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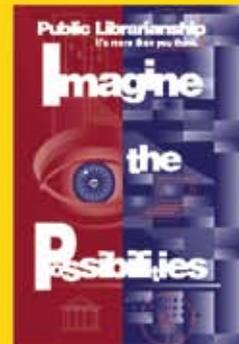
VOLUME 48 • NUMBER 1 • JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2009 • ISSN 0163-5506



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FEATURES

38 **Aiming High, Reaching Out, and Doing Good** Helping Homeless Library Patrons with Legal Information

LINDA TASHBOOK

Shows how public librarians can use legal topics to reach out to prospective and already present homeless patrons.

46 **Archives in Public Libraries**

ERIC LINDERMAN

Article describes the value of archive resources as an asset to the local community.

52 **The Library Link Sites Success Story** Alive and Thriving More Than Four Years Later

CHARLOTTE COX

Author details an innovative plan to provide access to underserved portions of a library community using library satellite sites.

59 **Partnerships for a Healthy Community** Laredo Public Library's Children's Health Fair and Outreach Program

RENA REN, KEITH COGDILL, AND ALEX POTEMKIN

Describes a successful children's health outreach effort in Laredo, Texas.

62 **From Classroom to Courtroom** Our Role in the Community

KATHY MCCLELLAN

Shows the critical role libraries can play in the lives of children who are making their way through local court and child welfare systems.

DEPARTMENTS

4 **News from PLA**

KATHLEEN HUGHES

4 **On the Agenda**

5 **From the President**

CAROL SHEFFER

11 **Tales from the Front**

JENNIFER T. RIES-TAGGART

13 **Statistically Speaking**

DENISE M. DAVIS

20 **Perspectives**

NANN BLAINE HILYARD

27 **Book Talk**

BRENDAN DOWLING

29 **Internet Spotlight**

MICHAEL PORTER AND
DAVID LEE KING

32 **Bringing in the Money**

LEE PRICE

35 **Passing Notes**

MICHAEL GARRETT FARRELY

66 **By The Book**

JULIE ELLIOTT

69 **New Product News**

VICKI NESTING

EXTRAS

2 **Editor's Note**

6 **Verso—Techlab**

8 **Verso—Rock-n-Roll Libraries**

68 **Index to Advertisers**

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PUBLIC LIBRARIES (ISSN 0163-5506) is published bimonthly by the American Library Association (ALA), 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611. It is the official publication of the Public Library Association, a division of ALA. 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.

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PRODUCTION

ALA PRODUCTION SERVICES: Troy D. Linker, Chris Keech, Tim Clifford, and Justine Wells.

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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

Dear readers:

There's been a lot of talk lately about the increase in library use as a result of the nation's economic difficulties. But what about those segments of your local population who, in good times and bad, can't get to a library? Or what about serving incarcerated youth, homeless persons, or others who may have trouble accessing library services? This issue of *PL* is entirely focused on outreach services and presents a wide spectrum of ideas for you to consider. Whether it is providing legal information to your homeless patrons, using local archives to assist your community, setting up satellite sites for your underserved areas, reaching out to youth at risk, or simply implementing a Twitter account—you'll find lots of great ideas in this issue.

We're working on a special issue (for July/August 2009) which will focus entirely on public libraries and the economy, and we'd love to have your input. Interested in contributing? Contact me at khughes@ala.org with story ideas or any other thoughts about the issue.

Thanks for reading!

Kathleen M. Hughes, Editor

Kathleen is reading *Charlotte Bronte: A Writer's Life* by Rebecca Fraser.



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What do you want to talk about today?

Branch Libraries
Cataloging
Rural Libraries
Technology
YA Literature
Readers Advisory
Marketing Public Libraries
Research and Statistics
Advocacy
Audiovisual
Metropolitan Libraries
Basic Education Services
International Relations

Join the conversation at www.plaspace.org.

Visit www.plaspace.org today to join or create a group that addresses your area of interest.

What is PLAspace?

The Public Library Association created PLAspace to better serve members by giving them an opportunity to share ideas, network, and explore their professional interests with their peers online. All PLA members can join or create Communities of Practice (CoPs), which represent groups that have come together for the purpose of discussing one topic pertaining to public libraries and public librarianship.

PLAspace features:

Discussions
Polling
Chat rooms
Events
Project management tools
Wiki pages

Log on and join the conversation at www.plaspace.org.

For more information, visit www.pla.org and www.plaspace.org.



News from PLA

Gifts for the Librarian in Your Life

PLA recently launched an online store featuring fun and functional items that let public librarians show their pride. The store offers items such as T-shirts, mousepads, magnets, notecards, and license plate frames. Many of the items feature the popular “Smartest Card” and “Ask Me Why I Love My Job” graphics. Check out the merchandise online at www.cafepress.com/librarystore.

PLA President’s Program at Annual Conference to Feature Cokie Roberts

Cokie Roberts will headline the 2009 PLA President’s Program and Awards Presentation scheduled for Monday, July 13, 2009, at 5 p.m. during the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago. Roberts is a political commentator for ABC News and a senior news analyst for National Public Radio. From 1996 to 2002, she and Sam Donaldson coanchored the weekly ABC interview program, *This Week*.

Third Edition of Collection Development Plan Now Available

Developing a collection to meet the needs of your community can be overwhelming for any library. The third edition of *Collection Development and Resources Access Plan for the Skokie Public Library* (ALA, 2009) is fully updated to help your library tackle this task.

This edition takes into account

the new demands of collection management, including new types of materials such as graphic novels, e-books, playaways, games, and more. In addition, the guide includes a section on managing the library’s Web presence, covering topics such as purpose and scope, site maintenance, retention and weeding, and development objectives.

Collection Development and Resources Access Plan for the Skokie Public Library is available from the ALA Online Store (www.alastore.ala.org) for \$24.

PLAspace Offers Librarians an Online Forum For Discussion



PLAspace www.plaspace.org, the web-site developed by PLA to house Communities of Practice (CoPs), continues to add new members who want to take part in ongoing, focused discussions surrounding library issues.

PLA began developing PLAspace after membership overwhelmingly voted to disband the more traditional committees in favor of CoPs, which are more accessible to those who are unable to travel to in-person meetings and allow members to create and sustain groups dedicated to specific library topics in an online environment. As new topics and issues emerge in the library community, members are encouraged to form groups for investigation, discussion, and management of projects.

