. However, technology has now become the fabric of modern life and must be an integral part of library service planning. One such experience that is becoming common for our born-digital customers and is currently visited by more than 2.4 million “residents” is **Second Life** (<http://secondlife.com>). Some of you may be familiar with this world, but I know that it will be new for others. I am basing most of my comments about Second Life on the observations of Cindy Mediavilla, library program consultant at the California State Library.

Second Life is a three-dimensional, online world where participants, through their avatars (computer-generated personas), can experience history, politics, commerce, community building, and other aspects of life. The typical participant is thirty-three years old and speaks English. Teens have a presence on Teen Island, but do not dominate the landscape. Only adults who have been cleared to do so can visit Teen Island. Interestingly, there are about the same number of female Second Life participants as there are male.

To participate, visitors must have access to high-end Internet software and a high-speed connection. The site is especially attractive to hackers, so the platform is constantly being revised, posing a challenge for many users. Because participants navigate using an ambulatory avatar instead of just a cursor, there is a steep learning curve to acquire the skills needed to fly or even walk down the street. Once users register, they are sent to Orientation Island, where they

learn the intricacies of their new virtual world. Users who were not born digital report that it takes at least ten hours to feel comfortable enough with the program to venture into the Second Life world. Providing access to all the activities available in Second Life may be a challenge for many library IT departments, with security as the priority, but we must find ways to make these opportunities available in the library setting to engage our born digital users.

There are many worlds (usually called islands) represented in Second Life. Some of these attempt to recreate real-life historical periods, where participants can go to experience the Middle Ages, for instance. Some of the worlds present an environment where one can experience other realities, such as schizophrenia. Dance halls and gambling clubs exist but are regulated, just as they are in real life. The San Jose State School of Library and Information Science is developing a presence on Second Life as are other universities. Commerce is a big part of Second Life, especially because avatars need a place to live and clothes to wear. Money (via credit card) can

be exchanged for Linden dollars, Second Life's currency.

Libraries have become an important part of Second Life. In fact, many librarians have assumed the role of tour guide through Second Life. The Alliance Library System in Illinois worked with a consortium of various librarians worldwide to create Information Island, which houses a main library, a medical library, "Mystery Manor" (where visitors can experience horror stories), and a space dedicated to science fiction. Free e-books are available through the main library.

Second Life presents the world of the future, and libraries must have a presence there. There is much educational potential, as Second Life is completely interactive; participants must collaborate with others to build islands or even a simple thatched-hut home. It also is a nonthreatening environment in which to try new ideas and policies.

In addition, Second Life presents the opportunity to study reality through a hypothetical lens. Entering Second Life can make one feel like an anthropologist studying an unknown culture. Students, therefore, are

forced to develop their observational and critical-thinking skills.

I would encourage all of you to check out Second Life and see how it might be integrated in your library service program. It would be interesting if we could expand Information Island to become a 24/7 virtual reference island providing service to Second Life residents. We need to be in this world to remain relevant for those who assume that Second Life is second nature to everyone.

This is my last PLA President's column. It has been a great opportunity and an honor to serve in this role. I would like to thank the PLA staff, board, and members for all their contributions to support me and the efforts of this great organization. I wish Jan Sanders, incoming PLA president, great success in her term. 

## References

1. Urban Libraries Council, "The Engaged Library: Chicago Stories of Community Building," 2005, [www.urbanlibraries.org/files/Ulc\\_PFSC\\_Engaged\\_0206.pdf](http://www.urbanlibraries.org/files/Ulc_PFSC_Engaged_0206.pdf) (accessed Jan. 7, 2007).
2. Ibid.

# Readers Respond

continued from page 2

Perhaps rural libraries in California are *negative* and *deficient* (doubtful), but this would not describe the rural or small libraries in Ohio. The statement demonstrates a lack of understanding of libraries serving limited populations and is so derogatory.

Libraries serving rural populations share the same problems as our larger neighbors except for the fact that there is a shortage of staff, money, and employee benefits. Small libraries typically do more with less money than our big sisters and brothers, which does not make them *negative* and *deficient*, but rather *vibrant* and *efficient*.

Asset mapping is a "no-brainer" in smaller libraries where directors, boards, and other employees have identified community resources out of necessity.

Until you have worked in a rural library serving limited populations, you will not understand that statements and comments such as those in this article do nothing to address the issues concerning smaller libraries. They only serve to show a total lack of understanding of the problems at hand.—*Toni Whitney, Director, New London Public Library, Ohio* 

**BEVERLY CHOLTCO-DEVLIN** is the Reference and Electronic Resources Consultant with the Mid-York Library System in Utica, New York; bdevlin@midyork.org.

Beverly is currently reading *Skylight Confessions* by Alice Hoffman

# Reference, Passion, Trust, Technology

Reference librarianship: what a terrifically dull name for a vocation filled with such passion, many thrills, and sometimes frustration, but almost always some tangible visceral sense of fulfillment. When visitors come for tours of the Mid-York Library System headquarters in upstate Utica, New York, where I serve as a reference consultant to our forty-three member libraries, I tell them that I have the best job not only in the place, but, dare I say, on the planet. And, though I am a relative newcomer (fourteen years) to the field, the time has been long enough for me to marvel every day at this place in this world where I have found myself and the sacred trust that others place in my own and other librarians' abilities to help them. I suspect others who do reference work may agree. I offer that the terms *passion* and *reference* belong together and are not mutually exclusive.

Some background is in order. In 1993, one of those magical synchronous convergences of circumstance and opportunity, as well as a monumental flash of insight on the part of Sue Greenhagen, a fellow library school student and board member of the tiny Morrisville (N.Y.) Public Library, happened to forever change my life and the lives of many in that community. I was the extremely new director of the library. Sue brought to my attention a grant titled Project GAIN, which would give our library (along with five other rural libraries in New York state) full access to the Internet, including a new computer; all telecommunications charges; access to several databases, including FirstSearch; a zippy 2400 baud modem; and training in such amazing tools as Veronica, Archie, and Gopher. Miraculously, our library was selected, and we were introduced to Jean Armour Polly, Wally Babcock, and Charles McClure; their collective and individual passion for both libraries and the role of technology in helping people access information served as a touchstone for all who participated in the project and for countless others to this very day.

Many amazing stories came from this good fortune. Before we received this grant, the Morrisville library was in danger of closing its doors. The library's meager \$19,000 annual budget had us on our knees to the point that we had turned off the hot water and were delivering overdue notices in person to save on postage. The **story of Project GAIN** has been told elsewhere and can be read at [www.ifla.org/documents/libraries/net/gainrpt.txt](http://www.ifla.org/documents/libraries/net/gainrpt.txt). The library now remains open with greatly increased funding.

The point I want make here, though, is to relay the exact moment in 1993 when I understood passion and trust in reference service and how it relates to technology. A local judge (who was famous in our area as an author of plays and stories) came into the library late on a Saturday and asked if I

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could get a copy of an original letter in a newspaper from the 1800s for a performance he was to give that Tuesday. He wasn't exactly sure of the newspaper's title. I was his last resort, he told me. I had the decidedly naïve advantage of not realizing that this was most probably an impossible request and told him I would try. I spent the better part of that Saturday night and most of the next morning learning how to use WorldCat. I found four possible holding libraries with two possible titles and, not knowing any of the normal interlibrary loan protocols, tried calling each of them. The first three were closed on Sunday. The fourth, a university library in Virginia, was open. I tried hard not to sound too green or too desperate as I made my request of the young man who answered the phone. "Sure, I'll go get it for you," he said without one iota of hesitation. He then faxed it to our village clerk's home office, as we did not have a fax machine at the library. I ran to her house. When she handed the fax to me, and I confirmed that this was the letter the judge wanted, I knew in that moment I had found my calling. I knew joy in work when I handed it to the judge the next morning.

I tell this story because, to this day, I remind myself that the truly important people in this story are the judge, for his amazing trust in me, and that young man at a Virginia university, who unquestioningly understood and shared my passion. This reference transaction has been followed by many thousands since, each important and significant in its own right because of the trust that the public has placed in me.

This memory was triggered by an article I highly recommend that appeared in the August 15, 2006, issue of *Library Journal*. "Drafted: I Want You to Deliver E-Government" was written by John Carlo Bertot, Paul T. Jaeger, Lesley A. Langa, and the very same Charles McClure who helped our poor library more than a decade ago. In this article, the authors address the increasing reliance of the public *and* the government on public libraries for the dissemination of critical government information in such areas as health care, disaster relief, and water rights. The authors also address the disparate and inadequate funding sources for providing such access. Additionally, the need for changes in the education of information providers in the public library sector was emphasized. Suggestions for changes to policy, practice, and librarian education are included.

What is the connection between this article about public libraries' role in the provision of e-government and the passion and trust I feel are the hallmarks of quality reference service?

This past June, several areas of upstate New York were devastated by severe flooding after countless days of rain.

Many of the libraries in our Mid-York Library System, as well as our neighbors in the Mohawk Valley Library System along the Mohawk River and the Four County Library System along the Susquehanna River, played an essential role in helping people whose homes and businesses were destroyed or damaged from the raging flood waters. Fortunately, none of our Mid-York member library buildings were damaged by the floods. Some libraries in other systems, however, were not so fortunate and were either heavily damaged or completely destroyed. Patrons flocked to libraries in all of the systems for information and assistance with filing claim forms for their personal losses. In our system, directors Tommie Jennings of the Ilion Free Library (along the Mohawk River) and Sandi Zaffarano of the Middleville Free Library (along West Canada Creek) both reported that they had difficulty getting to their libraries due to flooding. The clerk from Middleville had to walk across a flood-threatened bridge that bisects the village and had been closed to vehicle traffic. Once library staff were able to open the libraries, they reported that many patrons took advantage of the information the libraries provided regarding government assistance for flooding, and that Internet use, which was always brisk, was extremely heavy. Staff at the Ilion Library reported that they

helped several people navigate the government Web sites to help them get the forms they needed.

My colleague and friend Mary Grace Flaherty, director of the Sidney Memorial Public Library in the Four County Library System, was at home on the Wednesday morning that the Susquehanna River crested and flooded its banks and the village of Sidney. She knew she needed to get to the library. She and her husband loaded their canoe on her car and drove as far as they could until they were about two blocks from the library, where they were stopped by a police officer. He told them that they could not go any farther—that the roads were flooded and that the current was too strong for a canoe. Flaherty told him that she was the director of the library, and she needed to get there to possibly help people and to see what she could do to save the library’s resources. The officer agreed that she indeed was a provider of essential services and asked if her husband would escort her through the hip-deep water. When they arrived, they found the lower level was under five feet of water. She took care of what she could at the time, but knew that the library could not be opened that day.

As happened with libraries in the Mid-York System, library staff spent many hours at Sidney helping patrons find and fill out Federal

Emergency Management Agency forms and access the other government e-resources they needed to help them.

Unfortunately, at the time of this writing, some of these libraries in upstate New York are still grappling with the effects of this flooding. But the image of Flaherty being carried by her husband through dangerous flood waters to her library will always symbolize the passion and trust that make reference work special.

All of these experiences have been mirrored by countless other library staff in times of need, both here in upstate New York and throughout the country in recent months and years. Libraries are increasingly becoming the expected providers of such service; the authors of “Drafted” note that it is important for our communities, our funding sources, our governments, and especially us, to understand this shift and its implications. The authors call for addressing these changes with policy and changes in library education. On the local level, the passion of these librarians and their staffs (and husbands) for providing access to e-government resources and the trust that police officers and library customers placed in the library’s ability to provide these essential services are what make reference work the thrilling and fulfilling vocation it is and libraries the crucial resource they are. 



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*Arthur and George* by Julian  
Barnes and *Devil in the*  
*White City* by Erik Larson.

“Tales from the Front” is a collection of news items and innovative ideas from libraries nationwide. Send submissions to the contributing editor.

## Freeze Holds at Arapahoe Library District

If you’re going to be out of town for an extended period of time, but don’t want to lose your place on the hold list for library items if they happen to become available while you’re gone, the Arapahoe (Colo.) Library District near Denver offers a freeze option. If an item you have frozen becomes available, it will be sent to the next person on the waiting list until you choose to reactivate, or unfreeze, the hold. When you unfreeze an item, you are automatically placed on the waiting list again according to the date you originally placed your hold. That way, you don’t have to reenter your hold request and go to the end of the waiting list.

You will not have the option to freeze an item if it is already in transit to your library or ready for you to pick up at the library. Frozen items that are not reactivated after 255 days are automatically reactivated by the system.

For more information or assistance using the freeze option, send an e-mail to [ask@ald.lib.co.us](mailto:ask@ald.lib.co.us).

## SOLINET and bLogistics Collaborate to Help Members Manage Discards

SOLINET, a nonprofit membership organization serving more than 2,800 libraries of all types and sizes in ten southeastern states and the Caribbean, and bLogistics are collaborating to help members manage

materials that are no longer in circulation. Based in Denver, Colorado, bLogistics facilitates media product Internet sales on behalf of its clients

bLogistics accepts surplus books, CDs, and DVDs from libraries and then sells these items on such e-commerce sites as Amazon, eBay, and Alibris. Sales revenue is shared between bLogistics and the library. Libraries use bLogistics’ services to replace local book sales or to complement them by sending those items that do not sell in the library’s bookshop.

“The management of discards takes a lot of time, staff resources, and physical space,” said Timothy Cherubini, SOLINET manager of program management and development. “bLogistics handles the inventory management, pricing, and order and payment processing. This increases the library’s productivity by freeing staff members to focus on other responsibilities. It also heightens revenue potential by expanding the customer base for these products.”

The bLogistics program also is environmentally friendly. Items that do not sell are donated to nonprofit organizations whenever possible. Those items that cannot be donated are recycled. Nothing sent to bLogistics ends up in landfills.

Details about SOLINET’s partnership with bLogistics are available on the bLogistics product page on the **SOLINET Web site** ([www.solinet.net/bLogistics](http://www.solinet.net/bLogistics)). A referral form is linked to the product page, allowing interested libraries to get involved.

## Colorado State Library Launches Library Jobline

Library Jobline, a searchable database of job openings in libraries and related information organizations, has been launched by the Colorado State Library (CSL). Developed by the staff at Library Research Service (LRS) with the help of the Jobline Advisory Committee, interested librarians can check it out at [www.LibraryJobline.org](http://www.LibraryJobline.org) or follow the links from CSL's Web site ([http://www.cde.state.co.us/index\\_library.htm](http://www.cde.state.co.us/index_library.htm)).

The new site replaces the former static Web page with a database. The database of job ads allows users to customize the job posting and job-seeking experience. It also permits data collection for future use in trend analysis in library and information jobs as evidenced in online job ads. Users may set up an account as either an employer or a job seeker. Provide information about the job you are trying to fill or the job you are trying to find, and Library Jobline does the rest.

For more information, visit the **LRS Blog entry on Library Jobline** ([www.lrs.org/blog/ViewItem.asp?Entry=139](http://www.lrs.org/blog/ViewItem.asp?Entry=139)). Additional help is available by contacting a member of the LRS staff at [lrs@lrs.org](mailto:lrs@lrs.org) or calling (303) 866-6900.

## Expanded Global Libraries Initiative

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has announced grants to three countries totaling \$17.5 million to help ensure that people in Botswana, Latvia, and Lithuania have the opportunity to benefit from the latest information and training available on computers and the Internet. The grants will help each

country plan for or provide no-cost information technology services and training in public libraries and reading rooms. The grants are part of the foundation's Global Libraries initiative, which is expected to invest \$328 million throughout seven years to support computer and Internet access in public libraries in twelve to fifteen countries.

Today 87 percent of the world's population (five billion people) have no access to the Internet. The vast majority live in developing countries, which means that those with the greatest needs often do not have the opportunity to access valuable health, education, and government information that can improve their lives. The Global Libraries initiative partners with grantee countries to address this inequity and help strengthen global development.

Botswana, Latvia, and Lithuania were invited to participate in this first round of funding based on a number of criteria, including a national commitment to building a knowledge society and providing equal access to technology, a demonstrated need, the presence of a strong library system, and the potential for implementing and sustaining this critical service for the long term.

For more information contact Martha Choe, director, Global Libraries initiative at (206) 709-3400.

## Library Protection Act Approved on Permanent Basis

The Erie County (N.Y.) Legislature voted unanimously to make the Library Protection Act (LPA) a permanent local law. For fourteen years, Buffalo and Erie County Public Library (BECPL) trustees, staff, and Friends have urged lawmakers to extend the term of this law beyond

one- or two-year renewals and make it permanent.

"This action by the County Legislature represents a landmark in BECPL history and serves as encouraging evidence that the library and Erie County government have become stronger partners in delivering higher levels of service to the taxpayers of our community," said BECPL director Michael C. Mahaney.

First enacted in 1992 as temporary legislation to safeguard the library's annual budget appropriation from the county, LPA designates a portion of Erie County's property tax exclusively for library purposes. LPA neither sets a tax rate nor assures a specific level of funding, but it does guarantee that funds appropriated for the library's use cannot be reduced or reappropriated by Erie County during the course of the year—a practice that persisted prior to 1992.

For more information, contact Ami Patrick, community relations officer, at (716) 858-7182 or e-mail her at [patrick1@buffalolib.org](mailto:patrick1@buffalolib.org).

## Fund-raising via Create a Craft Parties

The Avalon Public Library, a small library in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, has established Create a Craft birthday parties as a fund-raising method for the library. Parents first select a party theme, such as Angelina Ballerina, Bob the Builder, Cinderella, Dora the Explorer, Hello Kitty, Little Mermaid, Princess or Prince, Max and Ruby, Wonder Pets, and so forth. The parent will then select a craft. Library director Susan McClellan can assist with the selection when parents need help; crafts can be anything from fun foam crafts, jewelry making, puppet making, purse decoration, sand art, sun

catcher crafts, t-shirt decoration, or flip-flop decoration—it depends on the party theme. Final party preparations are discussed with the director. The parents provide the paper products, birthday supplies, and the food.

The Avalon Public Library staff read stories to the children, provide such entertainment as games and themed activities, and help the partygoers with their take-home crafts for only \$5 per child. Parents have told the library staff that this presents a nice alternative to Chuck E. Cheese or having the party in a restaurant, as the library is an inexpensive place to have a birthday party. The birthday parties have turned out to be well-liked; the most popular is the Princess theme, with fun foam crown and castle decorating.

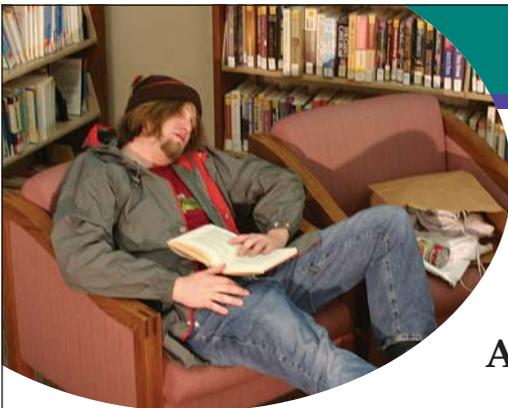
For more information, call the library at (412) 761-2288 and ask for Susan or e-mail [mcclellans@einetnetwork.net](mailto:mcclellans@einetnetwork.net)

### St. Paul Friends Create Library Consulting Group

Responding to a growing need for highly qualified consultants, the Friends of the Saint Paul (Minn.) Public Library launched Library Strategies, a new library consulting group. Coordinated by the staff of St. Paul's nationally recognized Friends organization, the Library Strategies group includes more than thirty-five prominent consultants from around the country who specialize in a broad range of services.

With a mix of leading librarians and other well-known consultants, Library Strategies offers a wide array of enhanced services and skills to libraries, library foundations, and Friends organizations. Library Strategies services include fundraising, managing foundations and Friends organizations, technology and strategic planning, advocacy training, leadership development and workshops, coaching, and keynote speeches on related topics. The consulting group expects to expand its services based on demand from the library marketplace.

For more information, contact Sue Hall, Library Strategies coordinator at (651) 287-0060 or send an e-mail to [librarystrategies@thefriends.org](mailto:librarystrategies@thefriends.org). 



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and *The Glass Castle* by  
Jeannette Walls.

“Perspectives” offers varied viewpoints on subjects of interest to the public library profession.

# Making Changes and Staying Happy

Since we’ve taken on the “Perspectives” coeditor assignment, Nanci Milone-Hill and I have become alert to ideas that could be good column topics. Those ideas come from experiences in our own libraries, our professional reading, and subjects we’ve always wanted to know more about. Our ideas also come from colleagues. That was the source of this issue’s subject. “Help! We have to reorganize,” read the e-mail. “What are other libraries doing?”

To Dianne, I hope the essays here will inspire you and make it easier for you to implement changes at your library!

## Organizational Change

JODENE GLAESEMANN, WALT BRANCH LIBRARY SUPERVISOR, LINCOLN CITY (NEB.) LIBRARIES;  
J.GLAESEMANN@LINCOLNLIBRARIES.ORG

I am fortunate to work in a library system whose director understands that we have to change so we can meet our customers’ needs and exceed their expectations. After an invigorating week at the PLA conference in Boston in March 2006, I returned to my branch overflowing with ideas for change both behind the scenes and out where the public would see it in our proactive customer service. This is the story of those changes and how our organization changed as a result.

I began putting up large, self-stick Post-it notes in our break room. Every couple of weeks I would pose a new question. The answers rolled in. I asked:

- “What comments do you hear customers making about Walt Branch (positive and negative)?”
- “What would make it easier to do your job?”
- “What does customer-centered service mean to you?”
- “Why can’t we . . . ?”