Currently, discussion groups for librarians interested in branch librari-

es, cataloging, collection development, intellectual freedom, services for children, readers’ advisory, rural libraries, and more are housed on PLAspace. PLAspace incorporates many common social networking and interactive components, including discussion forums, chat rooms, event calendars, and file storage, allowing groups to easily discuss topics and plan for projects. Visit www.plaspace.org for more information, to join an existing conversation, or to start a new one.

Candidate Slate for 2009 PLA Election

President/President-Elect

Audra Caplan, director, Harford County Public Library, Belcamp, Maryland

Alan Harkness, regional director, Piedmont Regional Library, Winder, Georgia aharkness@prl.org

On the Agenda

2009

PLA Spring Symposium
April 2–4, 2009
Nashville

ALA Annual Conference
July 9–15, 2009
Chicago

2010

PLA 13th National Conference
March 23–27, 2010
Portland, Ore.



CAROL SHEFFER is Deputy Director, Queens Library, Jamaica, New York; csheffer@live.com.

Carol is reading *The Race* by Richard North Patterson and *The Host* by Stephenie Meyer.

A Resolution for the Profession

Happy New Year! It's the time of year when we make resolutions. Many resolutions fade before Valentine's Day, but I hope that you will join me in making one that we can actually accomplish.

This issue of *Public Libraries* focuses on outreach and bringing people into our libraries. I would like you to focus for a few minutes on bringing people into our profession. I use the word *profession* in the very broadest possible terms. We not only need to draw folks into librarianship, but also into the myriad of other occupations represented on library staffs. We should encourage others to become trustees and Friends of the library, as well.

I didn't think that I wanted to be a librarian but a wonderful woman by the name of Elizabeth Laxton, the director of my local library, persisted in trying to recruit me while I was a high school page. (In the interest of full disclosure, I must say that my mother claims prenatal influence, as *she* always wanted to be a librarian.) I wasn't interested at the time (I didn't like the idea of working nights and Saturdays), but after a year of doing a job I really hated, I went to "Mrs. L" for a letter of recommendation to library school. I have never looked back or been sorry that I chose this career.

Over the past several decades, I have recruited my share of librarians. In fact, I once convinced a total stranger during a single lunch that she should become a librarian. She kept in touch during grad school and long after she accepted her first library position. If she reads this, perhaps we will reconnect.

I challenge you to resolve to make 2009 the year that you recruit a librarian, library employee, a trustee, or a Friend. With a large percentage of librarians eligible to retire within the next five years, let's help repopulate the profession. Let's encourage those with accounting, human resources, or public relations skills to consider employment in a public library. Service-minded volunteers should be made aware of the need for committed library trustees and Friends.

To prepare yourself to discuss libraries with others, make a list of what you enjoy the most about your role. Here is my list:

5. I'm always learning new things.
4. I have visited many places around the country and the world.
3. I can mentor colleagues.
2. I serve in elected office in PLA.
1. I have met and continue to meet the most wonderful people!

May the new year bring you and yours the best of everything! 

AMBER SLAVEN is

Computer Trainer–Techlab
for the King County (Wash.)
Library System; adslaven@
kcls.org.

Amber is reading *The
Stories of Breece D’J
Pancake* by Breece D’J
Pancake, *The True Patriot* by
Eric Liu and Nick Hanauer,
and *Deogratias: A Tale of
Rwanda* by J. P. Stassen.

Techlab

Computer Lab on Wheels

The King County (Wash.) Library System (KCLS) is one of the busiest in the country. Our service area encompasses 2,131 miles, including many rural and unincorporated areas. According to the 2009 Preliminary Operating Budget, KCLS operates forty-four community libraries, and our 2008 circulation reached more than twenty million items.

While our numbers and circulation are impressive, our brick-and-mortar libraries cannot reach all potential patrons. Even with forty-four community libraries, strong community support, and funding for capital upgrades, the growing demand for service in our area is outpacing facility growth and modernization.

With a mobile computer classroom, we could provide computer instruction by taking library resources to the people who needed special instruction. Such a resource would also address the needs of people who cannot travel to library buildings. A traveling computer classroom would extend our reach, enabling us to take library equipment and resources on the road to help patrons learn to use computers and online services. That’s how the KCLS Techlab began.

What Is Techlab?

Techlab is a thirty-five-foot Winnebago with a fully equipped mobile classroom offering broadband Internet, Microsoft Office products, a projector, and eight laptop work stations.

Techlab visits community agencies and organizations, including senior centers, park districts, community and recreational centers, social service agencies, residential facilities, and other community gathering places to offer hands-on computer skills training.

Who We Teach

Techlab classes are open to anyone, but our primary goal is to provide computer training for underserved populations and extend the library’s services to people who have difficulty getting to the library because of disability, age, language, or economic isolation. Techlab has extended its scope in recent years to reach new immigrants, adults living in low-income housing communities, women living in temporary shelters, and teens preparing to search for jobs.

Techlab students have diverse needs, skills, and backgrounds, and many have no other access to new technologies, computer training, or library resources.

While some KCLS patrons have high-level computer skills or can regularly attend branch computer classes, many in our service area do not have the basic skills to keep up in classes. It is more challenging to provide computer

In 2000, Techlab began service in the KCLS Outreach Department to expand library services and computer literacy beyond traditional brick-and-mortar settings, and make library resources available to new audiences.



literacy courses to such a broad range of skill levels, especially in busy branches. Techlab is an effective solution because its sole mission is teaching computer skills, and that allows instructors to tailor classes directly to the skill levels of each student.

In recent months Techlab has partnered with local social service organizations, including Jewish Family Services, Catholic Community Services, and the King County Housing Authority. With each group KCLS has organized classes for adults in transitional communities and subsidized housing, and classes for new immigrants to the United States.

Through our connection with Jewish Family Services, basic computer skills classes have been offered simultaneously to native Russian, Farsi, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Somali speaking students. Using existing websites like Spelling City (www.spellingcity.com) and the Government Printing Office's Ben's Guide to U.S. Government for Kids (<http://bensguide.gpo.gov>), English Language Learners (ELLs) practice basic mouse and keyboard skills, and strengthen their new vocabulary.

These students also use class time to practice for citizenship tests.

Christiane Hulet, English as a Second Language instructor for Jewish Family Services, said:

Getting to a library is difficult for some of my students, sometimes because of advanced age and sometimes because they're so new to the country that navigating the bus system is terrifying. It helps a lot to have a class that comes to them. These small classes of peers give them that chance to learn in a low pressure environment.¹

What We Teach

Classes are usually offered in three-session series, with variations depending on class enrollment and need. The core classes are Introduction to Computers, Introduction to Microsoft Word, Introduction to the Internet, and E-mail Basics. Classes on special topics can be arranged, including Keyboarding and Mouse Skills, Advanced Internet, and Résumé Formatting.

In collaboration with teen librarians at KCLS, Techlab is also offering a Résumé Building and Online Job Search series for teens in early 2009. Techlab may eventually offer more Web 2.0 services: classes on blogging, wikis, and possibly podcasting and gaming are being considered.

The Techlab computer trainer also finds new sites to expand service, creates and maintains lesson plans, manages the class schedule, and drives the vehicle. A typical day usually includes teaching from one to three classes, each just over an hour long, at various sites throughout the county. Students receive appropriate handouts or manuals for each session, and have plenty of individual instruction and opportunities to ask questions.

Why We Teach

Techlab is a unique and exciting service that offers a valuable opportunity for getting to know the community in creative and dynamic ways. Staff members find it rewarding to watch students gain confidence and learn skills many of us take for granted. Much of the feedback we receive reveals how much students appreciate patient, basic instruction that they cannot find elsewhere. Techlab also showcases the many great services we provide, and inspires new patrons to visit the libraries. Even if those who see Techlab in their neighborhoods don't initially take a class, they may be inspired to call KCLS for more information. ☐

References

1. Christiane Hulet, personal interview with the author, Nov. 3, 2008.

JESSICA HAGLUND received her MLS in January 2009 from Simmons College Graduate School of Library and Information Science in Boston. She is currently seeking a full-time job at a public or special library in the Washington, D.C. area; jessica.haglund@comcast.net.

Jessica is reading *To Bury Our Fathers: A Novel of Nicaragua* by Sergio Ramirez, *War by Candlelight* by Daniel Alarcon, and *The Miracle at Speedy Motors* by Alexander McCall Smith.

Rock-n-Roll Libraries

Marketing through Music Concerts and Festivals

One of the biggest questions in public libraries today is “how do we market ourselves to reach a certain population?” Many strategies and programs have been implemented, including lectures, concerts, author readings, and online resources. Some programs and initiatives were very successful and have become the model for marketing. However, to avoid becoming stale and duplicating programs to the same target audience, new approaches have to be discovered. An unusual approach that can yield great results is library marketing through music concerts and festivals.

This kind of “rebel” marketing hasn’t been done in the United States, but a public library in Arendal, Norway, has succeeded with this approach. In order to reach young people and increase the library’s visibility among them, Arendal’s library staff participated in a local rock festival. When the festival came to a nearby town, Arendal’s library staff e-mailed the festival organizers and asked to participate and they were immediately accepted. The staff brought tables, display posters, and books, and set up camp in a provided tent. Because the concertgoers were mainly youth, the library brought graphic novels, comics, and nonfiction dealing with subjects like music, environmentalism, feminism, human rights, and GLBT issues.¹ The staff members found

the presence of the library introduced a local element into the festival . . . [the staff] were well-acquainted with the area and could answer most practical questions, such as how far it was into town, bus connections, where to go shopping, etc. . . . [the library] offered a slightly different place to be . . . where one could relax, read, chat over a cup of coffee and feel at home.²

Although there are no concrete results or demonstrable findings that show an increase in library usage, marketing through music concerts and festivals has the potential to target new audiences, who in turn can become library patrons.

Urban-based public libraries have the advantage of being in the proximity of concert venues. For example, the musician John Mayer performed in Denver in summer 2008. HeadCount, a New York–based nonprofit organization that registers voters at live music concerts, is affiliated with Mayer and registered thousands of voters during his summer tour.³ If the Denver Public Library were to secure a booth, they could have provided information about voting, the U.S. political system, and books about the candidates in addition to information about the library’s resources. The library could bring a local

element to the concert, reaching many people.

Suburban and more rural libraries could also implement this kind of unorthodox marketing. In May 2008, the town of Woodbridge, Connecticut, held a benefit performance for Darfur.⁴ The Woodbridge Town Library could have set up a booth and displayed books and information about that region and information on various efforts to end the crisis in Darfur.

Libraries around the country are sponsoring the “Wizard Rock Concerts,” which consist of roughly three hundred bands that “play music inspired by the characters and events from the Harry Potter series.”⁵ Libraries could take the opportunity to target parents who are chaperoning their children and demonstrate the library’s resources that are geared toward them.

While this out-of-the-box marketing is very exciting in theory, there are three issues to consider: staff, cost, and logistics. Can the library spare two (or more) staff members to work off-site for a few hours? And if this is done either before or after hours, how should the staff members be compensated? One possible solution is to use volunteers or members of the Friends’ group. If the target audience is teenagers or college-aged youth, consider using younger volunteers to relate to the audience. Of course, always check with employment guidelines to see if youth volunteers are able to work and whether parental consent is required.

The cost of materials needed to make this kind of marketing successful are also important to consider.

The library may have a folding table to use, but if not, perhaps a library volunteer or member of the community would be willing to donate a table for a few hours. Also, does the library have at least one laptop that can be taken out of the library? Borrowing a laptop from a staff member or volunteer might not be the best solution, as liability issues arise if the laptop is damaged or stolen. If the library is interested in doing this kind of marketing, it is worth considering buying a laptop if the budget allows for it, or building the cost into the next budget cycle.

Logistics, or transportation, can be tricky to arrange. The library may have a van that can be used, but if not, the car of a staff member or volunteer may be used. Can the library rent a vehicle? What are the policies or guidelines on borrowing someone else’s car? These are all issues that need to be looked into before taking on this kind of project.