- “Pat your co-workers on the back. Tell us what you’ve seen them doing well!”

These have been a good way for us to brainstorm as we plan our fifth-anniversary celebration. Every staff member has another way to voice their opinion. We heard from staff who otherwise would not share their opinions, from aides (shelvers), and from our wonderful volunteers.

Another behind-the-scenes organizational change with a positive impact on customer service is the morning briefing. These are held fifteen minutes before we open, two or three times a week. They differ from regular staff meetings in that there is no set agenda. Not everyone attends, but participation includes aides, volunteers, and even maintenance staff if they’re in the building. Different staff members take turns being in charge of the morning briefing. This includes rounding up staff, getting the ball rolling, and being sure there is someone taking notes. The notes are then sent by e-mail to all branch staff, and a printed copy is posted for aides and volunteers. While some people were initially hesitant and unsure about these briefings, I now hear them ask, “Do we have a briefing this morning?”

These informal meetings provide a good way to share ideas and concerns, and they sometimes lead to researching a specific policy. One morning, a staff member shared her frustration with an adult who was using her child’s card to check out all adult materials because the fine accrual rate on children’s cards is lower. This led to a discussion where we learned that staff was handling this situation in various ways. I did some checking on what a system-wide response should be, and we

implemented a new, uniform way of handling this situation.

I put fresh flowers in the public restroom to the surprise and delight of the customers. Public restrooms, while a necessity, are rarely pleasant. What a fun, easy way to provide a positive experience! It allowed staff to look at new and different ways to provide good customer service beyond asking, “Did you find what you need today?”

We began guerilla displays this past summer to market the collection. The staff have embraced them. There is a Post-it note in the break room for staff to list topics for possible guerilla displays and another Post-it for staff to sign up to prepare a display on that topic. These are up anywhere from one day to one week and appear in various locations throughout the building. Topics we have used include Smoke Out Day, National Maple Syrup Day, National Pizza with Everything Except Anchovies Day, Pearl Harbor Day, Talk Like a Pirate Day, and more. It is fun to watch customers discover new (and old) materials they never knew we had. The displays provide a creative outlet for the staff, too. They think of our collection in new ways and take ownership of it.

I believe that everyone who works in the library has a role in providing customer service. That includes the aides, our book shelvers. Who knows the collection better than the people who shelve 40,000 items each month? They are among our best service representatives. No, they do not do in-depth reference or reader’s advisory, but I’ve seen many great librarian-like moments. I’ve seen a teenage aide help a grade-school boy find books on audio cassette. She then took it one step further and marketed our collection by showing him books on CD as well as telling

him about books that come with a CD so he could read and listen at the same time. I’ve seen aides explain to customers what a graphic novel is and where they are located. These are important customer service interactions that do not require the customer to wait in line for a “real” librarian. With this in mind, we’ve encouraged our aides to provide this type of assistance and asked them to track how many customers they assist each day. We do this with positive reinforcement, both verbal and written. We let the aides know what a crucial role they play in making that link with customers. These assistance statistics are then incorporated into our monthly statistical report.

Our branch was built with large public service desks that can be intimidating to the customer. Why make them approach the big desk with their questions? At various times throughout the day, staff is now scheduled to float. Floating entails walking through the entire building and meeting customers where they are, rather than being confined to one public service desk. We take the library service out on the floor. As a bonus, while walking throughout the building, we are more likely to spot areas of the collection that need shifting, spot damage to property, pick up pieces of paper, push chairs back in, and keep an eye out for those inappropriate situations we sometimes come across in the stacks! This also allows us to keep tabs on the groups of young adults coming in after school. It has taken some adjustment for some of the staff who are not quite comfortable with floating, but they are getting used to it. Change is not always easy!

Some of the changes I’ve mentioned are visible to the public. Others are behind the scenes. All of them have benefited our cus-

## The manner in which [change] has been implemented over the past year has allowed the staff to be part of the process, to own it, and to thrive—to the benefit of our customers!

tomers because the staff are more involved, engaged, and informed. Outcomes from this change in how I supervise and think of customer service include staff creating guerrilla displays even when it's not their assigned month and then making sure the display is up; non-supervisory staff being in charge of briefings, which gives them experience leading a staff meeting and ownership in how the library does business; and staff that often look at things from the customer's perspective (for example, if we change the font on these signs, they will be eye-catching and easier to read). Overall, we've changed as a branch and an organization in the way we look at providing service. The manner in which this has been implemented over the past year has allowed the staff to be part of the process, to own it, and to thrive—to the benefit of our customers!

### Self-Service Works!

KEN WERNE, BLUE VALLEY BRANCH MANAGER, JOHNSON COUNTY (KANS.) LIBRARY; WERNEK@JCOLIBRARY.ORG

Can we make self-service work? Will patrons be willing to help themselves? Will it truly free up the staff so they can provide better service to patrons?

We hoped to find answers to these questions when we decided to institute a self-pickup and self-check service model. The Blue Valley Branch of the Johnson County Library is a suburban branch in Kansas, in an area that continues to grow at a fast pace. Patrons are also transacting

more of their business online. In summer 2005, the two trends created a perfect storm, with requested and returned materials completely filling the processing area. Patrons became frustrated with the long wait for their requests. Staff members were overwhelmed. We knew that we had to try a different approach.

In spring 2006, our branch was selected as the pilot site for a new model of service—self-pick-up of holds and self-check of all materials. Four newer model self-check machines would be replacing our two older models. I conferred with Farmington (N.Mex.) Public Library, which achieved a very high percentage of self-check (*Public Libraries*, March/April 2006), as well as a branch of the Kansas City (Mo.) Public Library that used self-pick up of holds.

### Physical Arrangement

Blue Valley staff members discussed different physical arrangements of the self-check machines and approaches to displaying holds. We decided to install one of the new machines in our youth services area, because the old one had always been very heavily used. The other three machines were spread across our main checkout counter, where the number of workstations for direct service to patrons was reduced from four to two. The location of the hold shelves was more challenging, but Blue Valley staff members developed an arrangement that was: (1) easily accessible by walk-in patrons, (2) separated patrons from the processing area

and equipment for returned materials, and (3) close to the drive-up window. The new location, directly behind the checkout counter, had the added bonus of requiring minimal changes to the checkout area. Staff members came through again by thinking up a method of labeling holds that was easily understood by patrons but protected their privacy. Each slip lists the first four letters of the patron's last name, their first initial and the last four digits of the account number. All items are shelved spine-down, providing another layer of privacy. One final layer of privacy was virtual, with the requirement that patrons would need to enter their patron identification number to check out.

### Patron Education

Initially, we anticipated that the new service would be very staff intensive. We were not disappointed. Patrons did not know their patron identification numbers (PINs). They were hesitant to walk behind the counter and enter a staff-only area. They were afraid of the technology and the machines. The scanners on the new machines are very sensitive; if the patron is slow to move the item, it is renewed by the system and appears on the checkout slip twice. We continue to receive many questions and concerns from patrons when this occurs. While many patrons are used to self-service in retail and banking outlets or have no hesitancy to try something new, we know that the patron education process will be ongoing. Staff members assure

patrons that they can continue to have their materials checked out by a staff member at one of the two remaining staff-interactive terminals. Staff members walk first-time patrons through the pick-up and self-check process. If the patron does not want to do it, the staff member checks them out using the self-check machine. Many times the patron realizes how easy it is, and we win a quick convert.

### Patron Feedback

We have received many more positive comments than complaints or concerns. Patrons appreciate the ability and opportunity to grab their own materials and check out quickly without waiting in long lines. Comments included: “love it!,” “did not realize that you have so many holds,” and “just moved here; my old library allowed me to get my own holds; I am excited I can do the same here . . .”

Concerns and complaints have included: “miss the personal interaction of working directly with a staff member,” “it’s just another thing that we have to do ourselves now,” and “difficult to complete the self-check with more than one young child in tow.”

### Changes to Date

We eliminated the need for a PIN. Months after we began the pilot, many patrons still did not know their PINs. No other checkout transaction requires one—staff-assisted or with the old self-check machines. This one change alone had a huge impact on the amount of time spent by staff members walking patrons through the checkout process.

### Future Changes?

We would like to replace the large, massive checkout counter with

kiosks. Currently, patrons enter and exit the holds area through one doorway. It would be much more welcoming to patrons and much easier for staff members to assist them if both parties did not have to walk around the counter.

Another change we’d like to make is to work with our integrated library system provider to allow self-check on all items except those with a hold on them; currently, 5 to 6 percent of the transactions at the self-check machines are refused, which means the patron may end up waiting in two lines to be served. Reasons for the system refusal include incorrect card numbers or item statuses block the transaction—checked out, missing, lost, discard, or on hold.

We’re considering working with our integrated library service provider and our information technology staff to reconfigure the printing function so that the slips can be automatically printed. Currently, we must continue to manually print all hold slips. The whole holds process will be much more efficient and less staff-intensive if we can overcome this barrier.

### Summary

We have found that patrons are more than willing to help themselves. As noted above, feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Most patrons appreciate the convenience of being able to retrieve their own holds and check them out themselves. Circulation clerks are still available to provide friendly, one-on-one service when preferred or needed.

Circulation clerks are freed up to provide better service. The percentage of materials checked out using our self-check machines has increased from fewer than 20 per-

cent to between 55 and 60 percent. Clerks are less hurried when interacting with patrons, improving the interaction there. Clerks are also freed up to process the ever-increasing volume of materials checked out or requested. During the busy summer months, despite some position vacancies due to turnover or injury, a large backlog of materials did not develop in our processing area, and patrons’ wait time for their holds did not increase.

We look forward to fine-tuning our process and freeing up more staff time to allow us to continue to meet the needs of our ever-growing population.

### A New Supervisor’s Philosophical Perspective

PATRICIA M. JACKSON, SUPERVISOR, ACQUISITIONS AND CATALOGING, THE FERGUSON LIBRARY, STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT; PAT@FERGUSONLIBRARY.ORG

That “change is neither good nor bad—it merely is,” has been ingrained in my psyche since I first heard the phrase some time ago. After implementing a new acquisitions system, becoming a supervisor, and combining two departments, all in less than a year, I still fundamentally subscribe to this view.

Perhaps change is easier to accept when you’re not permitted to remain stagnant. Our primary jobber decided to change its book ordering and accounting system. Enter change one. Forced into change because of the elimination of outdated technology, there was no opportunity to agonize. Our jobber would no longer provide an accounting feature; we needed to acquire this from our integrated library system (ILS) vendor via an acquisitions module.

My library hired a consultant from our ILS vendor so the vendor could

## . . . it's important to weigh the cost-benefit of important decisions, and some change results in unforeseen or unwelcome outcomes, while other change provides unexpected benefits.

fully understand our operation and needs. We met with the consultant and reviewed our current acquisition workflow, and then we purchased the module, set a date for training, and created a product implementation timeline. Yes, they were the best-laid plans.

ILS training has a lot in common with professional sports; it looks easy enough, but be really careful if you try it at home. I was the library's cataloger at the time, and I didn't have the experience to see that the acquisitions training we received from our ILS vendor was insufficient. It was only after I tried to fully implement the module that I discovered that some key training elements were missing, namely 9xx and Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) ordering. *(Editor's note: 9xx allows the packaging or order information as part of a MARC record, while EDI is a standard that allows the transmission of electronic orders and invoices.)*

Working primarily with our main book jobber, we got the 9xx ordering working. But it was several months and three system upgrades before our ILS even had the capability to order electronically the way in which we needed it. It turns out that EDI ordering wasn't enough; we needed something called "enhanced EDI" to transmit processed orders to our jobber.

In the interim, when the library director asked me if the acquisitions module was functional, I replied with a smile, "No, but we're pretending it is." This pretending required

us to invoice each line item manually, and I'm sure I still owe the acquisitions staff a few lunches for that charade.

The transition to our jobber's new book database was less traumatic. Initially, the main flaw of the jobber's new ordering system was that it was Web-based and our Internet connection wasn't up to speed. On particularly bad days, the acquisitions staff would work from home. Once this issue was resolved through the library's participation in the Connecticut Education Network's high-speed Internet connection, everything went fairly smoothly. Our jobber provided training on use of its database, and we provided in-house reinforcement training several months later to offer clarification and information regarding local practice.

During the transition to the new acquisitions module, I was promoted to supervisor, and my first task was to combine the acquisitions and cataloging departments. The change made sense, and moving the acquisitions group from the business office into cataloging was well-received. After settling the seating arrangements, the change was rather smooth. I think this transitional ease stemmed from each group remaining somewhat self-contained, although closer in physical proximity. Looking for ways to integrate the two groups more closely will be phase two of the department integration.

Probably the greatest challenge for the acquisitions group was

leaving a long-time supervisor. The greatest challenge for me was helping these employees adapt to a different management style and helping guide their adjustment into the new acquisitions module. My greatest regret was not having a meeting with them early on to discuss how we would handle public relations within the library regarding any negative feelings from the library staff (and ourselves) during our transition to a new ordering system. By the time I had this conversation, some damage had already been done and it was difficult to reverse.

Change is inevitable in any viable organization. Of course, it's important to weigh the cost-benefit of important decisions, and some change results in unforeseen or unwelcome outcomes, while other change provides unexpected benefits. But, change, in and of itself, isn't good or bad; it merely is.

### Doing More Despite Having Less

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In 2002, McMillan Memorial Library was running out of space for public service growth while statewide spending limits and a troubled local economy were beginning to erode funding for both facility improvements and staffing. To meet the needs of the community under

these circumstances, the library was required to both expand public service space and reduce the size of the staff. During the last four years, the library has renovated a 5,000-square-foot storage area to expand public service space and endured a reduction in staff from twenty-three to sixteen full-time equivalents (FTEs) while preserving the high quality of library service. This success was accomplished through a thorough rethinking of the library's operations that resulted in an integrated reorganization of the library's facility and the staff.

Analyzing the library and studying the best practices of other leading institutions formed the basis for this reorganization. Internal analysis included a space needs analysis, an expansion feasibility study, and an extensive analysis of the work of library staff at all levels. Ideas from other libraries were gathered at library conferences and through research and visits to leading libraries. Major components of the reorganized facility and staff included maximizing self-service while maintaining quality, consolidating public service desks, reducing departmental designations, providing cross training for flexibility, and moving behind-the-scenes tasks to service desks.

### **Maximizing Self-service While Maintaining Quality**

The most obvious self-service components added were self-checkout and self-service holds. The redesigned and relocated circulation services desk handles fewer than 15 percent of the total circulation. This allows a reduced clerical staff to focus their efforts on greeting library users and assisting them with library card registration and late-fee

problems. Internet signups are automated and most holds, renewals, and meeting room bookings happen online. Online magazine and genealogy databases provide access to important collections for patrons at home or work. Self-service is never forced or required. Staff is always at hand to assist with self-checkout problems as well as available to check out, perform searches, or place holds.

To further promote self-service, the library's renovation improved the arrangement of the facility and its signage to encourage ease of use. The library user's ability to browse fiction, nonfiction, and audiovisual collections has been greatly enhanced through the substantial use of bookstore-style shelving. Almost 12 percent of the adult print collection is displayed in thirty-two genres and subjects using this new shelving. This promotes the best and brightest part of the collection, while also functioning as a gateway to similar books in the stacks. Sixteen similar display units will soon be added in the youth services department to complete the move to browsing gateway collections. The entire magazine collection also is shelved by subject. Each of the self-service improvements has been popular with the public and extremely helpful in reducing the workload of the staff.

### **Consolidating Public Service Desks to Unify Service Points**

The amount of staffing a library requires depends directly upon the number of public service desks it supports. The library found that one, and at times two, of our major service desks were not needed in a self-service environment. At the start of the process, McMillan had four

major service desks on two levels. The library now functions with three major service desks and can operate with only two staffed desks in periods of light use.

### **Reducing Support Staff Departmental Designations and Providing Cross-training for Flexibility**

With the exception of technical services, the library has eliminated departmentalization and consolidated all nonmanagement clerical staff into a single job description. These general-purpose staff members are cross-trained to work throughout the library as needed to enhance scheduling flexibility and efficiency. The library has maintained a sub-clerical position classification for shelvees, who also work throughout the library as needed. The library's six professional staff members and two management paraprofessionals have retained their departmental designations but are expected to be able to oversee the entire library. Everyone, from shelvee to director, is trained to help patrons acquire self-service skills, such as using the catalog, self-checkout, signing onto the Internet, and the many other tasks that patrons usually perform for themselves.

### **Moving Behind-the-Scenes Tasks to Service Desks**

In many libraries, especially those in suburban or rural areas, staffing efficiency is hurt by not using staff members who are covering service desks to perform other, behind-the-scenes tasks in between patron contacts. Staffing both a service point and a back room is wasteful unless the volume of public service

## We are nearing the completion of a significant space use plan that is designed to facilitate staff-patron interactions. . . . Reconfiguring the location and style of our service points within the library lets staff be where our patrons are.

makes this necessary. In smaller communities such as Wisconsin Rapids, staffing efficiencies can be gained by having these important functions performed by one rather than two people in one rather than two locations.

Stationing behind-the-scenes duties in public areas improves public service. Our library has found this to be an especially useful way to provide assistance with self-checkout problems. Professional librarians try to minimize time in back rooms to allow for more time in public areas. Our use of roving reference techniques is under development. All service desk telephones are cordless to allow staff to work and roam away from the desk. All staff wear name badges so that users can identify them when away from a service desk.

By the end of the reorganization process, McMillan Library appears to have, for the time being, weathered the budgetary storms. Despite a seven FTE staff reduction, no one is overworked, and the library's robust public service program has been preserved. The reorganization of the facility and the staff has been well-accepted by our community. Our library is deeply indebted to such libraries as Richmond Public Library in British Columbia for the leading the way into a new era of public library service. The educational mission of the public library is more essential than ever. Finding ways to be more effective and efficient have helped our library thrive in this time of diminished funding.

*Editor's Note: Ron McCabe is author of Civic Librarianship: Renewing the Social Mission of the Public Library (Scarecrow, 2001). Andy Barnett is the author of Libraries, Community, and Technology (McFarland, 2002).*

### Leading through Change

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The philosopher Heraclitus said "Nothing endures but change." At the Rapid City (S. Dak.) Public Library (RCPL), we are always changing to meet the needs of our community. Because of the impact of social networking, libraries must dramatically change their delivery of library services. Patrons are coming to expect the same or similar service that they get in the digital world.

While organizational change has always been a large part of RCPL's tradition, we realize that not since the Internet has such a shift like this taken place within the profession. RCPL is repositioning the use of our space, usage of employee skills, and delivery of services to address this next wave. We have addressed each of these areas simultaneously: Our service desks are reconfigured into individual staff and public workstations, four departments were combined into two, and our selection model is a hybrid of centralized and decentralized processes.

We are nearing the completion of a significant space use plan that is designed to facilitate staff-patron interactions. Libraries are about a community's public space and, through a charette process of reviewing the redesign and location of service points and materials, we maximized the use of our floor plan.

Reconfiguring the location and style of our service points within the library lets staff be where our patrons are. We dismantled our fortress that was the reference desk and created three smaller desks distributed throughout the library. One is in the stacks, another is near our public computers, and a third will be near the entrance lobby. We also dismantled our citadel known as the circulation desk. That, too, has been segmented into three smaller desks. One desk is now much closer to the entrance, allowing staff to greet patrons entering the building and monitor security gates. The two other desks face into the library, and are now much more obvious points of contact for patrons wanting to checkout materials.

Staff members at any of these new service points are now equipped with whatever they need to carry out tasks in between transactions with patrons. In addition, we pulled the holds shelving out from behind the circulation desk and made it into a self-service holds unit. Shelving was also rearranged along a sweeping arc, allowing easier and more open access to materials.

We combined four departments into two. Youth services and reference

were combined and now staff continually service points in both areas. We retrained both staffs for both areas; they quickly learned the strengths and skills of each department. The result was a higher level of service. Circulation and technical services also were combined. Again, we retrained both technical services and circulation staff members to do all tasks that were once in the two former departments. To facilitate this process and remove any hint of the old structure, we divided the department into three teams who work rotating shifts. Each team has at least one expert at specialty tasks who can help others who are less proficient.

Coincident with these changes, we revamped our selection process and how we track what subject areas we purchase. Whenever possible, we purchase patron requests locally. The pricing is similar to other vendors, but our response time is much better; we are now down to a couple days turnaround time from request to patron. Our patrons love it, and our request numbers keep going up. Our patrons are essentially doing some of our collection development for us.

To better anticipate requests, we started using cataloging statistics rather than budget expenditures to track where in the collection new items are added. We have heard about the selectors who think *The Da Vinci Code* is nonfiction and pay for it out of the biography budget. Catalogers, however, know the difference, and by relying on their

statistics, we correct for these types of errors. This helps us ensure that we are on target with information resource development plans.

We have found that the best way to prepare both staff and the community for change is through training and advertising: We do as much training as we can in advance, advertise the forthcoming changes to our public, and then make the changes. In the process of implementation, we evaluate the changes. Nothing is sacred. Staff and patron suggestions, along with statistical analysis, may dictate modifications. The results have been positive:

- Since we've dismantled desks, library users have more opportunities to interact with library staff. The number of patron contacts at the circulation desks is up. Circulation stats are up. Use of the self-check machines are edging up. Lines at desks are down.
- As a result of combining departments, the public now has the opportunity to see a wider variety of staff members at our service points. Staff have a deeper appreciation of the big picture and a sense of community with our patrons.
- As a result of our change in purchase selection and tracking, patron requests are up and we expect that to continue. Our local bookstores love us for the business we send them. Because

most of library staff help process these requests, they know which collections are in demand. Most importantly, library users experience a collection that reflects the community's interests.