In order to truly target a specific population and successfully bring them into the library, public libraries should follow these five steps:

1. select the resources you want to highlight;
2. identify your potential user groups;
3. choose locations where your potential users are likely to be;
4. utilize promotional materials, such as giveaways; and
5. tailor your presentation to the audience.⁶

Getting out of the library and into the community is one way of selling the library’s resources “one patron

at a time.”⁷ A wide range of audiences can be reached by marketing at music concerts; libraries will also become more visible within the community. By demonstrating some of the library’s resources through interpersonal communication, libraries could reach a target audience, make them more aware of the library and its resources, and hopefully bring in new patrons. ■

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1. Eli Solyland, “Rock Festival Librarians,” *Scandinavian Public Library Quarterly* 40, no. 4 (2007).
2. *Ibid.*, 25.
3. HeadCount press release, “HeadCount Announces Results of Spring-Summer 2008,” www.headcount.org/docs/HeadCount-ResultsRelease-9-10-08.pdf (accessed Jan. 7, 2009).
4. Save Darfur event flier, <http://ctsavedarfur.org/events/20080518-woodbridge.pdf> (accessed Jan. 7, 2009).
5. Suzanne M. Thinner, “Wizard Rock Concerts Cast Spells at Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh,” Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh press release, February 21, 2008, www.carnegielibrary.org/about/pressroom/2008/WizardRock.pdf (accessed Jan. 7, 2009).
6. John Ericson and Amy Peterson, “Old School Marketing for the Digital Age,” *Illinois Library Association Reporter* 25, no. 4 (Aug. 2007): 22.
7. *Ibid.*, 20.

Outreach Resources @ ALA's Office for Library Outreach Services (OLOS)

The ALA Office for Literacy and Outreach Services (OLOS) is charged with *focusing on* the delivery of services to the underserved and under-represented groups in libraries.

OLOS serves the association by “identifying and promoting library services that support equitable access to the knowledge and information stored in our libraries.” The office’s mission statement directs attention to services to “new and non-readers, people geographically isolated, people with disabilities, rural and urban poor people, and people generally discriminated against based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, language and social class.”

Advocacy Toolkits

From the OLOS website anyone can locate advocacy toolkits—developed by library practitioners—on services to bookmobiles, older adults, mobile services staff, rural and tribal libraries, and non-English speakers.

Other OLOS advocacy initiatives include The American Dream Starts @ your library[®] and How to Serve the World @ your library[®], for library services to immigrants and non-English speakers; Good Health Information @ your library[®], reflecting health information for people of color and immigrants in rural communities at the National Library of Medicine’s MedlinePlus; and Libraries, Literacy and Gaming, advocating gaming as a support to literacy in libraries.

Discussion Lists

OLOS discussion lists support the diversity of interests among the office’s liaison groups, encouraging discussion on related library outreach topics that include delivery of frontline services, collection development, effective practices, and issues of personnel, training, popular activities, and related educational resources.

Publications

The publication of *TRAILS (Tribal Libraries Procedures Manual)*, updated in October 2008, joins OLOS publications *Adult Literacy Assessment Tool Kit* (2000); *From Outreach to Equity: Innovative Models of Library Policy and Practice* (2004); *Library Services to Indigenous Populations: Viewpoints & Resources* (2005); and *Literacy and Libraries: Learning from Case Studies* (2001).

OLOS Conference Programs

The following programs are held at ALA Annual Conference each year:

- **Dr. Jean E. Coleman Library Outreach Lecture**—annually celebrating a library practitioner whose career efforts have focused on an OLOS mission area.
- **Diversity and Outreach Fair**—This popular and well-attended activity always features successful local initiatives, prioritizing OLOS mission populations, as well as the ALA committees, round tables, and affiliates, including the library associations of color, with similar target communities.
- **Bookmobile Sunday**—a new program developed by the OLOS Subcommittee on Bookmobiles that includes an author popular with mobile library users, as well as an exhibit of bookmobiles from the host area and manufacturers.

At ALA’s Midwinter Meeting each January, OLOS supports the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Observance, sponsored by the Black Caucus of the American Library Association (BCALA) and the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Task Force of the ALA Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT).

Awards

OLOS staff provides varying degrees of support services to these liaison round tables’ awards:

- EMERT’s Coretta Scott King Book Awards
- EMERT’s Cohen Multicultural Award
- GLBTRT’s Stonewall Awards
- GLBTRT and SRRT’s Rainbow Project
- SRRT’s Amelia Bloomer Project

For more information, contact olos@ala.org or (800) 545-2433, ext. 4294, or visit www.ala.org/olos. 



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Jennifer is reading *The Hot Topic: What We Can Do about Global Warming* by Gabrielle Walker and Sir David King, *The Sound of Butterflies* by Rachael King, and *The House of Mondavi: The Rise and Fall of an American Wine Dynasty* by Julie Flynn Siler.

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

LiveScan Fingerprinting Offered @ Mission Viejo Library

The Mission Viejo (Calif.) Library (MVL) continues to offer innovative, responsive services to its patrons such as U.S. Passport Acceptance Service and now, LiveScan Fingerprinting.

One might ask, “Why would a public library want to offer fingerprinting service?” In many communities, volunteers for nonprofit organizations—including scout groups, school districts, and sports leagues—are now required to be fingerprinted. Such is the case in the city of Mission Viejo.

Upon learning that the availability of fingerprinting service providers was limited locally, MVL Circulation Services Manager Kathleen Kelton investigated the feasibility of offering the LiveScan service to the community. She found that LiveScan had never been provided by a public library in the state of California, so she pursued an application to the California Department of Justice for MVL to be a LiveScan fingerprinting provider. The library and selected staff (now certified fingerprint rollers) met the rigorous State of California qualifications.

Funds to purchase the LiveScan fingerprinting equipment were generously provided by the Friends of MVL. The service was introduced on October 14, 2008.

LiveScan fingerprinting is offered nineteen hours a week by appointment. The library keeps the \$20-per-applicant fingerprint rolling fee,

and also fingerprints (at no charge) all the city’s volunteers and new employees. Anticipated annual revenue is \$20,000.

For more information about this service, contact Valerie Maginnis, director of library services, at (949) 470-3076 or e-mail vmaginnis@cityofmissionviejo.org.

Brighton Memorial Offers Reading Partnership with Seniors

Brighton (N.Y.) Memorial Library (BML) has revitalized its Partners in Reading for Seniors (PIRS) program as part of its community outreach initiative. PIRS matches homebound Brighton seniors, sixty years of age or older, with a library volunteer to create a reading partnership. The program currently has twenty-five volunteers who deliver library materials to twenty-five homebound residents and the numbers are still growing.

Gail Montean, circulation aide, has been instrumental in promoting the program. She visits Brighton’s senior and nursing homes and does presentations for the residents, describing how they can benefit from PIRS. Facility coordinators work with Montean to decide which residents would get the optimal benefit of the program. Residents get their own library card and volunteer partner.

Many residents are excited about the one-on-one interaction they receive with their library volunteer.

Others are happy to have a library card in their name and to be able to continue to use the materials BML offers. Additionally, the volunteers are eager to be involved with the library and enjoy their time with the seniors. In short, the program has been a rewarding one for everyone.

For more information, contact Montean at (585) 784-5320, or write her at 2300 Elmwood Ave., Rochester, NY 14618.

BookFlix Available @ Davenport Public Library

Davenport (Iowa) Public Library (DPL) has subscribed to a fun, new reading program that patrons and their children can access from home. Scholastic BookFlix is an online literacy resource that pairs classic video storybooks from Weston Woods with related nonfiction e-books from Scholastic. BookFlix was specifically created to support non, beginning, and reluctant readers and to build a love of reading and learning. This engaging resource for children in pre-K through third grade helps early readers develop and practice essential reading skills, and introduces students to a world of knowledge and exploration. Children can access Scholastic BookFlix 24/7 from anywhere there's an Internet connection. BookFlix includes:

- eighty classic video storybooks each paired with a related nonfiction e-book;
- read-aloud supports so students can hear each book narrated and also hear definitions of keywords and directions for each activity read aloud;

- educational games and activities
- safe, age-appropriate Web links selected; and
- “meet the author” section to learn more about favorite books and writers.

To log on to BookFlix, visit www.davenportlibrary.com and click on the “Do Research Online” link.

For more information about accessing this database, call the DPL Reference Department at (563) 326-7844.

Library Launches Ask-A-Librarian by Text Message

Since March 2008, Fairfax County (Va.) Public Library's (FCPL) virtual reference librarians have been answering questions sent to a library BlackBerry via text message. The new service is part of the library's remote Ask-A-Librarian program, which allows library customers to reach librarians via e-mail, phone, text message, or live chat.

The service is available during regular hours, and the librarians respond immediately. The library purchased a dedicated BlackBerry to receive the text messages. Once a message is received, the BlackBerry vibrates alerting the librarian that a text message has arrived.

After the Internet Services Department decided to pursue the service and received permission from library management, staff purchased the BlackBerry, requested and received a dedicated phone number and signed up for unlimited text messaging with the county's wireless service provider, since it was difficult to predict how

popular the service might become.

The next step was training the staff. Internet Services recruited a twenty-five-year-old administrative assistant who works in the department to show the librarians how it worked. None of the reference librarians, who are all in their forties or fifties, had ever texted anyone before the in-house training. In addition to learning what a text message looks like when it comes into the BlackBerry, and how to respond, they had to learn commonly used texting acronyms or abbreviations such as “y” (why), “u” (you), “2” (to or too), “k or kk” (okay), “ty” (thank you), “r” (are), and “thnx” (thanks).

Questions so far have included whether the library has a certain book, the start time of a library event, and the definition of a word. In fact, the number of text messages from the customer requesting word definitions multiplied to such a point that staff guessed the person texting was someone learning English, so staff pointed the enthusiastic learner to an online dictionary. Text messaging may have added appeal to people learning English as a Second Language, because often writing is easier than speaking a new language.

For customers and staff, texting is best used for simple questions. For customers who aren't quite sure what they want or have a question so complicated it can't be asked in a brief text message, phone calls, online chats, or in-person contact is still the best method for them.

For more information, contact Mary Mulrenan, communications specialist, at (703) 324-8319 or e-mail librarynews@fairfaxcounty.gov. 



DENISE M. DAVIS is Director, Office for Research & Statistics, American Library Association; dmdavis@ala.org.

Denise is reading *Daniel Deronda* by George Elliot and *Shoe Addicts Anonymous* by Beth Harbison.

This occasional column will focus on topical issues related to public library research and statistics. What do you need to know? Send ideas for topics to Kathleen Hughes, Editor of *Public Libraries*, at khughes@ala.org.

Outreach to Non-English Speakers in U.S. Public Libraries

Summary of a 2007 Study

About twenty-one million people in the United States speak limited or no English, fifty percent more than a decade ago.¹ This impacts public agencies in health care and education the most, but impacts other public agencies as well. Staffs at these agencies are faced daily with someone who needs services and does not speak English.

In 2006, the American Library Association (ALA) Office for Research and Statistics began discussions with Christie Koontz and Dean Jue of Florida State University to conduct a study to determine the non-English languages supported, and services provided to these patrons of U.S. public libraries. The study was made possible with the support of the ALA Office for Literacy and Outreach Services, Public Programs Office, and Office for Diversity and by the 2006 World Book-ALA Goal Grant.

This is the first national study to consider the impact of specialized library services to non-English speakers, as reported through anecdotal information by library staff, both in terms of barriers to developing language-based services and regarding perceived success of these services. Study findings are valuable in planning not just for the detail on services but also the findings regarding library service area population and patron proximity to the closest library branch as a market service indicator.

Completed in spring 2007, the study identified three themes:

1. Spanish is far and away the most supported non-English language in public libraries.
2. Smaller communities are serving a larger proportion of non-English speakers.
3. Literacy is both a barrier for non-English speakers using library services *and* for libraries providing services and programs.

We have worked hard over the past five years, using grant money from the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation and the New Jersey State Library, to upgrade our circulating collection of print and audiovisual ESL materials. Our circulation of these materials has tripled. We work closely with the literacy volunteers of Morris County and currently have six classes taught by their tutors in our building. The classes include Beginning English, Writing for ESL Students, and English Conversation. Our in-house mini-language lab offers Rosetta Stone ESL on three levels and can be used by anyone during the hours the library is open.—Morristown & Morris Township (N.J.) Library

Study Method

The research question was fairly simple: What barriers do libraries face in providing services for non-English speaking patrons? The devil was in the detail.