All of these changes have one guiding principle drawn from social networking: give the library user what they want. Consequently, RCPL is leading through change, but it is change driven by our users. Our organizational changes keep pace with the world around us because our community is keeping pace. If RCPL were a dictionary, we would be descriptive—not prescriptive. We do not prescribe what we think our community wants, we describe their wants.

## Conclusion

“Change is neither good nor bad—it merely is,” writes essayist Pat Jackson from her Connecticut library. What a good reminder!

Some of this issue's contributors have had to make some significant changes. Others have introduced smaller changes. They describe how they helped staff and patrons get accustomed to new ways of doing things.

The results? Staff are empowered. The budget goes farther. The building is better-used. Patrons are happier. The bottom line: better service for all concerned. 

**DOMINIQUE**

**MCCAFFERTY** is Special Services Librarian at the Riverside (Calif.) Public Library and a part-time Reference Librarian at California State University (San Bernardino).

She is currently reading *The Double Bind* by Chris Bohjalian.

Deb Caletti was interviewed by Dominique McCafferty via e-mail in the summer of 2006.

“Book Talk” provides authors’ perspectives on libraries, books, technology, and information. If you have any suggestions of authors you would like to see featured in Book Talk, or if you are interested in volunteering to be an author-interviewer, contact Kathleen Hughes, Editor of *Public Libraries*, at the Public Library Association, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611; khughes@ala.org.

# She Believes in Love

## An Interview with Deb Caletti

**D**eb Caletti’s young adult novels have had brilliant success. *The Queen of Everything* earned a starred review in *Publisher’s Weekly* and was also an ALA/YALSA Best Books of 2004 Finalist. *Honey, Baby, Sweetheart* was a National Book Award Finalist, a PEN USA Literary Award Finalist, an SLJ Best Book of the Year; a New York Public Library Best Books for the Teen Age 2005, and Kirkus called it, “tender and poetic.” *Wild Roses* also won acclaim with starred reviews in *Publisher’s Weekly* and *School Library Journal*.

And Deb Caletti has an incredibly kind heart. When I first wrote to ask her if she’d be willing to talk with me, I discovered that I’d hit “send” prematurely. I immediately sent an embarrassed follow-up and figured I’d lost my chance with Deb altogether, but she reassuringly wrote back: “First, let me say that I am one who not only sends e-mails when they are not done, but I also send e-mails to the wrong people, commit all sorts of grammatical crimes in my e-mails, and manage to find all available e-mail mishaps. . .” She proceeded to tell me a story which involved her accidentally sending an e-mail with her name signed, “Deb Banana.”

Deb lives with her family part time on acreage in Issaquah, a Seattle suburb, and part time on a houseboat on Lake Union. Her most recent novel, *The Nature of Jade*, was released by Simon & Schuster in February 2007.

**PL:** What was your childhood like?

**DC:** I grew up in the San Francisco Bay area in the mid to late sixties and seventies, so I was in tie-dye heartland. My mother painted oil paintings, blasted *The Fifth Dimension* in the living room when she vacuumed, and

took us to rock mass. My father was in the optical business (no, he was not the homicidal optician in *The Queen of Everything*) and traveled a lot. We moved every two years or so when he got transferred, and reading was my constant. I was an awkward, book-loving kid. I am still an awkward book-loving kid.

**PL:** What were some of the books you enjoyed reading as a child?

**DC:** I loved Beverly Cleary and Ramona. Ramona and I were kindred spirits. Little Bear, same. Nancy Drew, naturally. I still have my full set. I wanted to be her but never could quite stumble on a mystery like she did. I also loved *From the Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*. I was so happy when I finally went to New York and saw the bed Claudia slept in when she ran away to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. I still have all those books, actually.

**PL:** Did your parents read to you as a child, or did you discover books on your own?

**DC:** Yes, my mother read to me. I distinctly remember her reading *Charlotte's Web* aloud. And we made frequent trips to the library. It was my favorite way to spend the day. I was the kid who would bring home the huge stack I could barely carry. And then, of course, comes the deliciousness of figuring out which order you intend to read them. I loved the summer reading programs when I was a kid. I still have my Rocket Reader card from the summer reading program of 1970, Modesto Library. My name, Debbie Caletti, is written in a rocket ship, and under that, Outer Space member. My kids might agree with that part.

**PL:** Do you remember how old you were when you started writing?

**DC:** I was about six when I started writing. My school used to have these required storywriting contests with a winner per grade level. If you won, you had to read your story in front of the entire school, which seems a bit cruel to me now. Later, my hippie third grade teacher used to write “Groovy!” on my stories, which made me feel I was onto something. I kept writing and became a published lyricist when I was eighteen. My desire to write came from a love of books and reading. I am a reader before I am a writer.

**PL:** So your third grade teacher was encouraging. Were there other teachers who appreciated you?

**DC:** Both of my really inspiring professors were actually from the two years I spent at a community college before I transferred to the University of Wellington; Joanne Kotker and Pauline Christiansen. They took my existing book passion and lit a fire to it. Joanne loved Hemingway and ignited my forever love for him. Pauline was a funny lady who got so excited when she talked about literature that you couldn't help but be excited too. In her class, in lieu of a regular analytical paper, I wrote a story in the style of Flannery O'Connor. Pauline pulled me aside then and said the story had real merit. She even showed it around the department. Several years ago, I contacted Pauline to say thank you. Because of Pauline's response to my story, I felt like I might actually have talent—maybe enough to be a real writer, whatever that is. It was the first time I felt that possibility as something tangible. I called



**Deb Caletti**

them both after the NBA (National Book Award) nomination, and they showed up at a book signing together. They both raised their hands and asked questions and fought for the chance to tell their stories about me. Then Pauline pulled my old story from her purse—she'd saved it all those years.

The story has further serendipitous ramifications. When I was looking for an agent, I sent a query off to one Elizabeth McKee. I got a letter back from another agent who said that Ms. McKee was no longer active as an agent, but they kept her name on the letterhead out of respect. However, he was interested in seeing my work. The “he” turned out to be my long-time agent, and Elizabeth McKee was Flannery O'Connor's agent. One of the reasons I chose my agent was that he now takes care of Flannery's estate and literary matters.

**PL:** What was your major at the University of Washington?

**DC:** I got my degree in communications, but I was pretty sure even then (as I was reading the news on the campus radio station and lugging video equipment around and doing interviews) that journalism was not for me. I was too shy. I could do it, but it wasn't really suited to my nature. When I was in college, I really wanted to be a playwright. I read nearly every play on the library shelf, and started writing them then. A one-act I wrote was chosen as a finalist in a play-writing competition put on by Stanley Kramer and his wife. I think that reading so many plays really helped me understand how to tackle dialogue.

**PL:** Did you take any writing classes?

**DC:** I took only one writing class in college, and it was the only writing class I ever took. It was enough for me to know I didn't want to take writing classes. I felt so awkward amid what seemed like the self-importance of the students—a self-importance that probably tried to hide a great deal of insecurity, I realize now. I did not want to read my work aloud or talk about it. I am a very private writer and yet the professor always seemed to choose my work to read from (anonymously) and comment on very positively. I still remember my heart thudding away when I realized that hey, those were my words.

This is not to say that I don't believe in writing classes. It's just that I don't believe in them for me. I go by instinct, but I can count on my instinct. I also realized I had a lot of reading to do on craft when I started writing seriously to make up for the lack of classes, and I read everything. What really taught me were the years of being a reader.

**PL:** What were some of your odd jobs prior to earning a living as a novelist? How did you make ends meet?

**DC:** Upon graduation from college, I did some public relations writing, and I worked for an adult education company. I was married and raising two kids. My son was two and my daughter five when I gave myself a talking to. I told myself I would do it then, my writing, and never let go of the dream, or I would have to forget it entirely. I was afraid of the "I always wanted to be a . . ." syndrome. I was really terrified of the sadness of that.

**PL:** Do you think it's a conscious decision on your part to write about love and relationships, or does the writing lead you?

**DC:** It's not really a conscious decision of mine to write about love and relationships, though it is perhaps a conscious one to have both parent and child struggling with the same issues. I like the blending of that, and it seems to be a blending that we forget about. There's a them-us dichotomy about teens (and old people, too), and it's sad to me, that we do that. Even parents do it. I was at my son's soccer game the other day, and this boy butted heads with another boy. His mother said, "That's okay—he doesn't have any brains there to lose anyway." And we wonder why teens can feel disconnected from their parents, and often alienated from adults. I feel alienated from adults like that! In terms of love and relationships, do we really think we've got it all figured out? In *Honey, Baby, Sweetheart* especially, I wanted to show that these are issues we all deal with, and that they don't necessarily go away with age. Actually, in terms of life—do we really think we

have that figured out either? I think we all have our struggles, regardless of age, and the ways we are common are more interesting than how we are different. We give teens this sub-human label and I'm thinking we adults are just faking having all the answers. Or maybe it's just me. If anything, maybe teens are more honest about their struggles.

Why I write what I do is often a mystery to me, too. Sometimes I get through the whole thing before I have the aha! moment, when I realize why I spent a year on that story. Usually it has more to do with a portion of my life I'm trying to sort through, rather than some great big important message I'm trying to relay for the benefit of others. It's sort of the way my mind gives itself therapy, I guess the way I come to my own conclusions, through my characters coming to theirs. I start out with characters, people I like and want to spend time with, and a rough idea of where we're leaving from and where we're headed. I usually have no idea how we're going to get there, or why we're on the trip at all. Those are the places of discovery you stop at on the way. The scenic views you didn't plan on, the best spots to take pictures.

**PL:** You bring a lot of focus to bear on the bad boys in your books. There are quite a few of them.

**DC:** In regard to the bad boys in my books: We have Kale in *The Queen of Everything*, and he is just sort of the popular jock who can't see past himself, someone I see often in boys that age. He's almost a cliché, but the boys who are like that seem like clichés to me. In *Honey, Baby, Sweetheart*, you have the dad and Travis, different types from Kale and from each other. Dad is the inaccessible love object

who offers crumbs we eagerly gather up, and Travis is all danger, just out of reach. In *Wild Roses*, you have Dino, who is brutally harmful and dark but who has something extraordinary and (to the mother) extraordinarily compelling.

Bad boys, then, I guess, in my books and in my life, have come in different forms. In choosing someone, I can think I'm chalking off one bad thing off a list when I don't see it in a partner, yet find there's a new form of bad that hasn't even occurred to me to look for.

**PL:** It assumes another form.

**DC:** My first husband was a bad boy. I was actually dating a very nice, all-American type when I met him. But when my husband-to-be came along . . . he was gorgeous and dark haired, dark eyed.

Simmering, mysterious, aloof (there—the magic word). A challenge. To me he was so appealing because I was the good girl—an A student and neurotically nice. He was the antithesis of everything I knew or thought of being (but perhaps secretly thought of being). It was handy in a way, because I didn't have to do bad things myself, but being with him gave me that kind of thrill while maintaining my niceness. Vicarious badness. He smoked (which seemed very sexy to me), had lots of girlfriends, had lots of secrets. And inevitably I married him and found that I had married a thundercloud in all the worst ways (and I do mean all the worst

ways). He cured me of thinking I could “love” a bad boy. Seeing them as sexy in a passing way is another thing, but never again would I want one as a partner. Simmering is exhausting. Anger is scary. Secrets are disorienting. When I try to examine the draw he had to me, it seems that, besides the vicarious element, his dangerous demeanor perhaps demonstrated something fearless, and fearlessness spoke of power, and being chosen by someone with that power made me feel powerful, too, and oddly, wrongly, absurdly, safe. These are things I hope young women, *all* women, can avoid but probably won't.

**PL:** As I was reading your books, the question that kept arising was: Why are women intrigued by bad boys, for goodness sakes? Are you familiar with the song “Spanish Dancer” by Patti Scialfa? I think that song is about the bad boys in women's lives. As I was reading *Honey, Baby, Sweetheart*, I was simultaneously listening to that song—driving to and from work. I lived with it for days.

**DC:** The repeated word in that song is “Dark/Darkness” and the repeated theme is the desire to be chosen by someone who is likely to deny you. These are themes I certainly understand the allure of. I think women fall into this trap often.

**PL:** Which writers do you admire?

**DC:** I admire so many. Going back in time: Hemingway, Flannery

O'Connor, Cheever, Updike, all the great playwrights. I also like contemporary greats—Anne Tyler, John Irving, Richard Russo, Richard Ford, Charles Baxter, Barbara Kingsolver. Also Alice Hoffman and so many others. Next on my stack is the new novel (*Lost and Found*) by Carolyn Parkhurst—author of *The Dogs of Babel*, which I loved.

**PL:** You will love *Lost and Found*. It is one of the very best novels I read last year.

**DC:** I am trying to get up my nerve to read Joan Didion's *Year of Magical Thinking*, but I'm not sure if I can handle it.

**PL:** Tell us a bit about your latest book.

**DC:** The book that is out now is *The Nature of Jade*. It's about a young girl who struggles with anxiety and who begins to work at the elephant house of the Woodland Park Zoo. It's a novel about human nature and animal nature, about fears, and the ways it can keep us caged. It explores the need to move on, even when that means leaving good things behind.

**PL:** Is it safe to say it has something to do with the nature of love?

**DC:** Surprise—no. Familial love, love amongst people who are “your people,” yes. But it's more about money and the things we hunger for. Just another topic I hope writing will help me better understand. 

# Librarians Are Cooking Up A Storm!

What's your recipe for **SUCCESS**?



At the Suwannee River Regional Library system in Live Oak, Florida, they simmer their broth with **Deep Freeze**. Other libraries add a generous helping of **FORTRES** seasoning. Some invite volunteer **cooks** into the kitchen or develop robust meal plans.

**T**he MaintainIT Project is gathering practical tips and techniques from libraries about how to maintain public computers. These stories will be the main ingredient in easy-to-use Cookbooks, distributed free to public libraries.

## MaintainIT

What's your recipe for success?  
Tell Us: [www.maintainITproject.org](http://www.maintainITproject.org)

The MaintainIT Project is a part of TechSoup ([www.techsoup.org](http://www.techsoup.org)), a nonprofit serving fellow nonprofits and public libraries with technology information, resources, and product donations. The MaintainIT Project is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.



**DAVID LEE KING** is Digital Branch and Services Manager, Topeka & Shawnee County (Kans.) Public Library; davidleeking@gmail.com. David is reading *Peter and the Starcatchers* by Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson.

**MICHAEL PORTER** is Community Associate at Webjunction.org; michael.libraryman@gmail.com. Michael is reading *Galatea 2.2: A Novel* by Richard Powers.

If you have feedback about this article, would like to suggest a topic for future Internet Spotlight articles, have an interesting Internet resource to share, or if you just want to say hello, please feel free to e-mail the editors.

“Internet Spotlight” explores Internet and Web topics relevant to librarians in the public library sector. Your input is welcome.

# Thirty-seven Sites in Two Thousand Words or Less

**David and Michael:** Greetings *PL* readers!

**Michael:** Hey, David, is it just me or is this Internet Spotlight column especially exciting?

**David:** Oh my, yes! We really put our noggins on the line for this one.

**Michael:** True! I hope people like our Michael and David’s *Public Libraries* Internet Spotlight Column Listing Thirty-seven of Our Fave Sites for Public Librarians to Visit, Think, and Talk about.

**David:** That title is way too long and wonky.

**Michael:** I know. Our editor is going to think we sprung a noggin muscle or something.

**David:** Well, I *do* have a headache . . .

**Michael:** As long as the readers don’t get a headache!

**David:** Well, it *is* a useful, practical list. Though I hope some of the things we’ve included ruffle some feathers.

**Michael:** Yes! In fact, dear readers, please send us your suggestions and comments.

**David:** I’m betting somebody will send us a link to [www.youguysarenotvery-smartorfunny.com](http://www.youguysarenotvery-smartorfunny.com).

**Michael:** I'm not worried because I radically trust our readers.

**David:** Let's just hope the next top fifty list is written by reader submissions.

**Michael:** As long as they don't sprain their noggins thinking of sites.

**David:** I sprained mine just coming up with that idea!

**Michael:** Ugh. Let's dive into our list before this gets any more corny.

**David:** Hey, you wrote the dialogue! But you're right, let's get on with it. Ready? One, two, three . . .

**Michael and David:** Dear readers, we feel these sites are worth exploring. We do not endorse any single product or solution. We do not suggest you buy things from or submit any personal information to any site without doing your own research first. With that, we present to you:

## Michael and David's Public Libraries Magazine Internet Spotlight Column Listing Thirty-seven of Our Fave Sites for Public Librarians and Public Library Staff to Visit, Think and Talk About, Edition I

### 1. <http://del.icio.us/libraryman/article2/top50>

This is the only full Web address in this article. Go there to find links to every site mentioned here!

### 2. **Bloglines**

Bloglines is a Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feed reader (aka

aggregator). It is free. You use it to organize and read your RSS feeds. It took me (Michael, not David) a few passes to understand it. Once I did "get it" though, it changed the way I use the Web.

Spending some time figuring out RSS and RSS readers is important. We believe both will be around for a long time and will become a deeply integrated part of how we all use the Web during the next several years. If you are new to RSS we suggest you get started with Bloglines. See also: **3. Pageflakes**, **4. Google Reader**, **5. Netvibes**, and **6. My Yahoo!**

### 7. **Google**

Near the top for several reasons. First, whether you like them or not, Google is on top of the search game.

Google also ranks high in our list because Michael and David currently collaboratively write this column using **8. Google Docs & Spreadsheets**. David is in Kansas and Michael is in Washington State, but we don't care a whit about that! We can do all of the most common word processing tasks with Google Docs, then share documents and edit them as a team (even at the same time). We can even revert to older versions of a document. You don't have to lug documents around on a computer or a storage device because they are always on Google's servers and are always accessible using an Internet connection. Did we mention you can do spreadsheets here, too? Plus, you guessed it; the software and service is free.

But where do these Google people come up with their ideas anyway? Sure, they buy little sites like YouTube and Blogger, but when Google integrates these tools into a new product or service, they do so in the **9. Google Research** arm of the company. Go visit Google Research and get some

fascinating sneak peeks into Google's emerging ideas and projects. If you are so inclined (and we sure are), it can be simply fascinating.

Other reasons for listing Google high-up on our list: Google Alerts, Blog Search, Book Search, Catalogs, Checkout, Desktop, Directory, Earth, Finance, Froogle, Images, Local, Maps, News, Patent Search, Scholar, Specialized Searches, Toolbar, Video, Search, Code, Co-op, Labs, Blogger, Calendar, Docs & Spreadsheets, Gmail, Groups, Picasa, SketchUp, Talk, Translate, Maps For Mobile, SMS, Pack, and Web Accelerator. That is what we found this week, anyway. Perhaps we should have just written an entire article about Google!

### 10. **Netflix**

A DVD library. A model Web site. A model fulfillment (aka interlibrary loan [ILL]) service. Look! You can create queues of items you want! Look! You can connect and share lists with your Netflix-using friends! Look! You can rate every title you see in an amazingly simple way. Look! Netflix uses an amazing algorithm to actually recommend things you'll LIKE based on your ratings! Why don't libraries do this right *now*? We'll likely write an article here about Netflix very soon. It's that good (see also **11. Blockbuster**, **12. Peerflix**, and **13. SmartFlix**).

### 14. **LibraryThing**

Catalog your home library—your entire media library, not just your books. You can even scan in item bar codes! Please offer this service soon, big-library-service organizations (see also **15. Delicious Monster**—like LibraryThing but, as of now, just for Mac users).

## 16. Pandora

Like Netflix, Pandora has figured out how to make recommendations with an algorithm that includes user ratings of songs, user-selected artists, and conceptual phrases describing songs taken from the **17. Music Genome Project**. Need proof Pandora might be worth checking out? As of December 2006, MSN is using Pandora to fuel their formerly less-than-stellar MSN Radio. Pandora tells Michael that many of his favorite songs include “funky rhythms” and “extensive vamping.” He is not at all ashamed to admit it, either.

## 18. Flickr

If you like digital images, computers, and have friends or family with whom you'd like to share your photos, use Flickr. Sure, it is about photos, but it is really about sharing and connecting people with similar interests. Flickr is entertaining, engaging, and a fun way to learn about practical, yet cutting edge people-connecting technologies.

## 19. MySpace

Played out? Relevant barometer? It doesn't matter; MySpace is simply an important thing to at least understand and experience. You probably already know this, but: MySpace is a social networking tool. Each MySpace user can have a blog, a bulletin board, videos, pictures, music, links to books, comments, a profile, lists of schools and colleges attended, and a friends list. And all of this can be wildly customized.

There are a few other exceptional social networking sites worth checking out too, such as **20. Facebook** (which is a bit less loosey-goosey than MySpace). **21. LinkedIn** also connects people socially, but is

exclusively designed for making professional connections.

## 22. WebJunction

Administered by **23. OCLC** and funded in large part by the **24. Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**, this is an electronic community for librarians. Professional learning, community connections, and affordable technology are some of the main focuses of WebJunction. WJ has been making some serious improvements to its Web site, learning tools, and resources recently. There are several exciting things in the works to make the site even more practical, feature-filled, and usable in the near future. If you haven't visited the site in a while you may want to swing by to check things out again. *Disclaimer: Michael works for WJ, but David picked it, and wouldn't list it unless it really was cool.*

## 25. WorldCat.org

Big stuff from the member libraries that make up OCLC. Step 1: Get your holdings in OCLC's WorldCat. Step 2: Get a FirstSearch account from OCLC. Step 3: Link your holdings to WorldCat.org. Step 4: Look up your books here (many titles that have gone through this process also appear in several major search engines). Find a book you like here and see what libraries in your area have the item. Then, get linked into the library catalog to see its shelf status, and make a request.