The study team consisted of Koontz, Jue, and ALA staff. The first hurdle was identifying the study population. U.S. Census data were used to identify block groups with at least 20 percent population where English was not the primary lan-

guage spoken in the home. This is known as *linguistic isolation* (LI). Using GeoLib's Public Library Geographic Database (www.geolib.org/PLGDB.cfm), which plots public libraries and Census characteristic data to a map, the researchers identified the public library outlets within a one-mile radius of a linguistically isolated block group. There were 1,844 public library outlets identified, representing 672 unique public library entities (system headquarters) in 41 states and the District of Columbia. Ineligible states (those with no public library outlets within a one-mile radius of a linguistically isolated block group) were Alaska, Delaware, Mississippi, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

Using 1,844 as the number of public library outlets meeting the project definition for serving non-English speakers, the Census data identified:

- 70.8 percent of library outlets serving Spanish speakers;
- 14.9 percent serving Asian speakers;
- 55.4 percent serving multi-language speakers;
- 12.8 percent serving Indo-European speakers; and
- 1.4 percent of library outlets serving speakers of other languages.

Each of the public library outlets was then linked back to the one public library entity to which the outlet belonged. Of the total universe of 1,844 library outlets, 586 usable surveys were returned; 480 (82 percent) agreed they served a linguistically isolated market while 106 disagreed (18 percent).

Key Findings

Three key themes emerged:

1. Spanish is far and away the most supported non-English language in public libraries.
 - 78 percent of libraries reported Spanish as the number-one priority language to which they develop services and programs.
 - Asian languages ranked second in priority at 29 percent.
 - Another 17.6 percent of libraries indicated Indo-European languages as a second priority.

Approximately 63 percent of the block groups identified from the 2000 Decennial U.S. Census had a 20 percent or more concentration of Spanish-language speakers, so it is not surprising that a majority of libraries indicated this as the primary non-English language supported by programs and services.² Population estimates since 2000 indicate Spanish speakers are one of the fastest growing groups.

Although block group data indicate more multi-language households (24.6 percent), libraries indicated Asian (Asian Pacific Islander, 6.2 percent of block groups) languages as the second priority language. Very few libraries ranked multi-language or Indo-European except as third priority languages.³ When analyzed by programs or services offered, fewer than seventy-seven libraries (16.8 percent) indicated developing any programs or services to support these languages. Those that did focused on computer training and children's programs.

2. Smaller communities are serving a larger proportion of non-English speakers.

- The majority of libraries serving non-English speakers are in communities with fewer than 100,000 residents (484 of all responding libraries).
- The majority (53.6 percent) of residents in these smaller communities traveled between one and three miles to reach a library, and another 21 percent traveled between four and six miles.

Libraries in much smaller communities are meeting the demands of non-English speaking residents. And, the distance traveled to get to the nearest branch reported by a majority of respondents was three miles or less. Although any distance may be a barrier when transportation is an issue, it was the lowest ranked barrier to use reported by libraries.

3. Literacy is both a barrier for non-English speakers using library services *and* for libraries providing services and programs.

- Reading and library habits *negatively* impact use of the library by non-English speakers (76 percent). Knowledge of the services offered by the library was the second most frequent barrier to their participation (74.7 percent).
- Special language collections (68.9 percent) and special programming (39.6 percent) were the most frequently used services by non-English speakers.

Libraries reported the most successful library programs and services developed for non-English speakers were English as a Second Language (ESL), language-specific materials and collections, computer use and classes, storytimes, and special programs.

When considering developing programs and services for non-English speakers, native language literacy is a significant factor. Native language proficiency is very important before learning a second language. It is not surprising that ESL was the most successful service provided by libraries to its non-English speaking community. Following this, it makes sense that use of specialized collections and programs and computer training were highly ranked as successful services and programs.

Findings by Population Range

Some interesting patterns emerged when the responses were sorted by the population of the legal service area of the libraries responding to the survey.

Table 1 demonstrates the rather surprising distribution of responding libraries. The population-served ranges used were segmented using existing categories commonly used by ALA and PLA.

Libraries serving more than one million people reported Spanish as the priority language, followed by Asian Pacific Island, and multi-language. No libraries in this population-served range reported providing programs or services to Indo-European language speakers.

The distribution of density of languages in table 1 also sheds light on demographics of the smaller library service areas that might otherwise have gone unnoticed. It might be

expected that a large urban library would cater to a broader spectrum of non-English language speakers.⁴ However, even with Spanish being the most heavily supported single language, communities of 100,000 or less benefited from libraries providing programs and services to Asian Pacific Islander, Indo-European, and multi-language speakers.

Table 2 summarizes additional information gathered about the library and its services. It is interesting to note that libraries with modest infrastructures are providing very useful services to their communities, and to non-English speakers. The average number of computers available and the size of the library buildings provide sobering details in which to contextualize the services and programs offered by the libraries reporting.

Effectiveness of Services to the Population by Language

This portion of the survey provides detail on the staff perspective—the perceptions of the actual and potential customers libraries serve are needed to complete the picture.

Libraries were asked to describe in an open-ended question their effectiveness in providing services to non-English speakers. Responses were calculated manually by reading the open ended responses (see table 3). Not surprisingly, many respondents felt like services were most effective with experienced staff and appropriate resources. Slightly more than half of responding libraries think they are effective in providing library services, and slightly less than half feel their services need improvement. Some reasons for lack of effectiveness are described as a lack of specialized resources or staff, or just starting to serve these groups; a very few

Table 1. Languages by Population of Legal Service Area

Population	Spanish Priority			Asian Priority			Indo-European Priority			Multi-Language Priority			Other Priority		
	#1	#2	#3	#1	#2	#3	#1	#2	#3	#1	#2	#3	#1	#2	#3
4,999 or less	27	5	3	0	3	5	1	5	1	0	2	1	1	2	4
5,000 to 9,999	30	5	2	2	6	4	1	6	2	1	4	6	0	2	1
10,000 to 24,999	68	14	11	13	26	15	8	21	11	3	8	10	0	1	5
25,000 to 49,999	86	18	8	11	27	22	11	15	10	1	7	15	2	7	8
50,000 to 99,999	87	23	4	14	33	25	10	26	18	2	9	18	1	4	15
100,000 to 249,999	43	5	3	1	25	4	4	3	14	0	2	11	2	3	4
250,000 to 499,999	11	1	0	0	8	3	1	3	3	1	0	3	0	0	1
500,000 to 999,999	4	1	0	2	2	3	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
1,000,000 or more	4	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0

Table 2. Overall Library Use by Primary Language Spoken and Population

Population Served	Spanish				Asian			
	Visits	Borrowers	Circulation	Computers	Visits	Borrowers	Circulation	Computers
4,999 or less	6,826	990	10,762	4	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
5,000 to 9,999	37,099	3,481	26,045	7	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
10,000 to 24,999	53,808	4,440	135,389	8	111,008	12,820	163,582	10.8
25,000 to 49,999	87,589	11,259	95,860	4.6	302,640	64,811	400,650	20
50,000 to 99,999	170,009	27,294	236,951	20.7	298,667	33,426	524,689	32
100,000 to 249,999	298,424	78,678	402,559	27	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
250,000 to 499,999	495,861	142,787	677,716	53	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
500,000 to 999,999	2,123,949	264,140	1,255,886	217	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
1,000,000 or more	3,444,337	765,557	31,318,331	384.7	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.

n.d. = no data reported

(approximately 3.7 percent) described LI service effectiveness as “dismal.”