Now imagine, for a second (think about it in the shower or as you drift off to sleep perhaps). If you are geeks like us (and we mean geek in the best possible way, natch) you won't be able to sleep anyway! Some of the buzz around [www.worldcat.org](http://www.worldcat.org) intimates that there is potential here to impact all libraries in some pretty fundamental ways. While the site and its features

are still in beta, or early, mode, much thought, time, and energy is being put into the development of this tool. It will get more practical, feature-filled, and integrated over the next several years. So keep tabs on it!

## 26. eBay

C'mon, you know you bought that obscure Hummel figurine, Bob Dylan 45, and rare Atari 2600 game cartridge on eBay. eBay is the long tail in action. Interestingly, eBay takes some of our market away every day. If it's easy and cheap to buy a book and have it delivered via eBay, folks will do it, plain and simple. Actually keeping the book isn't necessarily even a priority—just like a book purchase on Amazon. Instead, convenience is the priority. So what's a library to do? Read on . . .

## 27. YouTube

This is Flickr for videos. YouTube allows you to upload, watch, and tag videos, subscribe to RSS feeds of videos,—just not downloading videos. They were recently bought by some obscure Web company . . . what was the name again? Something that started with a “G” and rhymed with “oogle?” It wasn't too expensive, really, just \$1.65 billion. See also **28. blip.tv** and **29. Joost**.

## 30. Digg

From Digg's Web site: Digg is “all about user powered content. Everything is submitted and voted on by the Digg community. Share, discover, bookmark, and promote stuff that's important to you!”

## 31. Blogger

Make a free blog in ten minutes or so. It is seriously easy and free. And,

surprise: Blogger was purchased by Google in 2005.

### 32. Wikipedia

More than 6 million articles in more than 250 languages, and growing as you read this. We especially like to use it for searches on pop culture. Citizendium is a similar project founded by a cofounder of Wikipedia that promises to eliminate some of the quality and authority concerns that occasionally trouble Wikipedia.

### 33. Pew Internet Project

Read Pew's regular Internet reports to get inspired, excited, motivated and, well, sometimes a little freaked out about emerging trends of Internet use. Fascinating and useful.

### 34. Skype

Make free long distance phone calls from your computers. Some of these guys are behind number 29.

### 35. Technorati

This search engine that tracks more than 66 million blogs. **36. Feedster** is good for blog searches, too.

### 37. del.icio.us (redux)

Sign up for a del.icio.us account, then use it to save and share the list of the cool Web sites you discover. You can add descriptions (known as tags) to sites as you add them to your list. You can log in to your del.icio.us account anywhere in the world and add sites. Once you have friends with del.icio.us accounts, you can view the sites they add to their

accounts, and you can even send each other sites that you think they might enjoy. Some folks find del.icio.us a bit hard to understand at first. David and Michael believe that it is worth understanding and using. Take an hour or so, read up and then practice. Soon you'll be saving, tagging, and sharing valuable Web sites with coworkers, friends, and family all over the net.

So, you now have thirty-seven Web sites to visit and explore. Remember to visit the del.icio.us URL in number 1, where you can find links to all the sites listed here, and a few more good ones, too. Then write us, and let us know: (1) what seems useful to your library, and (2) what you would add to the list! Maybe we'll discuss those in a future Internet Spotlight article. ☐

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young adult library services

THE PRINTZ

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Contributing Editor **LEE PRICE** is the Director of Development at the Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts (Philadelphia, Pa.). In that position and in his previous work as a fund-raising consultant, he has helped to raise millions of dollars for a wide variety of cultural organizations, including many libraries and archives. Please direct all correspondence about the column to him at [leeaprice@comcast.net](mailto:leeaprice@comcast.net).

Lee is currently reading *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay* by Michael Chabon and *Painting as an Art* by Richard Wollheim.

“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.

# Oh, the Money You’ll Raise!

“Congratulations!  
Today is your day.  
You’re off to great places!  
You’re off and away!”  
—*Oh, the Places You’ll Go!*  
Dr. Seuss

**T**he fund-raising bug bit me, quite unexpectedly, when I was in my early 30s. It is really a virulent condition, once you catch it. Your world view literally changes; suddenly, you see life in terms of restricted special projects, capital campaigns, and balanced operating budgets. You see endless cycles of research and planning–fund-raising–evaluation and then back to planning, and you welcome these cycles as good things.

I plunged into work as a fund-raising consultant with the enthusiasm of Sherlock Holmes on a case, exulting, “The game is afoot!” When you have the fund-raising bug, there’s nothing more exciting than discovering the clues that suggest an organization’s potential. And, in my experience, there’s always potential in every organization for invigorating growth through fund-raising.

Granted, some organizations are naturally limited when it comes to fund-raising. If you’re working for an organization dedicated to eradicating a disease, you’re restricted to funders with an interest in health. If you’re working for an arboretum, your fund-raising is generally limited to folks who love trees. If you’re working for a religious organization, your most likely donors will belong to your faith.

But libraries! Ooh, boy . . . What a treat it is for a fund-raising consultant to be invited into a public library! Libraries offer an endless buffet of choices, covering just about every fund-raising option in the fund-raiser’s handbook. Libraries can be competitive with funders who have an interest in health, with folks who love trees, with religious donors, and countless other potential funders with special interests covering innumerable fields. Libraries can raise money through earned income opportunities, or grants from private

## When you have the fund-raising bug, there's nothing more exciting than discovering the clues that suggest an organization's potential.

foundations, or grants from government programs, or corporate sponsorships, or annual appeals, or cultivation of major donors, or planned giving. Libraries are a fund-raising paradise!

That is, of course, libraries are a fund-raising paradise, if . . . there is a commitment to research and planning at the highest administrative levels, there is a willingness to dedicate time toward the task of fund-raising, there are appropriate channels in place to solicit money, and there is the dedication needed to use the money wisely when it comes in. If you've got all four, then, with apologies to Dr. Seuss, "You're off and away!" And, oh, the places you'll go.

### Everylibrary, U.S.A.

Once you start thinking like a fund-raiser, the hard part can be choosing which of the thousand-and-one available opportunities you should pursue. More than most organizations, libraries are extremely flexible in their missions. While remaining true to their missions, they can develop projects that will naturally interest funding sources with interests in specific subjects, like health and human services, or literacy, or arts and culture, or civic issues. I've known libraries to successfully pursue projects in each of these areas. And, in each case, the choice to concentrate energy on one particular subject of interest ultimately raised the overall profile of the library within the community.

Accompany me on a trip to Everylibrary, USA. I'm basing the following fantasy mainly on one particular library that I used to frequent, but with little bits of nine other libraries that I've known and loved throughout my life:

The public library of Everytown, Everylibrary does an admirable job of serving a rapidly growing suburban population that would have classified as borderline "rural" just a few decades ago. The influx of people has included factory workers, seasonal laborers, white-collar commuters, and people moving out of the city to get closer to their roots.

At 7:00 at night, this particular library is easily the most inviting place in the neighborhood. I park in the large well-lit parking lot and stroll toward the entrance, passing a small front lawn. Bushes line the front of the stucco building.

**Fund-raising NOTE:** Some planning and money could certainly spruce this place up a little! They could bring in a local landscape architect to draw up an attractive plan for this space with a reasonable budget. Plaques or park benches can offer naming opportunities for individual donations. Perhaps there could even be some in-kind donations of labor by students in the horticulture or landscape architecture programs at the local community college.

The automatic doors slide open and I enter the library's atrium. It's

a welcoming environment, with the soft buzz of busy people, a short line at the checkout desk, and a sturdy but comfortable carpet underfoot. I get oriented: Checkout is to my immediate left, adult stacks are ahead and to the left, reference is straight ahead, and the children's section is ahead and to the right. To my immediate right, there's a closed door, with a posted sign reserving the room for a board meeting of a local organization that runs English as a Second Language (ESL) programs.

**Fund-raising NOTE:** Has this library pursued any collaboration opportunities with this organization, or with other organizations that regularly utilize the library? Does the library have a book collection that meets the needs of the population that uses ESL programs? Do they have computer software available for ESL education? You know that this is an emerging need in the community, and it would be easy to pull the statistics from recent census data in order to make a strong argument for increased resources addressing this area. There are possibilities for federal, state, and local funding, not just from the traditional library sources but from funders who are principally concerned with social and education issues.

Time to stroll in, passing the line of people waiting to check out books and a person waiting for assistance by the reference desk. I turn to the left,

toward the adult stacks, with sections for general fiction and non-fiction, with separate areas for science fiction, mystery, and large-print. Toward the rear of the building, there's a pleasant expanse of lounge areas and tables for reading and quiet discussion. It's all quite friendly.

**Fund-raising NOTE:** There would be room for a café, if the library is interested in going this route. Sometimes, the work can be leased out to another company, putting relatively little stress on the library's resources and bringing in a small, but steady, stream of additional income. It might even please some of the regular patrons, who are undoubtedly familiar and comfortable with the Barnes & Noble/Borders paradigm of caffeine and books.

Computers are interspersed throughout the building, some specifically labeled for catalog access and others requiring sign-up for internet access. Several computers are not turned on. There are around a dozen people who seem to be waiting for a computer to become available.

**Fund-raising NOTE:** Are there enough computers? What are the demographics, and needs, of the people who are waiting for a computer to become available? Thanks to the work of prominent philanthropists, most notably the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, there is a growing understanding of the need to make computers accessible to all members of a community. If you can document an unmet need in your community, you can raise the money to address the problem.

There is a closed door to my left, with an open window looking into

an unlit room. I peer inside and see a small, special collection of books, newspapers, and other items documenting local history. Some of the books appear new, perhaps written by local authors who reside in the community and probably use the library. Others are visibly old and weathered, their spines detaching and flaking.

**Fund-raising NOTE:** Everytown, U.S.A. has a fascinating history, and the library happens to hold the most comprehensive, as well as the most accessible, collection dedicated to it. Special events can highlight local authors or historians. Even when these events only raise relatively small amounts of money, they still offer great opportunities to cultivate potential donors and to raise awareness of the library's needs. As for the preservation needs of this special collection, there are federal, state, and private funding sources with strong interests in preserving unique records of local history.

I stroll down the stacks, interested in the distribution of people at this particular hour. Some sections are quiet, and others see a brisk traffic. On this particular day, I note that people are tending to congregate in the large-print area, the Spanish language section, the cookbooks, and gardening.

**Fund-raising NOTE:** Collaborations! What are the possibilities for developing projects with the local retirement community (just two blocks away), a Hispanic community organization, a coalition of local restaurants, or a horticultural society? There's a good chance that leaders in these areas are already using your library. For instance, members of the

gardening club probably use your library as a resource. And where there is crossover: Tap into it.

Finally, I complete my circuit of the library by crossing over to the children's section, passing the stacks dedicated to young adult and juvenile books. The children's section is colorful with posters and artwork. As for the children themselves, they are deeply involved in their activities, whether they are on the computers, reading, working on homework, prowling the stacks, or giggling with friends.

**Fund-raising NOTE:** Is this library big enough? This section appears cramped with all the activity. When the library moved into this building, did they foresee the rate at which the community would grow? There appears to be room on the property to allow for expansion. Should the library be considering a capital campaign to increase the size of the building to better meet the community's needs?

My tour ends, my mind buzzing with possibilities. I collect my notes.

## Reality Intrudes

It would be madness for a small- to medium-sized library to attempt every project that comes to mind. Each project mentioned above should emerge from a patient process of research and planning, with the library's leaders carefully considering the pro's and con's of the project before embarking on any fund-raising. But there is certainly potential, at my imaginary Everylibrary U.S.A., for developing some significant and exciting fund-raising projects.

For better or worse, I must offer one slight caveat to this rosy picture:

Public libraries receive the bulk of their support from local government. When the crisis point is reached when budgets must be slashed in unthinkable ways, people often turn to fund-raising in a last ditch effort to make things right again. But in the world of public libraries, fund-raising naturally tends to be supplemental. Through fund-raising, you can purchase books, computers, landscaping, maybe even a new building. . . but you should never count on balancing an operating budget

through a devoutly wished-for wind-fall. That's not how it works. By the time the discussion turns to cutting hours or positions, it's probably too late to cultivate a miracle.

So embrace the prospect of achievable small projects. Celebrate the little successes. Throw a party to announce that \$250 gift to expand your large print collection. Fund-raising is never just about the money; it's about the great things that you can accomplish with a little outside support. All fund-raising

successes are public relations opportunities. Let the world know that your library is valued.

Raising money leads to raised awareness, which in turn leads to more opportunities to raise money. And that's one of the nicest cycles that you could ever find yourself in.

“And will you succeed?  
Yes! You will indeed!  
(98 and  $\frac{3}{4}$  % guaranteed!)”  
—*Oh, the Places You'll Go!*  
Dr. Seuss 

## Send Your Stories . . .

In upcoming columns, I am considering writing about two areas of concern and interest: the new grants.gov portal for federal grant applications and fund-raising projects for “Friends” organizations. I would love to hear your stories and possibly share them here.

Are you adjusting to the new grants.gov system? Please consider sending me a few sentences about your first application through grants.gov, and any advice that you'd like to share for a first-time user of this system.

Also, I'd like to do a positive, upbeat column on successful fund-raising projects led primarily by Friends groups. Of course, I'd love to hear about some blockbuster successes, but stories about small projects are welcome, too. Send them all in.

Please send your stories or comments to: [leeaprice@comcast.net](mailto:leeaprice@comcast.net). Thank you!

## ALA Presents Preliminary Results from Public Library Funding & Technology Access Study

Starting in June, the American Library Association (ALA) will begin sharing results from the 2007 Public Library Funding & Technology Access Study. Preliminary data will appear in a postcard inserted in the June/July centennial issue of *American Libraries*, and initial findings will be presented to the study advisory committee Saturday, June 24, at 9 a.m. in Washington Convention Center Room 149A. The postcards also will be available at the ALA Annual Conference, June 21–27.

The Public Library Funding & Technology Access Study will assess public access to computers, the Internet and Internet-related services in U.S. public libraries, as well as the impact of library funding changes on connectivity, technology deployment, and sustainability in FY2007–2009.

The final report will be available online in September 2007. More information is available at [www.ala.org/plinternetfunding](http://www.ala.org/plinternetfunding).

The project is made possible by a generous donation from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the American Library Association. The survey is conducted by the Information Institute at Florida State University.



Contributing Editor

**MICHAEL GARRETT**

**FARRELLY** is a Youth Services Librarian and graphic novelist living in Chicago; michaelgarrelly@hotmail.com.

Michael is currently reading *Heart-Shaped Box* by Joe Hill, *Owly Volume 2: Just a Little Blue* by Andy Runton, *Stasi: The Untold Story of the East German Secret Police* by John O. Koehler, and *New X-Men Omnibus* by Grant Morrison.

“Passing Notes” focuses on young adult service issues, including programming, collection development, and creating stronger connections with young adult patrons. The column will address these topics with a humorous bent and an awareness that the key to working with young adults is constant reinvention.

# More on Serving Gay Youth

When I was just starting out in library service, I worked as a children’s computer assistant. It’s not a glorious job, mostly consisting of restarting computers and dealing with children who are utterly shocked that the stodgy computers at the library aren’t built for running *World of Warcraft*. I worked with an amazing librarian on the weekends. While most of the librarians simply shifted off little tasks to me (“Could you cut 5,000 stars out using the die-cutter before you leave?”) Ron always treated me with respect and dignity above and beyond my \$8 an hour.

One day a patron came into the department in a red rage. She was livid regarding a large fine notice her daughter had received, and she zeroed in on Ron. He smiled, took the notice in his hand, looked up the book record, and talked the patron down, explaining that he was going to waive the fine if she promised to keep coming into the library. By the end, she was smiling as well and asking about upcoming programming. When she left, I slid my chair over to Ron and asked him how he did that. “That was like watching close-up magic.” I said. Ron smiled (he had the easiest grin of anyone I’ve ever known) and said “Would you rather be self-righteous or happy? Because you have to pick one.” Six years later I still keep those words in mind whenever I’m caught flat-footed. And now, a year or so into writing for *Public Libraries*, I find myself a bit flat in terms of my feet.

A few months ago I wrote a column that struck something of a chord, perhaps discord is more correct, with some readers. I was writing about the sometimes-tricky area of dealing with gay and lesbian teens in a library setting. Some readers replied thinking that my little anecdote at the beginning, in which a young adult patron told me that she had a girlfriend, was nothing short of a homophobic flinch, while others thought I was simply advocating adding a couple of books to the collection and calling it a cause rightly served.

## Watching my language, being careful in what I say and how I say it, a hundred thousand decisions go into every day as a young adult librarian.

In the first instance, I can simply say that my reaction at the time and my honest recounting of my shying away was hyperbolic in one sense. The young patron in question never sensed my embarrassment and was a frequent pal of mine for the whole of my tenure at that library. My embarrassment and concern wasn't expressed on my face or body language, but in that small part of my librarian brain that constantly worries about what role I play in the lives of young adult patrons. Watching my language, being careful in what I say and how I say it, a hundred thousand decisions go into every day as a young adult librarian.

But more important than my own justifications is the matter that there are a great many people who don't know what to say in that situation. Worse yet, they may say something stunningly judgmental ("Are you sure you don't like boys?") without intending any harm. I've heard a number of coming-out stories from friends, and about 95 percent of them involve one or more painfully awkward moments. One friend of mine tried to leave literature from Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) around the house in the hopes of getting a better response from his family.

To the second set of replies, claiming that my bibliographic selections were tantamount to a whole response to gay and lesbian teens, I can only say, not quite.

I approached my initial column on the topic of gay and lesbian teens from a perspective that I don't feel is often addressed in literature

on the topic: the point of view of a well-meaning librarian who wants to engage in advocacy for gay and lesbian youths but is concerned about how and where to start. It can be utterly daunting and at times even intimidating.

Homophobia hides in the most unlikely of sources. The tech services worker who holds up processing a book that frankly talks about gay issues, the page who continuously "misshelves" materials meant for young adults in the adult section, or even the out-and-out bigot who questions if we really want to be "encouraging homosexuality" at the library. If you think these bugbears are the stuff of bad young adult fiction, you'd be sorely mistaken. It can be an uphill battle in the most unexpected ways for a librarian hoping to do outreach to gay and lesbian youth, and no, adding a few books is not nearly enough.

So what can be done, if you're starting with only a pocketful of good intentions and that gracious, easy librarian smile? First, pay a visit to **Lambda** ([www.lambda.org/youth.htm](http://www.lambda.org/youth.htm)) and print out every form, fact, and part of this invaluable site. Everything from facts about famous gay folk to forms for reporting harassment and abuse; it's a good, multifaceted start. Building bibliographies of books for and by homosexuals as well as about homosexuality is always an excellent way to make a statement. Outreach to such groups as Gays and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) and PFLAG could provide a huge resource for your library. Look

for gay and lesbian speakers to come and talk at your library. Sponsor reading groups focusing on gay and lesbian literature or create programming highlighting homosexuality in history. Of course the close-minded can look askance all they like, but who can argue with the literary merits of Oscar Wilde and David Sedaris? Run marathons of *My So-Called Life*, which featured one of the most nuanced gay teens to ever appear on television. Displays highlighting gay and lesbian artists and musicians can decorate your walls any time of year. Offer library space as a meeting place for gay and lesbian teen support groups. Offer contact and resource information on safer sex practices and health concerns for sexually active gay teens. Create a zero-tolerance environment for abusive homophobic language in your library. Inform the young Eminem fan that "faggots" are bundles of sticks suitable for burning and not a correct term for addressing a human being.

That's about 250 words of advocacy. It's a tiny bit of a start, really. You could, and someone should, fill books on the subject. It's about realizing that the library can be an amazing resource for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or questioning youth. Nothing described is above and beyond the kind of outreach and advocacy libraries can do for any number of groups. So if you do get the stray remark from someone who takes offense, just remind him or her that the library is here for everyone—and it's your job to make everyone feel welcome. 

# CLASS

## THE FUTURE OF ADULT PROGRAMMING IN THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

**LORI BRACK** is the Community Learning Coordinator at the Salina Public Library; lbrack@salpublib.org. She is reading short stories by Mary Gaitskill and Sena Naslund.

**JOE MCKENZIE** is Director, Salina (Kans.) Public Library; joemcken@salpublib.org. He is reading *Drop City* by T.C. Boyle and *Gordon Parks: No Excuses* by Ann Parr.

**W**e weren't in the meeting room sitting on the floor for the second session of the Baby Sign class, but they tell us that they saw a child change—just like that. At the first session, he was a fussy, frustrated toddler who could not communicate his needs. But in this small-group setting, with a teacher on the floor in front of him and his parents beside him, he learned a sign to indicate he wanted more food. First, this simple sign and then more, and when his parents came back for the third session, there were tears of gratitude in their eyes and an obvious change in the child. He seemed content and ready to learn more signs at the public library.

This experience took place during the first semester of Community Learning and Skill Sharing (CLASS) in fall 2005 at the Salina (Kans.) Public Library. More than seventy classes, open to adults and teens age sixteen and older, were part of that first semester.

This concept—lifelong learning classes—has the potential to be a new model of adult programming for public libraries. It is working for us after four semesters of classes at the library and across the community.