Most Successful Activity by Language Group

Table 4 lists materials and services reported and may prove useful to libraries seeking information, or to

those looking to improve or expand services to non-English speakers. The study found an emphasis on family programming, perhaps bridging a barrier for non-English-speaking adults.

Potential Barriers to Use of the Library and its Services Presented by Language and Barrier

There are modest differences in how libraries rated perceived barriers to library use by non-English speakers (table 5). Although literacy skills are more highly rated as a barrier for Spanish speakers, transporta-

Table 3. Effectiveness of Services by Language

Effectiveness	Spanish	Asian	Indo-European	Multi-Language	Other	Total	Percent (%)
Very effective	78	5	9	3	2	97	24
Fair/moderately effective	108	11	13	1	4	137	34
Poor/not effective	54	4	4	0	0	62	15.4

tion and discretionary time were greater barriers for Asian and Indo-European speakers. It is important to note, however, that all the barriers asked about were closely and highly rated.

Conclusion and Recommendations: A Scenario for Using the Study Findings

Operationalizing the findings is critical. Koontz prepared the following scenario for the study report:

Library A, 25,000 square feet and built in 1967, is three miles from its nearest library B, located in upper rural New York State. They are open 30 hours a week, collection of 75,000 materials, and circulation of 110,000 annually. Library A has 3,700 registered borrowers of a town of 12,500. Their visits are quite high (72,600) per year—almost commensurate with circulation. The library has three computers available to the public. They serve a new burgeoning Hispanic speaking population, with pockets of older and longer settled German and Italian immigrants. The staff believes there are few barriers to library service as the community is small. They provide books in Spanish and feel they are effective in reaching the non-English speaking groups through their

book collections and special programming and outreach.

Upon reading this report, or hearing about the results at a recent ALA conference, the library director:

1. Decides to share her survey results with other branches in the system to identify any services or materials her groups might benefit from. She will start with neighboring branch B, since she now understands distance impacts services;
2. Realizes that only 30 percent of her community is registered. She considers the list of barriers to service and wonders if some of these may be affecting potential customers as well. It has been more than eight years since the U.S. Census data was gathered. She decides to go to the local county office to obtain their latest demographic reports from the state, and see what newer non-English-speaking groups may have moved into the area;
3. Reviews the results from question 16 and decides that some new services might attract an even greater portion of the Hispanic market. She decides to hold a focus group with actual

- Hispanic customers to have them review and suggest new services or programs;
4. Looks at the array of library-use statistics that she usually only gathers and decides to develop per capita counts, not just for total population, but for the other important use categories; and
 5. Reviews the study with staff, who in turn suggest that the director hire a bilingual staff person and begin ESL and computer classes for the senior Hispanics. Staff also suggests pursuing access to the Spanish version of the Internet. The director had not thought this necessary.⁵

Further, Koontz emphasizes that this study provides insight into the demographic variable—linguistically isolated people who are actual users, and can guide libraries not currently offering services to them as *potential* customers. To transform some into actual customers, the barriers reviewed in the study can be eliminated in part by library staff.

Mechanisms might include:

- Increase in targeted communication and intent of services in U.S. public libraries as opposed to other countries, and detailed listings of the impact of library services on individuals;
- Optimizing outreach for effective

Table 4. Most Successful Programs by Language

Most Successful Activity	Spanish	Asian	Indo-European	Multi-Language	Other
ESL	81	7	0	0	1
Special materials /collections	67	11	2	1	2
Computer use /classes	52	6	6	1	1
Storytimes	46	1	0	0	1
Special programs	31	4	0	0	0
Children's programs	22	2	4	0	0
Family storytimes	17	2	0	0	0
Outreach	14	1	0	0	0
Summer reading program	11	0	2	0	0
Literacy	9	3	0	0	0
Staff	9	1	0	0	0
Festivals	7	0	0	0	0
Homework help	6	0	0	0	0
Citizenship	5	1	0	0	0
Crafts	5	1	0	0	0
English conversation groups	5	3	0	2	0
Health screenings	4	0	0	0	0
Multicultural programs	4	3	0	0	0
Social security	3	0	0	0	0
GED	2	0	1	0	0
Tours	2	0	1	0	0
ILL	2	0	0	0	0
Book groups	3	0	1	0	0
1 to 1 teaching	1	3	0	0	0
Driver's license information	1	0	0	0	0
Displays	1	0	0	0	0
Book expo	1	0	0	0	0
Holiday open house	1	0	0	0	0
Voting machines	1	0	0	0	0
Concerts	1	0	0	0	0
Parental tutoring	1	0	0	0	0
Music, dance, theater	0	1	1	0	0
Reference (culturally sensitive)	0	1	0	0	0

Table 5. Perceived Barriers to Using Services

Perceived Barrier	Spanish (%)	Asian (%)	Indo-European (%)
Reading/library habit	81.2	8.8	7.4
Transportation	82.3	10.8	4.7
Literacy skills	83.4	8.1	4.9
Discretionary time	79.5	10.4	7.5
Knowledge of services	80.6	9.5	7.3

- facility locations;
- Reduction of time needed to access library materials and services; and
- Enhanced community partnerships (that is, transportation planning and other aspects of community life that facilitate provision of equitable library services).

The findings presented in this report can provide a venue for developing better and more precise materials, services, and programs for those linguistically isolated. Demographics, while only a partial predictor of use for library planning, are essential. This study provides the staff perspective—the perceptions of the actual and potential customers libraries serve are needed to complete the picture.

This significance of using any relevant demographic data to better identify segments within the community served is also illustrated in this study. Koontz and Jue recommend further research to analyze linguistic isolation in combination with other demographics relevant to library use, such as age, race, or ethnicity. Including other public agencies also challenged by communication with linguistically

isolated populations may increase the value of the data collected in the eyes of community stakeholders.