CLASS is a contemporary, proactive approach to information delivery. Of course, our library offers information services with our reference department, but, as we are learning, that model doesn't fit everyone's needs as more and more people are turning to the Internet for information. Along with other libraries, we are asking how relevant and helpful a reference department can be operating on the historical model of a person waiting behind a desk or counter for the next question. Tired of waiting, some librarians are venturing forth to rove the stacks in search of people to help. We have built strong collections of nonfiction books and audiovisuals for people to borrow and take home. But the majority of library patrons do not ask for help. With CLASS, information comes alive with instructors in small-group settings. Our patrons and new library users



Art by Jim Lange Design

find out about classes through a tabloid-sized catalog inserted in our city's daily newspaper, the *Salina Journal*. The catalog also is distributed at a variety of local sites and the classes are promoted on posters inside the library (some of them posted in the nonfiction stacks near books about similar topics). Word-of-mouth, and public service announcements on local radio also have been helpful.

The library charges fees for most of these classes. In that first semester, we generated revenue of nearly \$15,000, and fee income has grown ever since. The library board was nervous at first about adopting a program that depended on fees, but it has not been an issue with tax-paying CLASS students. There have been times when the most expensive classes have filled up first, such as semester-long Spanish-language and fiction-writing classes. Our experience

indicates that combining information with instruction in a community educational model is a product that people are willing to pay for, just as they do at other schools. Fees average around \$30 per class, with some classes offered for free. Classes are available to everyone, in part, because of support from the local community foundation in the form of a grant to provide scholarships for those who can't afford a class. Classes are as accessible as our collection and other traditional services.

### History

CLASS started in 2001 with a conversation among several people in town. They wanted to learn new things, and they thought others would, too. A long-standing model for lifelong learning existed sixty miles east in Manhattan, Kansas, called UFM

(formerly the University for Man), which provided a start-up grant for CLASS through the state Community Resources Act. To inform the community about this new program, one of the originators, a retired surgeon, stopped by the library director's office. The name of the fledgling group was Learning for Life. On the office whiteboard was a phrase from our mission: "lifelong learning." The doctor made the connection and asked if the library director would join the six-person board. This was a good fit for the library. This small start-up was doing the work of the library, and the library wanted to be involved. Just like that, the public library was part of a grassroots group bringing information to the community in this active, experiential way. The library board agreed to provide meeting and program space to the new program, in addition to free copier use and other support as the group worked to establish its own identity as a nonprofit organization.

This initial project lasted two years, but began to falter when grants dried up and office rent and a part-time director's salary outpaced revenue from class fees. The program was popular, and as with anything new, the board put a lot of effort into publicity and marketing. But the program folded; its board appealed to local education entities, the city parks and recreation department, and the library, to consider picking up this program. The organizers were dedicated to the concept of lifelong learning and didn't want to see the program die.

There was no spring semester in 2005. Learning for Life, now called CLASS, made a proposal to the library board. When the mayor, a businessman and decision-maker, first heard the proposal, he said it was a "slam dunk" and a "no-brainer," a perfect fit for the library. But the library board worried about the new expenses CLASS would bring, as well as the wisdom and precedent of offering a fee-based service. A committee of library board members, Friends of the library, and the CLASS board and its director was formed. After several months and a fresh look at a revised budget estimate, the library board agreed to a trial semester in fall 2005. With that approval came the hiring of a full-time coordinator who would also help with grant writing and volunteer program coordination.

## **CLASS, in Session at the Library**

Key to CLASS's success is direction that includes energy, creativity, and a web of community connections. As with many services, the efforts of a dedicated staff member make the program work. We

strived to gain the support and assistance of library staff; even though the new program affected workloads, each department soon saw its possibilities and benefits. The reference desk handles enrollments; the marketing coordinator designs the twice-yearly catalogs; the tech center director helps with everything from the Web site to software applications; and the business office keeps the books on income, expenses, and grants.

After the initial flurry of enrollments and positive media and community comments, library staff became enthusiastic CLASS supporters as well as students and even instructors. The first semester included a book repair workshop led by our staff. As the program has developed, library staff have shared skills in jewelry making, origami, Kansas travel, and more. This fall, library staff brought a proposal to our policy review committee requesting fee reductions on lifelong learning classes as a benefit of employment, and we adopted a policy that allows our employees to enroll in any class for 25 percent off the fees charged to the public.

If you lived in our community, wouldn't you be interested in learning to play the folk harp? How about grilling and tailgating? What about *CSI: Salina*? That's right: Enticing names of classes, along with zippy blurbs in the catalog, are essential to success. Our first semester included essential feng shui, yoga, quilt basics, Mexican desserts, women's self-defense, and ballroom dancing. The dance classes were so much in demand that we added more sessions. Cooking and languages (Spanish, Japanese, baby sign language) also were popular. We scored a nice public relations coup when our long-standing and popular city manager retired, and we asked him to teach the Texas Hold 'Em Poker class. He brought name recognition and credibility, and when the newspaper covered his retirement party, CLASS was in the lead—as one of the ways he would spend his post-retirement life.

When CLASS came to the library, we added a number of how-to classes, such as how to listen to classical music, led by the symphony conductor; how to read the newspaper, with its editor and publisher; and how to experience sculpture with the local sculptor whose work was recently installed on our state capitol dome. Participants—many of whom hadn't used the library in years—liked getting to know these instructors, and we liked the outreach to new audiences. That's a win-win. In the first semester, fall 2005, we put out a twelve-page catalog with seventy classes. A year later, people wait anxiously for new class schedules to arrive in the local newspaper.

# O ur community has embraced the concept of lifelong learning. An active, relevant public library brought perception and reality together in people's minds.

Our meeting rooms are full most nights during the semester, as CLASS competes for space with our youth services department and public requests for meeting space.

Increased visibility from the catalog and local media coverage of specific events, such as the open house for enrollment, is an added bonus. In-house, we have added banners and lots of photos of adult students in class. And, of course, CLASS put the library all over town, from the senior center to retirement centers, church meeting rooms, the art center, the local history museum, and public schools. Programming in these facilities can be a challenge, and setting up and tearing down our own meeting spaces adds to our workload.

When CLASS was a stand-alone nonprofit, the board was pleased to see spinoffs, such as a yoga studio opening downtown after packed classes encouraged yoga instructors to go out on their own. Then, a yarn store opened after the CLASS knitting instructor received great feedback from students who also expressed interest in a local store from which to purchase supplies. A hiking group has been active since the first semester, and there are more than seventy-five people on the group's e-mail list. Since coming to the library, a meditation group has started meeting regularly, and people who began studying Spanish through CLASS have created small groups to continue to practice together. These are examples of community building as a result of bringing people together to learn.

From the beginning of its existence at the library, the CLASS catalog has included our computer class schedule, plus reference resource classes. This has boosted public awareness of our tech classes, something we have been offering since 1995. In the first semester, we had enrollment of 1,418, with actual participation at 2,451, as classes averaged 3.6 sessions. October was the busiest month, with 984 participants. That far outdistanced the previous October for adult programs, when we had a few book discussions in addition to computer classes.

While the first semester was rolling along, plans were being made for the spring semester. We began to get a feel for what was popular, and we knew we

wanted to bring some of those classes back. Word-of-mouth also brought in new proposals from instructors. Students made suggestions for topics they wanted to learn about through CLASS. Gradually, other organizations wanted to increase their visibility by associating with the library and offering classes. CLASS instructors and staff have helped us develop our collection by suggesting important books in the subjects of classes they teach, from organic gardening to sign language.

## Second Semester

The spring 2006 catalog, in tabloid-size newsprint, had a question as the heading: "What do you want to do?" It was followed with: "Answer: Add CLASS to your nights (and weekends)." The front page featured a quick list of new classes along with color photos of people enjoying fall classes. We learned that the front page must grab readers, and we added a simple table of contents in sections, such as Health and Well-Being, Arts & Handicrafts, Spirituality, Out & About, and Languages. We also mentioned the availability of scholarships on the front page.

During this second semester, we offered wine for beginners, contra dancing, Bible study, foot reflexology, home brewing, Photoshop, poetry writing, and many more. We ended up canceling just eleven classes because of low enrollment. Karaoke and juggling were cancelled, though jugglers found each other through the library and formed a club. It was another successful semester. We had 1,755 enrollments and 2,851 in participation. (*Editor's note: Participation is the number of enrollments multiplied by the number of times the class met.*)

## CLASS and Its Effect on the Library

Our community has embraced the concept of lifelong learning. An active, relevant public library brought perception and reality together in people's minds. One patron and CLASS participant wrote us an e-mail marking the program's first year, saying, "Our library is a working, breathing, living entity. Thanks for making our library a real part of people's lives."

This is just one of many e-mails and remarks we have become used to receiving.

While not everyone knows the library offers adult learning classes, those who do made a point of telling library staff and others that they like what we are doing. No one has complained about fees. On a scale of 1–5, with 5 being excellent, 82 percent gave classes an excellent rating, and 16 percent said 4. That left 2 percent with a 3 rating, our lowest. 85 percent of instructors rated the staff and organizational support excellent, with another 15 percent at 4.

Through CLASS, the public library is able to deliver on our mission of information and lifelong learning by bringing people together to teach and learn. You might think that this has been a positive boost to the community, and it has. Salina, with a population of 46,000, offers an active and nationally recognized cultural arts program, a great art cinema, a symphony, an art center, and galleries. There are two colleges. Parks and Recreation offers some classes, and families have plenty of soccer and other sports leagues to play at every day. We have a wonderful senior center and good shopping. Salina is a regional center, so the library and CLASS have many out-of-town users. We are successful in a competitive activities and events market. People are as busy as they want to be, or busier.

During the program's transition to the library, we relied on the experience of the CLASS advisory board, which combined most of the original board plus four new community members. This group helped the program make the change from a struggling non-profit to an integral library program. It continues to meet monthly, and advisory board members help with marketing and other related tasks.

Income from CLASS fees for the first two semesters was nearly \$40,000. The Friends chipped in with a grant. The library's expenses are salaries and benefits for the coordinator and a new part-time assistant, plus some instructor fees and class supplies, which we build into the cost of the classes. Rental fees for

other locations are minor. Of course, we did some advertising in addition to the cost of printing and inserting the catalog into 20,000 copies of the local daily newspaper.

The Salina Public Library still has a reference desk helping people find information. Reference librarians also taught more than two hundred people in reference resources classes last semester, a group of information-based classes that has grown since CLASS joined the library's learning context. We continue to develop our nonfiction collection. Some students follow up their class by continuing to visit the library to borrow and read books.

CLASS as a public library service offering lifelong learning opportunities for adults is a clear and popular winner. The library's responsibility to serve the community and help meet information needs in a variety of ways is still central. CLASS breaks down some traditional perception barriers by bringing teachers and students together at the library. This builds community. People meet others with like interests. Instructors, some of whom have never taught before, have a chance to share their knowledge and learn more as they prepare for class and interact with students. One big measure of community buy-in is the number of instructors who volunteer their time. More than half of the instructors each semester offer their time and talent without pay.

And lives change, like the young child whose world opened up when he learned a few simple signs to communicate with his parents. It happened at the public library. I don't think his grateful parents will ever forget that. It is inspiration like that found in this story that convinces us that public libraries can do more than open the doors, arrange the information under a Dewey system, and offer regular book discussions plus a few special programs or collaborative events each year. Communities that benefit from the life and energy of a lifelong learning program will embrace new ideas and encourage the growth and development of public libraries for the future. ■

# OODA LOOPS, MANEUVER THEORY, AND THE Tactics of Survival

## HOW JOHN BOYD AND THE U.S. MARINES CAN AID LIBRARIES BIDDING FOR RELEVANCE AND INDISPENSABILITY

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**N**ew management concepts, theories, and metaphors are constantly being identified and pursued by businesses looking for a competitive edge. Some of these eventually trickle down to public organizations that desire to be relevant and responsive. A couple of ideas that, upon superficial inspection, seem ill-suited to libraries may in fact prove quite useful for offering new ways in seeing the environments in which they operate.

Anticipation of change must be part of library planning. This certainly includes anticipating changing user expectations. It is news to no one in the profession that public libraries in the United States are striving for relevancy in a world of cheap, often free, easily accessible information, much of it distributed on the Internet. In addition, our citizens are assigning themselves into smaller and smaller subsets of interests, making it harder for public libraries to attract them to the broad and somewhat shallow array of both resources and access they provide.

The increasing affluence of many Americans seems designed to distance them from communal interactions by allowing them to purchase resources (books, journal and newspaper subscriptions, Internet connections, audio files, and the like) that represent a core part of our services and resources. Also, many of these resources are identified and delivered remotely, often downloaded. There is a message here, one that libraries are sometimes challenged to decipher. Libraries can be slow to see trends in information-seeking behavior and cautious in their attempts at fashioning coherent responses to these trends. This is despite the fact that our ability to observe takes place in an environment of relative leisure rather than in an unsettling cascade of real time.

Narrowcasting, by definition, targets smaller audiences. Those fortunate individuals of society with discretionary income and time sequester themselves from the broader community by allowing themselves to

be channeled into specific interest and consumer communities. This is a societal trend that harbors no good feeling for public libraries. For many of these elite, the public library is simply an anachronism. Over time, the public library audience grows less constant and more elusive. The embracing, of late, of outcomes measurement can be seen as a reflection of the concerns about how new services and programs meet the needs of patrons and just who is being served. Embracing technologies that fall under the category of social software to create new bridges to patrons may or may not create new loyalties.

It is worth wondering whether the public library should attempt to attract different clusters of potential users by taking the narrowcasting approach. Traditionally, public libraries broadcast information about their goods and services and use this same approach when acquiring them. Allocating resources in hopes of achieving the biggest bang for the buck makes sense when demand for the latest Oprah title is imminent. It is reasonable to question this strategy, however, rather than mindlessly pursuing it at all times at the expense of niche collections that might find their own audience in time. When a patron is sixty-third on the holds list for the latest James Patterson title anyway, one has to wonder how well the library is serving the mission of feeding the desires of mass consumption. Narrowcasting is an approach that can find success if modulated correctly. A library that truly observes the information-seeking behavior of its users can do more than merely mirror generic library service trends and target niche audiences with tailored services and resources.

The Western Council of State Libraries developed a list of Library Practitioner Core Competencies in 2004.<sup>1</sup> Section II (Public Library Administration) lists a wide array of competencies for the ideal administrator to master. Broad as they are (“exercise effective leadership incorporating vision, management, empowerment, diplomacy, feedback, entrepreneurialism, personal style, personal energy, and multicultural awareness”), they are, within a certain context, useful. However, they collectively make the assumption of the ongoing viability of the public library as a center and touchstone for information commerce. Unfortunately, the indispensability of the community public library in this regard cannot be assumed. There are numerous examples of organizations, both public and private, that lost market share or its equivalent, and no longer were perceived as competitive or useful at providing the services for which they were known. Libraries remain low on the

priority list when city governments look to expand services, target citizens, or allocate dollars. Libraries are nice. They have always been nice. They have not always been free, however false the definition. They don’t always have to be essential to the spirit of the marketplace of ideas. Long-term, public libraries in their current form and status could cease to exist.

Careful observers know this to be true. For a recent example, one need only look at the drastic staffing and service reductions imposed on the Buffalo and Erie County Library System in New York in their 2005 and 2006 budgets.<sup>2</sup> Initially, they projected that one hundred full-time employees, or nearly one-third of the entire full-time county public library staff, were threatened with layoffs. Ultimately several branches were closed and hours of service at other branches were severely reduced.

Alternatively, organizations that once seemed on the verge of losing their mission and meaning experienced nothing short of rebirth. As public libraries seek strategies for maintaining viable futures, they would do well to reflect on one especially powerful example and one remarkably potent concept—both drawn from the distant arena of warfare, that can serve to guide libraries to greater relevance in the public service marketplace of today. The key for libraries and their managers will be to find ways to acculturate their organizations to the values and mindsets embodied in these techniques.

## Maneuver Theory and the OODA Loop

Organizations in the for-profit arena seek marketplace victory as defined by increasing market share, profits, and stockholder’s returns. Libraries, by and large, do not. However, advantages can accrue for a library that develops a mindset recognizing the Darwinian nature of all organizations, as well as their fundamentally entropic nature. Initiating change is generally superior to adapting to it, as it can then be better shaped to one’s desires.

The OODA loop is a dramatic representation of the process of survival (in the narrowest and broadest sense). It is also known as Boyd’s Loop after its remarkable inventor, Air Force Colonel John Boyd, who was arguably an intellectual genius as well as being a superior Air Force fighter pilot. The OODA Loop is a model demonstrating the keys to life and survival and nothing less. It is applicable to organizations as well as individuals. It is a mental process that strives to allow the practitioner to get inside their opponent’s frames of reference and expectations.

**I**t is easy enough to follow technology trends that may affect one's library. It is harder to determine which of these trends will make an impact, which to implement, and when to do so.

Essentially, the OODA Loop, according to Boyd, is a system that is acting through a decision-making process based on observations of the world around it and at the same time a description of how people and organizations arrive at tactical decisions. By Observation, Orientation, Decision, and Action (not necessarily in this sequence at all times) activities are precipitated that create advantages in a competitive environment by obscuring motive and disrupting the ability of one's opponent to accurately perceive intentions and thus, opportunity. As Boyd has pointed out elsewhere in his "Discourse on Winning and Losing" a successful entity must cope with uncertainty, imprecision, and mismatches by recognizing that they are fundamental to reality.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, it is valuable to have the ability to utilize these aspects of reality in positive ways rather than becoming immobilized by them.

Cycling faster through the loop allows a competitor to get "inside" an adversary's loop by continually moving through one's own loop faster than they. Ultimately, their ability at predicting next events becomes less precise and eventually completely futile. The organization and its environment tends, like all closed systems, toward (some might argue is governed by) disorder (entropy). Our perception of reality, including our cultural awareness, prejudices, previous experiences, and so forth is a fundamental feature of the orientation component of the OODA Loop. The loop is continuously playing. Individuals and organizations participate in the loop and they mesh and collide and overlap. Getting inside of another's loop is seen as an opportunity for success through superior orientation in a medium that grants insight into external looks and creates avenues for better understanding of one's own (organizational) self.

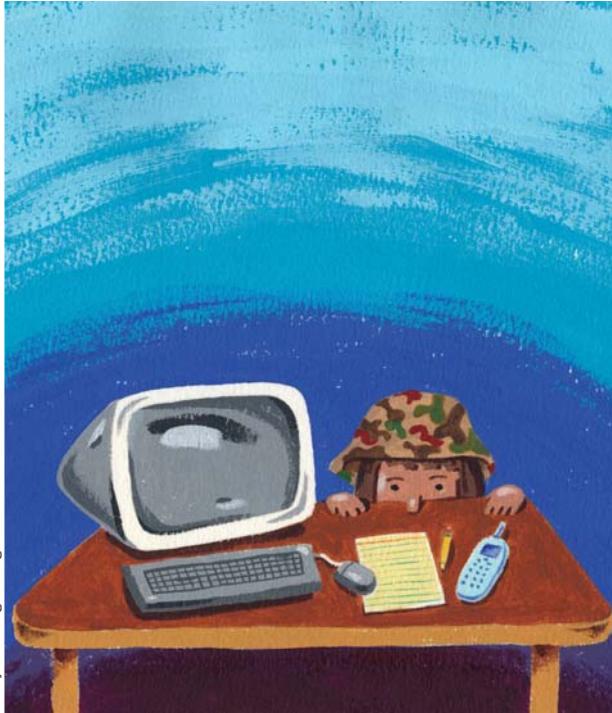
Our engagement with the OODA Loop is one that can be acutely and intelligently experienced or casually observed. The choice is every organization's to make, just as it is every individuals' to make. The point for organizations to understand, and especially public organizations such as libraries that don't perceive themselves to be in competition, is that the OODA loop cycle inevitably occurs. It is a reality of

such profound value that it was finally given a name through John Boyd's exhaustive analysis of the process. Furthermore, every one is a participant, and some participants' goals are in conflict or competition with the library's. Other participants besides ourselves might be more acutely observant of the OODA Loop process of observing, orienting, deciding, and acting in ways that tend to diminish us and our organization in the eyes of our constituents while at the same time elevating themselves. The OODA Loop is about gathering information and making choices quickly once this information is examined and processed in order to be time-competitive and thus change the course and nature of one's organization before opportunities to strategically reorient wane. It involves daily mastering what Boyd called a "fingertip feel" for the library and its relationship to its external environment. No amount of careful strategic planning or continuous process improvement can supplant the need for this kind of observation and organizational feel.

An example is found in the offering of wireless Internet access. It is easy enough to follow technology trends that may affect one's library. It is harder to determine which of these trends will make an impact, which to implement, and when to do so. Strategic planning that takes into account trends that may demand tactical shifts in services and technology serves the organization and its users best. By observing the marketplace and understanding the context of the library in this environment—who is providing free wireless to their customers and why—the library could respond with little expense to a demand not yet articulated. Working faster through the loop, the library could have anticipated the popularity and relevance of public wireless earlier, when a staff wireless network was installed.

Work the cycle and observe: How much demand would the staff place on the network? What would be risked by immediately opening it to the public? What are the knowledge limitations of the organization?

Orient: Does managing the wireless network differ substantially from managing a hard-wired one? The risks and costs to the organization for support of the network are substantially less.



Art by Jim Lange Design

**Decide:** Would providing open wireless to the public immediately upon installation or shortly afterwards position the organization as a community frontrunner in wireless public access?

**Act:** Determine where to place the network or networks and promote the service with noticeable fanfare.

The OODA Loop, it should be noted, is not always a completely conscious and linear process. However, it is a mindset that once instilled in an organization's leaders trickles down and makes the organization competitive, relevant, and greedy for recognizing opportunities with alacrity.

A key tenet of maneuver theory is tempo, or time competitiveness. John Boyd firmly established the primacy of tempo in his OODA Loop theory. Public sector organizations, however, are sometimes far too comfortable nurturing the twin myths of tradition and public good to observe our competitive environment in such a ruthless and willful fashion. But while death, disgrace, or damaged financial ratios do not await the loser, it is still vital that the public library recognize that both it and its competitors "operate as a system that is acting through a decision making process based on observations of the world around it."<sup>4</sup>

Of the four phases of Boyd's loop of observing, orienting, deciding, and acting, he argues that orienting is the most critical. Orientation to the environment in which we must function and compete directs all of

our planning, prioritizing, and decision-making. It is influenced by previous experience and cultural traditions and it dictates the way organizations observe, decide, and act.

In planning new services or modifications to ongoing services, not using past experiences coherently and placing them in appropriate context for the present can lead to misunderstanding the customer or failing to anticipate service and technology trends relevant to the organization. Orientation involves being cognizant of the latent prejudices and conflicts that exist and calculating for them. Not doing so creates organization blind spots in observation that can, in time, lead to imprecise or improper decisions and actions, and thus to a loss of credibility with peer departments, disengaged customers, and a deterioration of funding and mission.

Unfortunately, caution too often dictates our planning and decision. Everything we do serves this static perception of our identity and our reality. We are pleased with our organizations and their role in defending a variety of liberties. We stubbornly believe we continue to offer a viable and vital alternative to commercial, recreational attractions. Thus, we often shy from asking normative questions about our institutions. By operating in this mode of relative inattentiveness, competitors are able to get inside our OODA Loop, regardless of whether we acknowledge the contest as it unfolds. They position themselves to seize funds for projects by gauging their immediate environment correctly and proposing projects and visions that please or neutralize their leaders, stakeholders, and constituents. Conversely, our organization, thus defeated and disoriented, is marginalized and funding-starved, since in the arena of public organizations it remains, in many respects, a zero-sum game and one department often is awarded funds that have been essentially stripped from another.

Marketplace victories help to establish identity (along with profits) over time. A question that must be asked is whether libraries are in competition for market share, however one wishes to define it. If the answer is yes, then maneuver warfare and the OODA Loop will assist us in defeating our competitors and increasing market share.

Cautious bureaucratic mindsets that don't operate from an OODA Loop mindset are often defeated from the outset because their organizations do not appreciate the primacy of tempo when dueling rivals for funding and public attention. Inevitably, these organizations linger on by subsisting on residual good-

# Powerful lessons can be drawn from the remarkable transformation of the United States Marine Corps. It is no stretch for libraries to see this organization as a model for performance.

will, broader institutional fond memories, or some existing mandate that provides a minimum amount of funding to survive but not prosper from one fiscal year to the next.

## The United States Marine Corps

This leads us to that once terminally beleaguered organization that had seemingly lost its relevance and any semblance of a meaningful future. Powerful lessons can be drawn from the remarkable transformation of the United States Marine Corps (USMC). It is no stretch for libraries to see this organization as a model for performance. The corporate world has looked to USMC repeatedly as a source of exemplary organizational behavior, both in mission commitment, loyalty, and adaptability. Today, USMC is more vital and relevant than it has ever been before and has reached the cusp of being indispensable. It is, in fact, just what libraries dream of being.

Besides knowing how to field strip an M4 carbine blindfolded, what do the Marines know that libraries do not? And how did they learn it? Unlike other military bureaucracies, USMC has demonstrated flexibility to changing environments both on and off the battlefield, best exemplified by its willingness to articulate goals, then provide problem-solving authority to junior officers and noncommissioned officers on the battlefield in a process the Germans know as *auftragstaktik*, known in America as directive control. This downward thrust of authority is a basic principle of maneuver theory.

Maneuver theory is geared toward intelligent activity in battle in order to disorient and disillusion the enemy. Clausewitz knew that “in war everything is simple, but even the simplest thing is extremely difficult.”<sup>5</sup> One can also argue that this applies to libraries. When libraries explain what they do—collect and organize information, promote access and use, facilitate access, and answer queries—it doesn’t sound like much. It is all simple. But we struggle to do it consistently well. USMC developed maneuver theory to an advanced level by emphasizing the need to drive change and not be driven. They have applied it in combat and in interagency politics. Subordinate to this, USMC has

emphasized small unit initiative as a way of achieving battlefield goals. Evidence of small unit initiative is sprinkled through numerous Marine combat accounts from World War II through the Gulf wars.

The battle for Hue City during Vietnam is one example. (See *Marines in Hue City: A Portrait of Urban Combat, Tet 1968* by Eric Hammel [MBI Publishers, 2007] and *The Battle for Hue: Tet 1968* by Keith Nolan [Presidio Press, 1983] for detailed accounts.) At Hue City, urban terrain limited the knowledge and influence of command. Consequently, small units coordinated effectively in a decentralized command environment down to a squad and fire team level. Small units at Hue were, by necessity compelled to make command decisions and explore opportunity unilaterally when leaders did not always know where they were on the ground. Organizational leaders do not always know where their employees are either, in a real and in attitudinal sense, but employees must be allowed to engage in individual and small group prioritization of tasks in order to meet organizational goals. This is accepted and appropriate and part of the risk of proper maneuver and allowing small unit initiative. As William S. Lind points out, maneuver warfare involves radical decentralization of authority. An outcome of this is the speeding up of the decision cycle, essential in war but also valuable in a public service organization.<sup>6</sup>

## The Creation of the Fleet Marine Force and the Notion of Planned Indispensability

Organizations the world over have attempted to emulate some of the desired traits of USMC. It is an organization that has long ago mastered the ability to turn natural handicaps into advantages.

In “From Boarding Parties to Digital Warriors,” General Charles C. Krulak provides the condensed history of the Marine Corps as one of constant redefinition.<sup>7</sup> He briefly summarizes the identify crisis suffered by USMC in the early twentieth century due to advancements in technologies that began making some of their traditional functions obsolescent.

(Sound familiar?) These included the Navy's transition to steel-hulled, steam-propelled ships, which coincided with a greater emphasis on rifled, long-range guns. Traditional roles for Marines up to that time, as General Krulak points out, were as boarding parties and snipers in close-range naval engagements. These would soon be seen as comically irrelevant to twentieth-century warfare at sea. Other technology shifts and political decisions ensued, perhaps none more important than Marine Commandant Maj. Gen. George Barnett's controversial efforts to abandon USMC's traditional role to develop an Advanced Base Force to protect Navy coaling stations, an effort that eventually provided the Marines with a new offensive mission to engage in amphibious operations that were offensive in nature, thus establishing the Fleet Marine Force. This is nothing if not foresight positioning itself for maximum opportunity.

USMC early on adopted the principles of small unit leadership. This enthusiasm eventually led to refinements of the idea in the Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory.

Technology is creating cultural change and driving decision-making in many organizations, including libraries. It is seen sometimes as an opportunity, sometimes, a challenge, sometimes a savior, and often as something out of a library's control. It is, in truth, none of these things, if it is not allowed to be. Predictions of the blending of technology and biology notwithstanding, technology is without value, either moral or strategic, unless people harness it to some human mission. Libraries that are often in position to enable various technologies in a timely fashion do not always do so due to (pick one) limited resources, uncertain patron demand, network security, or, most tellingly, fear of unintended consequences. Partly, the problem stems from a perception (or wish, for some) that public libraries are, or should be, frozen in mission. Libraries evolve slowly. They do not make great leaps into unknown territories of service and partnerships, but instead carefully align services with lovingly wrought (if sometimes contradictory) goals and objectives. This is a conservative mindset and reasonably sensible for a marketplace without competition. But not only is there competition from overlapping spheres of interest from bookstores, Amazon, WiFi hot spots, public parks, and the like, this conservative approach allows opportunities to be missed and entire generations of technology that could serve the public not pursued and not enabled. Cycling through OODA Loops enables organizations to identify where technology meets strategic objectives created by human input.

Take as an example a bond vote for new library services or infrastructure. Has the planning considered current and future realities and expectations, or even perceptions of same? Where is the leadership coming from? Is there a single, resonant message that makes sense and has been clearly articulated to the library employees and stakeholders? Is library leadership visible to the public?

Victory and indispensability are frustrating goals. They must be secured against perpetual assault. A successful bond vote is a distinct, individual event—a tactical victory that requires sustenance and further vision to perpetuate a reputation of indispensability through constituent loyalty. But it is in the everyday events that the library maneuvers its way to a successful future.

Maneuverability is vital. In the context of warfare and USMC battlefield disposition, maneuverability is defined as being flexible enough to create options, reinvent all or portions of the organization when prudent to do so, assign and deploy small portions of the organization to organization-wide problem solving and to seize initiative, and to have the courage to accept criticism and arguments for change from within and beyond the organization.<sup>8</sup>

The maneuver warfare concept is codified in the Marine Corps Doctrine Publication 1, *Warfighting*. The key meaning of maneuver as encompassed in the tenets of maneuver warfare is “. . . the movement of forces in relation to the enemy to secure or retain positional advantage.”<sup>9</sup> Replace the word “enemy” with “competitor” and the definition becomes utterly relevant to the public library.

It is also useful to examine the basic principles of maneuver warfare presented in the following short summary and see if connections can be made to the way public organizations position and reposition themselves to provide public service. The following comes from the U.S. Air Force's Air and Space Power Course at the College of Aerospace Doctrine, Research, and Education and found under a section on Army, Navy, USMC doctrine. Italics have been applied to passages particularly cogent to public organizations.

Maneuver warfare is a warfighting philosophy that seeks to shatter the enemy's cohesion through a variety of rapid, focused, and unexpected actions which create a turbulent and rapidly deteriorating situation with which the enemy cannot cope. The aim is to render the enemy incapable of resisting effectively by shattering his moral, mental, and physical cohesion—his ability to fight as an effective, coordinated whole—rather than

# The library board must be inculcated in the value of the OODA Loop process and the rewards that may accrue from cycling faster through the loop and raising the organizational tempo.

to destroy him physically through incremental attrition. *Maneuver relies on speed, the ability to focus efforts for effect, and surprise. Tempo is itself a weapon—often the most important.* Firepower and attrition are essential elements of maneuver warfare. In fact, where strength has been focused against enemy vulnerability, attrition may be extreme. Nonetheless, the object of such local attrition is to eliminate a key element which incapacitates the enemy systemically rather than systematically destroying the entire enemy force. *Maneuver warfare puts a premium on certain human skills and traits. It requires the temperament to cope with uncertainty and a flexibility of mind to deal with fluid and disorderly situations. It requires a certain independence of mind—a willingness to act with initiative and boldness to exploit every opportunity, and the moral courage to accept responsibility for independent action.* This last set of traits must be guided by self-discipline and loyalty to the objectives of senior leaders. Understanding the commander's intent two levels up and two levels down enables decentralized execution and disciplined free action.<sup>10</sup>

The USMC approach to achieving acceptance of organizational goals and values is to inculcate recruits with the sense of being a part of an elite group and the fear of letting your peers down.

Outside of an elite warrior brotherhood, organizational pride and loyalty are difficult to foster, but immeasurably valuable to the organization and its ability to achieve its goals. Creating acceptance of organizational goals requires the cooperative establishment of goals that are realistic, coherent, and consistent with the values of the organization.

What is required:

Maneuver theory is fundamentally about what Boyd called “time competitiveness,” a constant positioning of the organization faster than others—observe, orient, decide, act—responding to opportunities before others see them, thus establishing the organization as perceptive to user needs and utterly relevant. More to the point, if Starbucks and McDonald's can become wireless hot spots thus

generating customer loyalty, why do libraries wait so long before making decisions on what seems both obvious and painless to the organization, and promises such goodwill? Failure is not always defined by the taking of risk, of orienting and acting first, and accepting blame for misreading the environment. Rather, it is defined by not accepting the realities of the OODA Loop principles in the first place and refusing to operate under its conditions. Such a mindset translates to little risk and little reward. The first principle is an honest and active orientation to the operating environment of the organization.

Stakeholder anxieties play a significant role in hampering organizational maneuverability. The library board must be inculcated in the value of the OODA Loop process and the rewards that may accrue from cycling faster through the loop and raising the organizational tempo, even at the expense of some process. It will be important to remind stakeholders that accountability is not necessarily sacrificed with the discarding of process.

In public services, public libraries scramble to find a hook that will draw attention and bring in new audiences, or at least maintain old ones, but can often be reluctant to manage marketplace tempo when they arrive at a bold initiative. Time, tempo, lack of staff, money, or expertise can leave them nibbling at the bare margins of innovation and rarely finding the time or candor to examine closely the face they present to the public. When new services are launched they are rarely transformative but merely incremental, and they make much fuss and inefficiency over minor initiatives—without carefully anticipating outcomes for staff or expectations of patrons. There exists a mindset that reconciles these organizations to well-intentioned conformity that is dispiriting to its most committed staff members.

Encouraging and directing staff to take leadership roles and make mistakes is a core tenet of USMC doctrine of small unit initiative. USMC knows well that experienced managers *still* make mistakes—tactical and even strategic. Libraries too, need to encourage and accept mistakes rather than operate from a zero defects mentality. Such mistakes are the costs of increased tempo.

## Necessity of Acknowledging the Existence of the OODA Loop Principle

Is the OODA Loop necessary for public institutions that aren't strictly in competition? Yes, first, due to the fact that the public library is in competition with other agencies for resources and support as well as with businesses such as Amazon, Google, and the local Starbucks that are carving away at our once relatively exclusive niches. Over time, these competitors can marginalize libraries to their constituents and city management. A possible, if perhaps not preferred, future for public libraries is as glorified community centers with collection development and technical services functions largely ceded to vendors.

Consider the likely competitors who can (and have) gotten inside the OODA Loop of library leadership to corrode our funding and relevancy:

- large chain bookstores (Barnes & Noble and Borders);
- online mega retailers such as Amazon;
- other municipal agencies that are not mandated services (for example, city parks and recreation);
- other libraries;
- the Internet (Google and Wikipedia);
- Stores with WiFi hot spots (Starbucks, McDonald's, hotels);
- cybercafés;
- airports; and
- anyone that provides free Internet content or free (or cheap) Internet access.

While old news now, it remains noteworthy to focus attention on Amazon's success in effectively evaluating user need. Taking a traditional business model—bookselling—to the Internet in 1995 was a risky proposition. While there were many factors contributing to the success of Amazon, some can be traced to the value-added features that customers quickly embraced. Examples include the editors feature, which provided book recommendations to customers based on their previous purchases. Another was allowing customers to contribute to reviews of books (and today, to other media as well). Giving customers this kind of ownership on the Web site anticipated blogging and wikis by nearly a decade and allowed Amazon inside of its competitors' OODA Loop.

The OODA Loop is ceaselessly relevant because of its value in revealing to organizations information about *themselves*. The constant process of orienta-

tion and observation in order to create decisions and actions places great emphasis on the organization to examine its prejudices and its orientation to the environment in which it functions.

Orientation, as Grant Hammond observed, shapes the way we observe, decide, and act.<sup>11</sup> Patterns must be identified in the activity of the world around our organization that can then clearly represent the reality the organization must operate in. All the organizations' employees must be conditioned to cycle through their OODA Loops in numerous operational situations. Only by developing these skills can the organization as a whole create a useful mosaic of the reality in which it operates. Everyone will have a piece of glass to contribute to the mosaic, and the process will foster trust, a greater understanding of leadership intent, and a respect for responsible authority. Decisions and actions that follow will inevitably be more congruent with both the organization's capabilities and its stakeholders' expectations.

Compared with the incrementalism of libraries and their natural conservatism and aversion to change is the approach taken by USMC. The Marines were desperate to survive and maintain *perpetual relevance*. They needed to create new meaning for their organization through new missions and to adapt and excel, to the point of providing leadership in these new endeavors so that others would turn to them when such a need beckoned. They rewrote their business model. They began to model excellence and became the standard for it.

Public libraries are hovering over the threshold of the same challenge. We don't know what we are allowed to be, from management on down. We periodically and enthusiastically engage in group visioning exercises that project our possible library futures, but these tend to look too far and lose focus. When the results are tabulated we often see taking shape some kind of grandiose social service agency that would, in practice, be everything to all people. In other words, we emerge not very good at anything and not very useful at all.

At the same time, we fear changes that will make us unrecognizable to ourselves, as if the form and trappings of the profession are all that perpetuate us as a professional species. As much as we hate to admit it, public libraries and librarians did not emerge as some phenomenon, *Sui Generis*, to bestow on the public preordained, indispensable information services.

By acknowledging and embracing the principles of Boyd's OODA Loop, libraries can learn better how to drive change and no longer be driven. It is an

aggressive posture that requires energy and vigilance (recall the value of increased tempo), but it contains less risk and more reward than one might immediately assume. It asks the library to check not only its environment and the shifts and changes that take place there but to attempt to interpret their meaning through a (literally) constant engagement with orientation and observation, in watching ourselves, watching our world, acknowledging and looking around the corner of those biases and cultural conditioning to see what actual challenges await and to accurately assess our current ability to meet them. It asks that we be free to make errors to make decisions in a timely fashion, because time is plentiful and we are free to manipulate it to our needs. It allows room for those errors because an organization actively engaged in OODA Loop activity is by nature self-correcting. Waiting for change, after all, means adapting to someone else's desires of what our organization should be. ☐

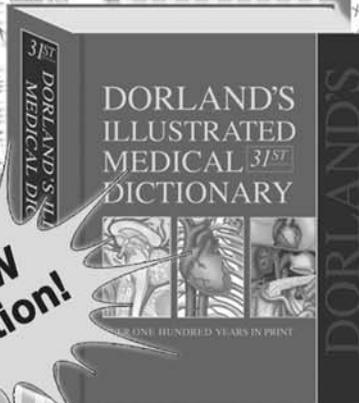
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# WHY DO TEENS USE LIBRARIES?

## RESULTS OF A PUBLIC LIBRARY USE SURVEY

**DENISE AGOSTO** is Assistant Professor, Drexel College of Information Science & Technology in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Denise.Agosto@ischool.drexel.edu. She is reading *Boy Meets Boy* by David Levithan.

**B**ecause most public libraries keep records of how many people visit them each month and of how many items they circulate, we usually have a pretty good idea of the popularity of our libraries and of our collections. Our picture of the various reasons why people go to public libraries in the first place is less clear. The traditional view has been that people use public libraries to find information. For example, the mission statement of the Phoenix Public Library is “to foster an informed and literate community with information resources and works of the imagination.”<sup>1</sup> But is information the only significant motivator for public library use? And what about teenagers? Are there other reasons why they use public libraries?

### Research Questions

This study sought to create a model of the various reasons why teens use public libraries, based on information gathered directly from teen library users. It also set out to answer two related research questions: (1) What are the basic purposes for which young adults use public libraries? and (2) How can public libraries adapt their services to better match teens’ reasons for using them?

### Literature Review

This study builds on two areas of research: (1) teens’ use of public libraries, and (2) the role of the public library in modern society.

## Teens and Public Libraries

A number of recent studies have investigated teens' public library use and perceptions. In an often-cited article, Meyers described the results of a Public Libraries As Partners in Youth Development initiative that involved talking to teens about their views of public libraries. The study concluded that most teens thought of public libraries as unwelcoming and "uncool."<sup>2</sup> The project leaders suggested that "teens want a multiple-use [library] space, offering both a place for quiet study and space to socialize."<sup>3</sup> Agosto and Hughes-Hassell's study of urban young adults' everyday life information needs led to a similar conclusion about teens' perceptions of public libraries. The study participants:

conveyed a negative attitude toward libraries and librarians and reported frustration with many of the same aspects of library service such as strict rules, unpleasant staff, lack of culturally relevant materials, dreary physical spaces, and limited access to technology.<sup>4</sup>

Bishop and Bauer used surveys and interviews to ask public librarians and teens to evaluate strategies for bringing young adults into libraries. They concluded that "The majority of the teens said they came to the library to study, to do assignments, and to use the Internet."<sup>5</sup>

Hughes-Hassell and Miller surveyed public librarians about their reasons for creating and maintaining library Web sites for young adults. The results indicated that "most responding librarians tended to use their young adult library Web pages to provide reference assistance, educational support, and community information for teens . . . These services, which address the public library's goal of supporting student learning, represent the traditional role that the public expects their community's libraries to play."<sup>6</sup>

Cook, Parker, and Pettijohn surveyed more than 600 teens about their public library use.<sup>7</sup> They learned that teens visit public libraries for research purposes, to check out books, and to enjoy the restaurants. They found positive perceptions of libraries to decline as teens age, and they found girls to rate library services more positively than boys.

Most recently, Abram suggested that in addition to "thinking skills, information literacy training, and great collections," technological skills are the essential public library services for today's young adults.<sup>8</sup>

Across nearly all of the studies reviewed here, the most commonly mentioned reasons for teens' public library use are for information-related purposes, such as homework needs and computer access.

Together these studies point to the provision of information as a crucial role of public library services for young adults.

## Public Library Roles

Studies of the public library's purpose in modern society have generally included information provision as the chief role. For example, Wilson explained that "It is a given that reading is fundamental to the business that libraries provide."<sup>9</sup> Similarly, Bohrer described early literacy centers at a number of public libraries and offered suggestions for promoting early literacy.<sup>10</sup> Scroggins suggested that the future success of the public library in the United States depends on a continuing commitment to the library as a place for reading and exchanging ideas. He stressed that the library is primarily "a place for books and reading."<sup>11</sup>

Some authors have identified additional roles for public libraries. For instance, in his discussion of the importance of the physical library in the digital era, Crawford said that physical libraries are important as study spaces, reading spaces, and research spaces—all of which relate to information provision and information gathering. He also stressed that libraries are important meeting spaces, a role that is not tied to information provision.<sup>12</sup> Sullivan even went so far as to contradict the notion of public libraries as information providers. He asserted that "libraries are not predominantly information centers," but community spaces above all.<sup>13</sup>

Nonetheless, it seems that the public views their libraries as information providers first and foremost. A recent study supported by the Americans for Libraries Council and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation asked 458 American adults to identify the top service priorities of public libraries. The most common answers were the provision of books and reference materials, and the availability of knowledgeable, friendly librarians. About two-thirds of the respondents felt that providing computers and online services also were high priorities.<sup>14</sup> Even more significantly, a recent OCLC survey of public attitudes toward libraries showed that the public overwhelmingly equates public libraries with books. The report concluded that "'Books' is the library brand. There is no runner-up."<sup>15</sup>

Finally, it is important to consider what PLA sees as the main roles of the public library. Nearly ten years ago, PLA identified a set of thirteen essential service areas: basic literacy, business and career information, commons, community referral, consumer information, cultural awareness, current topics and titles, formal learning support, general

information, government information, information literacy, lifelong learning, and local history and genealogy.<sup>16</sup> Twelve of these thirteen roles are tied to the idea of the public library as information provider. PLA is in the process of revising this list of core services; the final report should be completed in early 2007.<sup>17</sup> It will be interesting to see if the new list emphasizes information provision as heavily.

*Editor's note: The 2007 Public Library Service responses are now available as a Digital Download on the ALA Online Store. Visit [www.pla.org](http://www.pla.org) for more information.*

## Method

A three-part survey relating to teen library use was designed, pretested, and administered in two public libraries. This article will focus on survey Parts One and Two.<sup>18</sup> Part One asked a series of basic demographic questions concerning age, sex, frequency of public library use, frequency of school library use, and home computer access. Part Two asked three open-ended questions: "Why did you come to the library today?" "What kinds of information do you look for at the library?" and "What kinds of information do you need that you can't find at the library?"

## The Test Libraries

The young adult (YA) librarians at the Sellers Library, in Upper Darby, Pennsylvania, and at the Elizabeth (N.J.) Public Library each distributed fifty copies of the survey to teens aged fourteen to seventeen on a first-come, first-serve basis. Upper Darby is located approximately six miles west of Philadelphia. Its Sellers Library serves a population of 81,821, 77.3 percent of whom are white, 11.3 percent of whom are African American, 8.9 percent of whom are Asian, and 1.6 percent of whom are Hispanic/Latino. The population is 13.9 percent foreign-born, which is slightly higher than the 11.1 percent national average. About 17.5 percent speak a language other than English at home, roughly equivalent to the national average of 17.9 percent. The median annual household income is \$41,489, 1.2 percent lower than the \$41,994 national average.<sup>19</sup> The Sellers Library has a YA collection located within the children's department, and it employs a full-time YA librarian. The library offers a wealth of young adult programs and activities, including a YA book group, a teen advisory board, a knitting club, a teen blog, monopoly and other game tournaments, a trading card game club, and a comic and manga club.

Located roughly fifteen miles southwest of New York City, Elizabeth has a diverse population of 120,568.

It is 49.5 percent Hispanic/Latino and 20.0 percent African American. Elizabeth has a large immigrant population, with 43.9 percent being foreign-born, and more than two-thirds (67.5 percent) speaking a language other than English at home. The median annual household income is \$35,175—16.2 percent lower than the national average.<sup>20</sup> The Elizabeth Public Library employs a full-time librarian to supervise adult and teen services, and it has a separate YA collection and room. It offers a wide variety of YA programs, including an anime club, an annual teen art show, a teen literary magazine, teen movies, a teen book discussion group, a teen advisory council, YA author visits, and more.

## Limitations

The main limitation of this study is the use of a convenience sample. The results are not assumed to be strictly generalizable, but rather they are an introductory step in working toward a generalizable model of the reasons why teens use public libraries. In addition, the results reflect the behaviors of public library users, as opposed to the general teen population, which includes both users and nonusers.

## Results

### Demographics

Of the 100 surveys, 97 usable surveys were returned, for a 97.0 percent return rate. Of the 97 respondents, 54 (55.7 percent) were female, and 43 (44.3 percent) were male. Table 1 shows the age distribution of the participant group.

Respondents were asked to rate their frequency of public and school library use on a four-point Likert scale ("about once a week" "about once a month" "a few times a year" and "almost never"). As a group these teens declared much higher public library use than school library use, which is not surprising considering that the surveys were distributed in public libraries (see tables 2 and 3).

**Table 1:** Respondents by Age

Age	No.	%*
14	40	41.2
15	20	20.6
16	20	20.6
17	17	17.5

\*Percents total less than 100 due to rounding.

The difference between public library and school library frequency of use was statistically significant. (Chi-square = 61.64,  $p \leq .01$ ,  $df = 3$ ). This should be interpreted as an indication that this particular group of teens uses public libraries considerably more frequently than they use school libraries, not that their estimations of library use frequencies were accurate, as most survey respondents have difficulty accurately quantifying their library usage.

The final question in Part Two asked respondents to indicate whether they had access to a computer at home. Seventy-six respondents (78.4 percent) indicated that they did. This number corresponds closely with the Census Bureau's October 2003 estimate that 78.5 percent of children ages ten to seventeen had computers in the home.<sup>21</sup>

### Reasons for Library Visits

This discussion will focus on the first of the three open-ended questions: "Why did you come to the library today?" as it most directly relates to the research questions examined here.<sup>22</sup> Responses to the open-ended questions were analyzed using the constant comparative method, the most common method for analyzing qualitative data.<sup>23</sup> It involves repeated readings of written data while organizing the data into emerging themes. A coding scheme is developed, and, when a model is the desired final product, it is constructed from the various themes represented within the coding scheme.

Many of the respondents listed multiple reasons for visiting the library, bringing the total number of responses to 163. These 163 responses were first

organized into thirty-one unique reasons for library visits, which together served as the coding scheme. The thirty-one reasons are listed in figure 1, with the number of occurrences in parentheses.

Continued analysis led to the development of eleven categories of reasons for library visits. Further analysis of the eleven library visit categories uncovered three main roles of the public library: (1) the Library As Information Gateway, (2) the Library As Social Interaction/Entertainment Space, and (3) the Library As Beneficial Physical Environment. Finally, the three library roles and the eleven library visit categories were organized into a visual model, as shown in figure 2.

In the model, the three library roles appear in boldface type in order from most frequently to least frequently cited. The library visit categories appear in

- To participate in library club meetings (25)
- To check out/return books (20)
- To attend library programs/events (12)
- To read books/magazines at the library (11)
- To check out books for personal interest/needs (8)
- To read books/magazines for personal interest/needs at the library (8)
- To use computers (8)
- To browse books/To see what new books are available (6)
- To do homework (5)
- To do volunteer work (5)
- To socialize with friends (5)
- To visit a librarian/library employee (5)
- To find books for homework (4)
- To make new friends (4)
- To play computer games (4)
- To find a safe environment (3)
- To have fun (3)
- To research a personal hobby/interest (3)
- To socialize with boyfriend/girlfriend (3)
- To use computers for homework (3)
- To use computers for personal interest/needs (3)
- To accompany friends (2)
- To do research related to homework assignments (2)
- To find a quiet environment (2)
- To gain knowledge (2)
- To get computer game codes (2)
- To get academic tutoring (1)
- To get unspecified information (1)
- To improve oneself (1)
- To please one's parents/guardians (1)
- To work in the library (1)

**Table 2.** Frequency of Public Library Use

Response	No.	%
About once a week	67	69.1
About once a month	14	14.4
A few times a year	13	13.4
Almost never	3	3.1

**Table 3.** Frequency of School Library Use

Response	No.	%
About once a week	17	17.5
About once a month	27	27.8
A few times a year	18	18.6
Almost never	35	36.1

**Figure 1.** Coding Scheme. (N = 163)

lowercase letters below each corresponding library role. Each part of the model is explained in the next section.

### The Library As Information Gateway

Of the 163 total reasons for library visits, 85 (52.1 percent) corresponded to the Library As Information Gateway. This role refers to the library as provider of information and information access, from Internet and database access to book circulation to reference services, etc. This strong showing of library use for information-related purposes adds strength to the notion of the public library as information provider. The library visit categories for this role include library use for information related to unspecified needs, for information related to personal needs, and for information related to schoolwork.

### Information for Unspecified Needs

Of the 85 answers that corresponded to the Library as Information Gateway, 40 referred to “Information for Unspecified Needs.” In these cases respondents listed information of some type as the impetus for their visits, without explaining why they needed it. These responses included “to check out books,” “to get information off of the computer,” “to do some researching on the computer,” and so on.

### Information for Personal Needs

Thirty of the 85 answers that corresponded to this library role represented “Information for Personal

#### Library As Information Gateway

information for unspecified needs  
information for personal needs  
information for schoolwork needs

#### Library As Social Interaction/entertainment Space

organized entertainment  
interaction with peers  
unorganized entertainment  
interaction with library staff

#### Library As Beneficial Physical Environment

refuge  
community improvement  
personal improvement  
financial support

## Figure 2. The Role of the Public Library in Teens' Lives

Needs.” These reasons addressed topics of leisure or private interest, such as celebrity photographs, computer game codes, music lyrics, and other similar topics.

### Information for Schoolwork Needs

The remaining fifteen responses for this role involved “Information for Schoolwork Needs.” For example, one teen had gone to the library “to use the Internet to do a summer assignment.” Another needed “to work on [his] AP English assignment.” Still another wanted “to find a book for [her] summer reading assignment.”

Some authors have argued that the Internet might be a competitor to the public library.<sup>24</sup> On the contrary, Internet use played a significant role in all three of the library visit categories for this role. It seems that for many of these teens the public library is one place to go to access the Internet, rather than an alternative option.

### The Library As Social Interaction/Entertainment Space

Of the 163 total responses, 63 (38.7 percent) corresponded to the Library as Social Interaction/Entertainment Space. Reasons related to this role involved creating and maintaining social relationships, or simply seeking opportunities for amusement. The library visit categories for this role include organized entertainment, interaction with peers, unorganized entertainment, and interaction with library staff.

### Organized Entertainment

Thirty-seven responses referred to “organized entertainment,” or to programs and other events at the library. For example, one teen had gone to the library “to watch a movie.” Another was “[t]here for a weekly meeting of the knitting/crocheting club.”

### Interaction with Peers

Fourteen respondents indicated that they used their libraries for “interaction with peers.” They listed reasons for visiting the library such as “to meet my friends,” “to hang out with my boyfriend,” “to have fun and meet new people” and “to talk with my friends.”

### Unorganized Entertainment

An additional seven responses dealt with “unorganized entertainment.” These reasons included “to play on the computer and read anime books,”

“to play games,” and to engage in other, unstructured activities.

### Interaction with Library Staff

Five responses involved “Interaction with Library Staff.” For instance, one girl wrote that she had gone to the library to see the YA librarian, whom she mentioned by name and called her “Mommy #2.” Three other respondents also identified their YA librarians by name.

Thus, more than one-third of the library use reasons involved social and entertainment purposes. As Cook, Parker, and Pettijohn have suggested, “With appropriate strategies, public libraries can be relevant to young teen patrons. However, it will require the library to focus more on the social aspects of a teen’s life, rather than simply helping them with their homework.”<sup>25</sup>

### The Library As Beneficial Physical Environment

Of the 163 total responses, 15 (9.2 percent) corresponded to the Library As Beneficial Physical Environment. That is, nearly one out of every ten reasons indicated that the respondents went to their libraries seeking a positive atmosphere, as opposed to seeking information, social interaction, or entertainment. The library visit categories for this role include: refuge, community improvement, personal improvement, and financial support.

### Refuge

Five respondents indicated that they had gone to the library seeking some form of refuge, from dangerous home lives, from family members, or simply from noise. For example, one teen called the library “a quiet place to get away from family.” Another was seeking “a quiet place to study for [his] finals.” Another sought “a safe place to go after school.”

### Community Improvement

Five respondents were using their libraries as a method of “Community Improvement,” that is, to do volunteer work there. As one boy wrote, “I came to help. I came for volunteering.”

### Personal Improvement

Four of the fifteen reasons associated with this role involved “Personal Improvement.” For example, one boy wrote that he had come to the library “to enjoy and reap its educational benefits.” One of the girls wanted, “to improve [her] reading and communication skills.”

### Financial Support

Finally, one respondent used her library for “Financial Support.” She wrote that she had gone to the library “to come to work and earn some money.”

Bernier rejected the idea of public libraries as safe places: “Libraries cannot deliver safe spaces any better than we can insure that wisdom will come to those reading our collections. And we should not promise that we can.”<sup>26</sup> While it is true that libraries can never be entirely safe places, with no possible risk of danger for their users, in many cases libraries are probably safer places for teens than their neighborhoods. Regardless, this study indicates that some teens do view libraries as refuges, and that the physical environment of libraries is significant to them.

### Implications for Practice

Public librarians who work with teens can use the model presented here as a guide for increasing the appeal of their libraries to young adults. Some suggestions for resources, programs, and services relating to each of the three library roles are discussed next.

### The Library As Information Gateway

- Create a “Homework Helper” Web page within the library’s Web site to point YAs to recommended reference tools, free online homework assistance services, useful library databases, and other relevant online resources.
- Develop a “Popular Hobbies” Web page within the library’s Web site. Include links to movie- and TV-related Web sites, online teen magazines, teen book reviews, and “Top 10” book lists for new YA titles, sports biographies, graphic novels, and so forth
- Create eye-catching displays of new YA books, and provide forms for teens to recommend new titles and new series to collect.
- Set up a “Magazine Trade” box to let teens bring in magazines that they have finished and exchange them for magazines that other teens have left.
- Offer informal classes to teach teens how to use library databases.

### The Library As Social Interaction/ Entertainment Space

- Organize teen-friendly library clubs, such as drawing clubs, knitting clubs, and chess clubs.

- Offer programs with entertainment value, such as movies, dance shows, and storytelling.
- Provide inexpensive entertainment/socialization materials for unstructured use, such as decks of cards, board games, and Web pages with links to free online games.
- Designate a separate Teen Room in the library, where YAs can play music, play card games, and board games, hold library club meetings, or browse teen magazines without disturbing patrons in other parts of the library.
- Distribute brief questionnaires to solicit programming ideas. Try offering a short list of possible programs and asking teens to circle those they'd be likely to attend. Conclude by asking, "What other kinds of programs and events would you like to have at your library?"

## The Library As Beneficial Physical Environment

- Create a Web page with links to vocabulary-building games and lists of great books.
- Create bookmark-sized pathfinders relating to college and career information.
- Designate a small room or corner of a room as a Teen Study/Reading Area, a quiet space with a few tables and a computer with library database access.
- Provide volunteer opportunities for teens, such as programming assistants, teen advisory board members, and grade school homework helpers.
- Consider hiring teens for part-time positions in YA and children's services.

## Conclusion

These are just a few sample ideas. The most basic lesson to be learned from this research, and much more important than specific service and programming ideas, is that we need to think about public libraries as more than just information providers, as only about half of the reasons for library use found here involved information gathering. Instead, we need to think of libraries as combined Information Gateways, Social Interaction/Entertainment Spaces, and Beneficial Physical Environments. With this view of libraries in mind, we can support a fuller range of teen interests and needs and make libraries more significant forces in teens' lives. ■

*Acknowledgements: The author wishes to thank Gretchen Ipock of the Sellers Library and Kimberly L.*

*Paone of the Elizabeth Public Library for their assistance in administering the surveys.*

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If you are interested in reviewing or submitting materials for “By the Book,” contact the contributing editor, **JULIE ELLIOTT**, Assistant Librarian, Reference/Coordinator of Public Relations and Outreach, Indiana University South Bend, 1700 Mishawaka Ave., PO. Box 7111, South Bend, IN 46634-7111; jmfelli@iusb.edu.

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### Creating the One-Shot Library Workshop: A Step-by-Step Guide

*By Jerilyn Veldof. Chicago: ALA, 2006. 170 p. \$42 (ISBN 0-8389-09132-2) LC 2005-33222*

This excellent book describes the process of designing an effective learner-centered and performance-based library workshop for teaching library research skills at the college level. Ignoring the common practice used by librarians, Jerilyn Veldof uses an instructional system to design and teach a library workshop. The instructional system design model that she favors consists of five major stages: analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation. Each stage is further divided into several sub-steps. The whole process of the instructional system totals seventeen steps, beginning with assessing needs, analyzing learners’ characteristics, and ending with evaluating the workshop. The process is not linear; instead, it is circular with feedback coming from evaluations and other stages and then feeding into various stages in order to revise and improve the total instructional system.

The author combines her profound knowledge of instructional design and learning theories with

her rich library experiences as the director of undergraduate initiatives at the University of Minnesota Libraries. One chapter provides thorough explanations about what and how to do each particular step. The reading of the book, however, is never dull for the book has several special features such as boxes for “Tips” as well as a few cartoons. This adds some humor to the text and turns reading into a joyful experience. A box called “Are You All Set?” placed at the end of each chapter checks readers’ comprehension before moving on to the next chapter. Every chapter contains a case study describing the actual application of a particular step at the University of Minnesota libraries in teaching freshmen how to search for articles and how to differentiate scholarly journals from popular magazines. In the case studies readers see the theories actually put in action.

Because of time and resource constraints, the instructional design model presented in the book would be more practical and easier for university or large public libraries to adopt or adapt as they have a team of library staff to share the responsibilities of designing and teaching. At K–12 schools, it may not be feasible as the media specialist often is the only person in charge of the media center.

In summary, this book is a great guide and resource on designing a library workshop. Numerous lists of resources on learning theories, instructional design, and other related topics are very impressive. There is no doubt that the author is well versed and trained in the area. The instructions on working on each step are clear and systematic. A person lacking experience in planning a library workshop should not have difficulty understanding and following the steps.—*Shu-Hsien Chen, retired faculty member of the GSLIS, Queens College, Flushing, N.Y.*

### **The Librarian's Internet Survival Guide: Strategies for the High-Tech Reference Desk**

*By Irene E. McDermott. Medford, N.J.: Information Today, 2006. 328p. \$29.50. (ISBN 1-57387-235-0) LC 2005-030308*

Searcher columnist Irene McDermott, a reference librarian and systems manager for the San Marino (Calif.) Public Library, has put together a new expanded version of her 2002 book. This book is made up of chapters that were originally written as installments of her Internet Express column.

Each chapter is meant to stand on its own with each discussing a different subject. The first nine chapters detail Internet sites that will aid those working on a reference desk. There are chapters dealing with business, medical information, full-text resources, kid-friendly sites, shopping, and ready reference. The last six chapters deal with helping library staff to provide better assistance to patrons seeking guidance on how to use the Internet. For example, McDermott talks of strategies for teaching the Internet to our clientele, for dealing with technology

troubleshooting, and keeping up with technology changes.

Included are print screens of different sites mentioned throughout the book; and a listing of all figures with page numbers. For each site mentioned, the author includes the Web address and a brief description.

The author is very engaging in her writing style and adds some lightness by sharing a bit of her experience on each subject. Each chapter provides a sample of recommended reputable sites. McDermott has put together a good sampling of Web sites and this is recommended for all libraries.—*Jen Dawson, Coordinator of Academic Support Services, Citrus Research and Education Center, Lake Alfred, Florida.*

### **Extreme Teens: Library Services to Nontraditional Young Adults**

*By Sheila Anderson. Westport, Conn.: Libraries Unlimited, 2005. 175p. paper. \$37 (ISBN 1-5945-8170-3) LC 2005-16076*

This excellent guide, in the Libraries Unlimited Professional Guides for Young Adult Librarians Series, provides public librarians with numerous ideas and advice for working with teens who have encountered difficulties in their young lives. According to Anderson, extreme teens, a term not intended to be derogatory, refers to nontraditional teens who are underserved or at risk because of their different educational situations, living conditions, or sexual orientation. It is a great resource book filled with a wealth of annotated lists of books, videotapes, CDs, DVDs, and Web sites, all related to extreme teens. The book contains interesting information about several well-known people who once were extreme teens. School dropouts, homeless or runaway

youth, ESL students, pregnant teens, teenage mothers, emancipated or incarcerated teens, and homosexuals are extreme teens for whom the author strongly advocates accepting as clients and giving proper library services.

Extreme teens may be invisible to mainstream society, but they do exist in most communities. This book is intended to assist public librarians in planning services or programs suitable for this group of young people. For many extreme teens, the public library may be the only safe haven where they feel unthreatened as they search information for their particular needs. Public librarians, and especially, young adult librarians, reference librarians, and library administrators will benefit from the book as they plan to begin or strengthen services or outreach programs for this group. Other professionals working with youth in other social agencies or organizations will also find the book very useful.

The vast amount of information in the book is organized in a logical and easy-to-understand manner. Facts and statistics about extreme teens are laid out first, followed by descriptions of various groups of extreme teens regarding their concerns, interests, fears, and needs. Discussions of services and programs that the public library may provide or collaborate with on are also provided. Diversity in building a collection is emphasized. Finally, the author recommends tips and techniques on how to promote, publicize, and market library services and programs for extreme teens. Also included are several sample booktalks on different types of extreme teens, complete with lists of books appropriate for booktalks; a large number of resource lists on working with extreme teens; and "Extreme Teens Tidbits," which gives interest-

ing facts and suggestions regarding nontraditional teens.

There already are several books on serving certain groups of troubled teens, such as *Bringing Them Back Alive: Helping Teens Get out and Stay out of Trouble* by Jose M. Olivares (Taylor Trade Pub., 2004) or *Shouting at the Sky: Troubled Teens and the Promise of the Wild* by Gary Ferguson (St. Martin's, 1999), but none of the books has been as comprehensive and inclusive as *Extreme Teens* in covering such a wide spectrum of underserved teens. This book is a must purchase for public libraries. A copy of the book in a high school or middle school media center would be a good reference for school personnel.—*Shu-Hsien Chen, Retired faculty member of GLIS Queens College, Flushing, N.Y.*

### Children's Book Award Handbook

*By Diana F. Marks. Westport, Conn.: Libraries Unlimited, 2006. 424 p. \$40 (ISBN 1-59158-304-7). LC 2006-3720*

There are children's literature awards for superior writing, brilliant illustration, promoting diversity and even promoting peace. Awards have multiplied, according to author Diana Marks, to such an extent that an award has been created every year since 2000. Marks documents twenty-four of these awards in *Children's Book Award Handbook*. In addition to the Newbery and Caldecott, she includes such diverse awards as the Coretta Scott King, the Pura Belpré, Mildred Batchelder, and Hans Christian Andersen, just to name a few.

Most chapters feature an overview, a biography, and personal timeline of the award's namesake; award history and criteria; a bibliography of the namesake's work (if applicable); a complete award list

(including honors); and enrichment activities meant to stimulate reading. One short chapter combines information on the Golden Kite Award, the Sid Fleischman Humor Award, and the Boston Globe-Horn Book Award. There is also a bibliography of sources that Marks used for the histories and biographies and an index that includes books, authors, and awards.

Unfortunately, the suggested activities fail to connect children to the literature and are too didactic to promote a real love of reading. For example, many suggested activities are concerned with the person who gave the award their name rather than any of the books or authors whose work won the award. Given the proliferation of free reading enrichment tools on- and offline, and Web sites that update awards lists mere minutes after they are announced, this book is a supplemental rather than critical purchase. For those looking for sure-fire ways to excite children and teens about award-winning literature, skip the activities in the Handbook, pick up a few award-winning books and just read them together.—*Cindy Welch, Ph.D student, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Graduate School of Library and Information Science*

### Summer Library Reading Program Handbook

*By Carole Fiore. New York, N.Y.: Neal-Schuman, 2005. 312p. \$65 (ISBN 1-55570-513-8) LC 2004-031104.*

Author Carole Fiore is a former library program specialist and youth services consultant with the State Library and Archives of Florida and director of the Florida Library Youth Program (FLYP). She has put together a guide for librarians to "strengthen and expand their role in supporting learning over the sum-

mer months" (xv). The manual that Fiore has put together details the origins of summer reading programs and why there needs to be increased investment and participation in these programs.

She has divided the manual into parts that take a library through the stages of summer reading. The first part is entitled "Summer Reading Program Essentials." The section explores the history of the summer reading program and its effect on literacy in children and why we need to continue to support summer reading programs in libraries. There are several charts detailing statistics related to literacy including "the impact of summer learning loss on the achievement gap in reading" (19). Part two deals with the aspects of designing a successful summer library reading program that not only caters to your library users but those that are not currently using the library. She also discusses how to develop programs that will include students with disabilities. Part three mentions several ways to promote and organize your program. She mentions several partnerships libraries can undertake to aid in their summer programs. She lists examples of public libraries partnering with schools to help bring more books to those students during the summer and also using the schools to promote the programs. Part four is "Designing and Evaluating Your Program," which contains several different programming ideas that could be used, such as poetry jams and film programs.

Evaluation of programs is also discussed—for example, having your patrons fill out surveys about programs they have attended. Included in this section are examples of exemplary summer library reading programs with themes and descriptions. There are several pictures showing

t-shirts that the individual libraries designed as well as other items that the libraries made for their programs.

There are appendixes that list different themes used; Appendix A has state library reading themes used in previous years up to current if available. Appendix B contains collaborative summer library program themes by year with members, appendix C contains southern states summer reading cooperative themes by year with members, and appendix D has a form to send to Fiore regarding outstanding summer library reading programs.

Fiore has included an index as well as a list of figures included in this title. There are several examples in these figures of sample letters and forms that libraries have used that would provide a great help to any public library getting started with their summer library programs. For example, Figure 6-2 is an example of a media release template.

Overall, this book is a great guideline for step-by-step instructions on how to design, implement, and evaluate any summer library reading program.—*Jen Dawson, Coordinator of Academic Support Services, Citrus Research and Education Center, Lake Alfred, Florida.*

## On Sybil's Shoulders: Seeking Soul in Library Leadership

By Donna Brockmeyer. Lanham, Md: Scarecrow, 2005. 171p. \$37 (ISBN 0-81085-120-2) LC 2005-6307

Does librarianship have a soul? This is what the author examines as she discusses how it is our caring and passion embracing our desire to do our best to help others. The author asks what inspires us to help others and continue to create ourselves? This book takes an interesting

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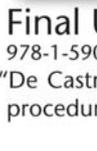
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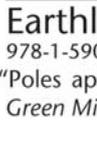


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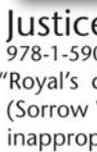
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look at professional and organizational library leadership based on the author's own experiences as a library leader. The book discusses the profession and what happens

between us and the customers we serve. The author examines the contemporary, feminist, and ancient

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The contributing editor of this column is **VICKI NESTING**, Assistant Director at the St. Charles Parish Library, Louisiana. Submissions may be sent to her at 21 River Park Dr., Hahnville, LA 70057; [vnesting@bellsouth.net](mailto:vnesting@bellsouth.net).

Vicki is currently reading *Dead Center* by David Rosenfelt, *The River Sorrow* by Craig Holden, and *The Last Town on Earth* by Tom Mullen.

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

### **New Small Business Resource Center Provides Entrepreneurs with Tools to Start and Run Businesses**

[www.gale.com](http://www.gale.com)

Thomson Gale released Small Business Resource Center, a comprehensive database offering content that covers all major areas of starting and operating a business, including accounting, finance, human resources, management, marketing, taxes, and more.

From conducting industry research to financial planning, Small Business Resource Center houses a combination of periodical and reference content for use by business students as well as current and future entrepreneurs. Easy to search and highly intuitive, Small Business Resource Center allows users to search subjects, keywords or entire documents. They also can link directly to pre-compiled information based on popular business topics and types, sample business plans and answers to the most frequently asked questions from a "How To" menu.

### **National Public Radio Now Available in Thomson Gale's Academic OneFile**

[www.gale.com](http://www.gale.com)

Thomson Gale recently added transcripts and audio from all National

Public Radio (NPR) programs to Academic OneFile.

Run a search on a topic in Academic OneFile; click on the Multimedia tab in the database's updated, intuitive interface; and find premium NPR content from 1990 to the present day. NPR content also will be added to other Thomson Gale online resources, including General OneFile.

### **Book Index with Reviews Now Offers Detailed Records for Music and Video Titles**

[www.ebsco.com](http://www.ebsco.com)

EBSCO Publishing has expanded the latest version of Book Index with Reviews (BIR) to include information on thousands of music and video titles. In addition to more than 4 million popular and classic book titles, BIR now features detailed information on more than 450,000 music titles and more than 200,000 DVD and video titles. This updated version of BIR also includes the following customer-driven enhancements: price listed on the search results page (rather than only at the title record page), ability to limit searches and browse using Dewey classifications, persistent links to titles are now displayed on each title display page, and additional print and e-mail options for results lists are available (with or without book

jacket or cover image, with or without annotation, and so forth).

## The Book Report Network Celebrates Ten Years

[www.tbrnetwork.com](http://www.tbrnetwork.com)

The Book Report Network (TBRN) is a group of seven Internet sites featuring original content about books and authors. During the last decade, these sites—led by flagship site [Bookreporter.com](http://Bookreporter.com)—have become the gathering places for a large and devoted audience of readers and book buyers. Monthly more than 1.3 million unique visitors come to the sites in TBRN, making it the largest noncommercial group of book Web sites on the Internet.

TBRN includes Web sites for:

- General adult readers at [Bookreporter.com](http://Bookreporter.com)
- Reading groups at [ReadingGroupGuides.com](http://ReadingGroupGuides.com)
- Christian readers at [FaithfulReader.com](http://FaithfulReader.com)
- Young adults at [Teenreads.com](http://Teenreads.com)
- Children at [Kidsreads.com](http://Kidsreads.com)

TBRN offers informed, contemporary book news, reviews, and author interviews. Web site visitors can subscribe to newsletters, join book clubs, and participate in interactive polls and contests.

## Espresso Book Machine

[www.ondemandbooks.com](http://www.ondemandbooks.com)

On Demand Books (ODB) is set to become the first company to globally deploy a low-cost, totally automatic book machine. The Espresso Book Machine can produce fifteen to twenty library quality paperback books per hour without any human

intervention. ODB has two machines currently deployed—one at the World Bank InfoShop in Washington D.C., and one at the Library of Alexandria in Egypt. The New York Public Library was scheduled to receive its machine in February 2007.

The machine can print, align, mill, glue, and bind two books simultaneously in less than seven minutes, including full-color laminated covers. It prints in any language and will even accommodate right-to-left texts by putting the spine on the right. The upper page limit is 550 pages, although future versions of the machine will accommodate longer works. Prices for the finished product will vary depending on location, but the production cost is about a penny per page.

Approximately 2.5 million books are now available—about 1 million in English—and no longer under copyright protection. On Demand accesses the volumes through Google and the Open Content Alliance, among other sources.

## OCLC Awarded Grant to Develop Library Marketing Campaign

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

OCLC has been awarded a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for development of a potential national marketing campaign to increase awareness of the value of libraries, and the need for support for libraries at local, state and national levels.

The \$1.2 million grant will be used by OCLC to conduct research, develop strategies, create materials and test elements of a national marketing campaign to demonstrate the value of libraries, and the need to increase support for libraries to meet

the changing needs and expectations of library users.

According to Cathy De Rosa, vice president of OCLC Marketing and Library Services, “Many libraries lack the resources, expertise and funding to build the library advocacy and marketing programs required to create an environment that can sustain and increase support. It is our goal to help libraries communicate their value to the communities they serve.”

## NetLibrary Offers All New Subject Sets

[www.netlibrary.com](http://www.netlibrary.com)

NetLibrary is now offering new Subject Sets for academic, public, community college, and corporate libraries. Covering key topics including business, nursing, engineering, career development, information technology, vocational education, and more, Subject Sets contain titles from top publishers with no duplication from set to set. Pricing starts at \$1,000, and each Subject Set includes ongoing access fees and OCLC MARC records at no additional charge.

Public Library Subject Sets include high-demand content such as health and wellness, personal computing, travel and leisure, and small business.

## Magnolia Pictures, HDNet, and Others Join OverDrive to Offer Video Downloads through Library Web Sites

[www.overdrive.com](http://www.overdrive.com)

Digital media vendor OverDrive announced that Magnolia Pictures, HDNet, Weston Woods, Nano Network, Music Sales Group, Naxos,

Hart Sharp Video, Davenport Films, Mill Creek Entertainment, Magic Lamp Productions, Associated Television International, MPS Multimedia, Sounds True, Tai Seng Entertainment, and Venevision International have entered into distribution agreements with OverDrive to download film and video titles through public library Web sites.

Some of the new titles that will now be available include such films as *Enron: Smartest Guys in the Room*, *World's Fastest Indian*, *Supersize Me*, and *Bubble*; educational works such as *Biography: Vincent Van Gogh* and *Modern Marvels: Mount Rushmore*; live action fairy tales such as *Hansel and Gretel* and *Rapunzel*; children's films including *Corduroy*, *Curious George Rides a Bike*, and *Wheels on the Bus*; spiritual and self-help videos such as *Meditation for Beginners*; and top-selling special interest videos including *Unlocking Da Vinci's Code* and *Angels and Demons Revealed*.

OverDrive, which provides digital audiobooks to more than 4,000 U.S. and foreign public libraries, expanded its service in the past year to include download film and video in its library media catalog. To use the service, a patron browses the library Web site or catalog, enters their library card, and checks out and downloads movies and TV shows in Windows Media Video format (.wmv). At the end of the lending period, the video title expires and checks itself back into the library catalog.

## Avon Books Launches New Inspirational Fiction Line

[www.harpercollins.com](http://www.harpercollins.com)

Avon Books, in conjunction with religion and spirituality publisher

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HarperSanFrancisco, announces the creation of a new inspirational women's fiction line, Avon Inspire. "These stories, written by some of the most respected and beloved authors in the inspirational fiction category, lift the

heart and spirit; Avon Inspire novels are engaging stories that Christian readers can trust and love," says Avon publisher Liate Stehlik. Avon Inspire will launch in Summer 2007 with two original titles, *Defiant Heart* by

Tracey Bateman (on sale May 8, 2007) and *Wedding Bell Blues* by Linda Windsor (on sale June 26, 2007).

**Omnigraphics Introduces African-American Holidays, Festivals, and Celebrations**

[www.omnigraphics.com](http://www.omnigraphics.com)

*African-American Holidays, Festivals, and Celebrations* presents the history, customs, symbols, and lore of more than one hundred diverse African-American holidays and festivals celebrated in the United States. Events covered include contemporary and historical holidays ranging from slave observances to Kwanzaa.

Also covered are holidays and festivals commemorating notable people, historical events, and cultural heritage. Religious observances include those of various Christian denominations as well as

those of Santeria and other African-based faiths.

Each entry covers the name and date of the holiday or festival; its history and how it was created; when and where it was first celebrated; when and how it is observed today; Web sites and contact information for relevant organizations; and suggestions for further reading.

*African-American Holidays, Festivals, and Celebrations* is by Kathlyn Gay and comes in at 569 pages.

**Greenwood's The World Cookbook for Students**

[www.greenwood.com](http://www.greenwood.com)

Greenwood Publishing recently developed a new five-volume cookbook set that is directly related to the middle school and high school multicultural curricula. *The*

*World Cookbook for Students* fills a demand for more and different recipes for all countries and also from ethnic groups. Very few cookbooks are geared to students, and no in-print sets or series match this scope and depth.

The volumes are organized alphabetically by country or group name. Each entry includes a brief introduction to the land and people and their cuisine and then an overview of the foodstuffs, typical dishes, and styles of eating in simple bulleted lists. Approximately five recipes of typical dishes and holiday fare are provided for each country or ethnic group, for a total of 1,198 recipes. Includes thumbnail maps, illustrations, introduction, and a bibliography with print and online resources, and a set index in each volume.

*The World Cookbook for Students* by Jeanne Jacob and Michael Ashkenaz is 1,312 pages in five volumes. [D]

**By the Book**

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views of leadership along with interviews of nine library leaders that she admires to give readers a perspective on what motivates and inspires them to be passionate about their career. The last part of this book focuses

on leadership through the Northern Exposure to Leadership (Canada) and the American Snowbird Leadership Institute.

This book offers librarians an interesting and thought provoking

perspective on our profession and on what makes a great leader. Highly recommended for all libraries.

—Susan McClellan, Director, Avalon Public Library, Pittsburgh, Pa. [D]

**Index to Advertisers**

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# Instructions to Authors

*Public Libraries*, the official journal of the Public Library Association, is always eager to publish quality work of interest to public librarians. The following are options available to prospective authors:

- Feature articles. These are usually ten to twenty manuscript pages double-spaced. (Contact Kathleen Hughes at khughes@ala.org.)
- Verso pieces. These express opinions or present viewpoints and are not to be longer than six manuscript pages. (Contact Kathleen Hughes at khughes@ala.org.)
- Library news for Tales from the Front (Contact Jennifer Ries-Taggart at jtaggart@libraryweb.org)
- Vendor announcements for New Product News (Contact Vicki Nesting at vnestin@bellsouth.net.)
- Reviews of professional literature. (Contact Julie Elliott at jmfelli@iusb.edu)
- Announcements of grants and other funding opportunities for Bringing in the Money. (Contact Lee Price at leeaprice@comcast.net.)
- Items for News from PLA (Contact Kathleen Hughes at khughes@ala.org.)

Please follow the procedures outlined below when preparing manuscripts to be submitted to *Public Libraries*.

## Mechanics

Because *Public Libraries* is composed using desktop publishing software, all manuscripts should be submitted as an e-mail attachment (preferably in Word format). Please include **YOUR NAME** and the **TYPE** of word processing program (including **VERSION**) in the text of the e-mail.

- Do not use automatic formatting templates. Make the manuscript format as streamlined and simple as possible. Complicated formatting creates problems for our desktop publishing software.
- Justify text on the left margin only.
- Double-space the entire manuscript, including quotes and references.
- Number all pages

- Add two hard returns between paragraphs to delineate them. Do not indent at the start of a new paragraph.
- Do not use the automatic footnote/endnote feature on your word processing program. Create endnotes manually at the end of the article.
- Do not use any characters that do not appear on the standard keyboard, such as bullets or arrows. These are embedded during the desktop publishing process.

## Style

- **Cover page.** Submit a separate cover page stating the author's name, address, telephone and e-mail, and a brief, descriptive title of the proposed article. The author's name should not appear anywhere else on the manuscript.
- **Abstract.** Include two or three sentences summarizing the content of the article before the first paragraph of the text.
- **References.** *Public Libraries* uses numbered endnotes. References should appear at the end of the paper in the order in which they are cited in the text. Bibliographic references should not include works not cited in the text. See past issues of the journal for the preferred form for citations.
- **Spelling and use.** Consult the *Random House Webster's College Dictionary* for spelling and usage.
- **Style.** Consult the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th edition (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Pr., 2003) for capitalization, abbreviations, and the like.
- **Presentation.** Write in a clear, simple style. Use the active voice whenever possible. Avoid overly long sentences.
- **Subheadings.** Break up long sections of text with subheadings. All nouns, pronouns, modifiers, and verbs in the subhead should be capitalized.
- **Illustrations.** Photographs enhancing the content of the manuscript are welcomed. Hard copies are preferred over digital copies, unless digital copies are prepared at high resolution, suitable for magazine printing. Web-quality files, such as gifs, cannot be used. Please include captions for all photos submitted.

- **Revision.** Articles are edited for clarity and space. When extensive revision is required, the manuscript is returned to the author for revision and approval of editorial changes.

## Tables and Graphs

- Tables and graphs should be prepared using a spreadsheet program such as Lotus or Excel, if possible.
- Number tables and graphs consecutively and save each one as a separate file. Indicate their placement within the text with the note [insert table 00 here].
- Give each table or graph a brief, descriptive caption.
- Use tables and graphs sparingly. Consider the relationship of the tables and graphs to the text in light of the appearance on the printed page.
- For complicated graphic materials such as maps or illustrations of Web pages, prepare separate TIF or PDF files, named [author table 00] or [author figure 00]. Save the graphics in a size similar to the size on the printed journal page; generally this should be 2.8 inches wide and not more than 5.5 inches deep. Saving to fit the size of the graphic on the printed page improves the quality of the printed graphic.
- You need not provide graphs in final form. If you prefer, you may provide a rough version. If so, please mark all data points clearly. We will create the

graphic. You will have a chance to review the graphic when you review your typeset pages during the proofing stage.

If you have any questions about manuscript preparation or submission, please contact Kathleen Hughes, Editor, 50 E. Huron, Chicago, IL 60611 or khughes@ala.org.

## Submission and After

Manuscripts are evaluated by persons knowledgeable about the topic of the work and the editor. The evaluation process generally takes eight to twelve weeks for feature articles and less than eight weeks for Versos. Articles are scheduled for publication mostly in the order of acceptance, except where space considerations dictate. For example, the number of pages available might require a longer or shorter article to complete the issue's allotted pages.

Send an electronic copy, as an e-mail attachment along with your name, address, telephone, fax, and e-mail address to Kathleen Hughes at khughes@ala.org. Queries may also be addressed to khughes@ala.org.

Receipt of all manuscripts is acknowledged. Please feel free to contact Kathleen Hughes at the PLA office, 1-800-545-2433, ext. 4028 for more information. Your queries and suggestions are welcomed.

## Updated Service Responses Available for Download from PLA

The Public Library Association (PLA) is pleased to announce that the 2007 Public Library Service Responses are now available for download at the **ALA Online Store** ([www.alastore.ala.org](http://www.alastore.ala.org)). The PDF document, which includes comprehensive descriptions of eighteen new and revised service responses, is available to ALA members for \$22.50 (\$25 for non-members).

In 1997, the publication *Planning for Results: A Public Library Transformation Process* included thirteen service responses, which were defined as “what a library does for, or offers to, the public in an effort to meet a set of well-defined community needs.” As communities change, library responses have adapted. In 2006, PLA Results series editors Sandra Nelson and June Garcia initiated a process to revise the 1997 service responses by soliciting input from librarians, library staff, and library trustees through meetings and online review and discussion on the **PLA Blog** ([www.plablog.org](http://www.plablog.org)). The resulting eighteen new and revised services responses were completed in February 2007.

The revised service responses (product number 5212\_0507), along with other titles from PLA's popular Results series, may be ordered online at [www.alastore.ala.org](http://www.alastore.ala.org) or by calling the ALA Store (1-866-746-7252). For more information on PLA publications, contact the PLA office at 800-545-2433, ext. 5PLA, or visit **PLA's Web site** at [www.pla.org](http://www.pla.org).

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