The Milwaukee Public Library has become effective in reaching the Latino population by an increase in:

- acquisition of Spanish materials at thirteen libraries, especially the Forest Home and Zablocki branches, which have service areas with increasing/dominant Latino populations;
- partnerships with agencies that serve these populations;
- strategies that welcome patron visits; and
- useful, bilingual programs such as computer training programs and preschool storyhours.

—Milwaukee (Wisc.) Public Library

For the complete study report, please visit the ALA Office for Literacy and Outreach Services at www.ala.org/nonenglishspeakers. The report includes detail on all responses, provides recommendations for how to use the findings (locally and nationally), and the significance of this research. 

References and Notes

1. The figure is calculated by deducting the 1990 Decennial Census figure from the 2000 Decennial Census figure. Also see Paul Siegel, Elizabeth Martin, and Rosalind Bruno, “Language Use and Linguistic Isolation: Historical Data and Methodological Issues,” U.S. Census Bureau, 2001, www.census.gov/population/socdemo/language/li-final.pdf (accessed Jan. 28, 2009).
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3. Non-English languages are nicely outlined in the U.S. Census Bureau’s “American Community Survey 2002 Subject Definitions—Languages Spoken at Home,” www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/2002/usedata/Subject_Definitions.pdf (accessed Jan. 12, 2009): 55.
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Nann is reading *Who the Hell is Pansy O'Hara? The Fascinating Stories Behind 50 of the World's Best-Loved Books* by Jenny Bond and Chris Sheedy and *Emily Post: Daughter of the Gilded Age, Mistress of American Manners* by Laura Claridge.

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

Extraordinary Outreach

From the *Random House Webster's College Dictionary* at my desk:

- *Extraordinary*, adjective: being beyond what is usual, regular, or established; exceptional to a high degree.¹
- *Outreach*, noun: the act of extending community services to a wider section of the population.²
- *Outreach*, transitive verb: to reach beyond, exceed.³

The programs described by contributors to this column are examples of extraordinary outreach. They extend the library beyond the walls and the parking lot to take the library's resources where people are: at school, at home, online.

Getting the Word Out

DAWN BUSSEY (DBUSSEY@GEPL.ORG), DIRECTOR, GLEN ELLYN (ILL.) PUBLIC LIBRARY

The days of promoting a new library service or material format by placing it in the library newsletter, hanging up some posters in the library, putting out a few fliers, and sending a press release to the local newspaper are long gone. It's time that we get outside of our brick-and-mortar institutions and spread the word about the fabulous materials, programs, and services our libraries have to offer.

Public libraries are no longer the only place to go to fulfill the informational needs in our communities. There's competition—the Internet, search engines, bookstores, and more. Yes, we can debate the issue that these competitors are not as good at providing high-quality information and reading materials as those of us who staff our libraries, but at the end of the day these other resources still exist and our patrons are using them. If we do not get the word out to the people we serve and keep them in touch with our services, we won't even have a chance to debate information literacy. We have to make our presence known not only to our users but also to the nonusers.

At the Glen Ellyn Public Library (GEPL) in west suburban Chicago, we



Glen Ellyn Farmers Market



Glen Ellyn Wal-Mart



Taste of Glen Ellyn

incorporated the idea into our strategic plan. We stated a goal to develop and implement marketing to our current and future constituencies, and a commitment that library staff will be highly visible in the community.

In order to accomplish this goal and its objectives, we work to take our message out into the community.

One way we have spread the word is by having different staff from different departments take turns displaying our tabletop backboard and fliers at community events. For example, one Saturday last spring the local Wal-Mart held a health fair. We took our display board and information about library resources and the upcoming summer reading program.

We also take our booth to the farmer's market once a month and participate in the annual downtown sidewalk sale. This past year, we also had a booth during the Taste of Glen Ellyn and the chamber of commerce technology fair.

Each time we go out to one of these events we highlight a particular message dependent upon upcoming events and activities at the library.

Giving presentations regarding library materials, programs, and services to any group or service organization that will listen is yet another way we have been spreading the word.

We actively approach these groups and request a time and date to tell them about the great things that are happening at the library. Currently, we have two different PowerPoint presentations with handouts: one for a general overview of the library and one that goes into detail about senior-friendly services and formats. Both presentations cover the computerized catalog, online holds and renewals, the Statewide Illinois Library Catalog, WorldCat, and interlibrary loan. Then we discuss the services and resources that are available online 24/7, including remote wireless printing.

Next we touch on programs of interest to the group to whom we are speaking followed by new things that are coming soon. Then we end the presentation with the variety of ways that individuals can get involved at the library such as volunteering, joining the Friends group, or joining the foundation. Finally, we answer questions for the group.

At this point, these presentations are given by the adult outreach librarian, the school outreach associate, the marketing associate, and the library director.

We know the combination of the outings and the presentations are really working to raise the level of awareness of library materials, programs, and services with both users and nonusers. We saw the largest

number of individuals registered for summer reading at the youth, teen, and adult levels this past year in our recorded history of summer reading statistics. More than once we have finished giving a presentation and had someone in the audience say, "My family has used the library for years and I thought I knew everything there was to know about it, but I just learned so many new things!"

It is said that the average person must read, see, and hear the same information over and over several times before it is retained. Therefore, we will continue to present and participate in local fairs and festivals in order to spread the word about the wonderful materials, programs, and services we have to offer.

Electronic Outreach and Our Internet Patrons

EUGENE J. JEFFERS (EJEFFERS@PAWTUCKETLIBRARY.ORG),
COMMUNITY RESOURCE LIBRARIAN, PAWTUCKET (R.I.)
PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Pawtucket Public Library (PPL) serves an urban community of about seventy-five thousand people. The average Pawtucket median household income is well below the State of Rhode Island's average median household income. Many of our patrons make good use of our Internet accessibility, because many of them do not have access from their homes. Last fiscal year (ending June 2008) there were 80,961 sign-ins for our public Internet terminals and 2,709 log-ins to our wireless network.

Since our patrons were already going to the Internet for their information needs and community networking, we wanted them to use the library's Web presence for social networking, outreach, marketing, instruction, and improved reference services.

PPL's website (www.pawtucketlibrary.org) is more than capable of helping with our patron's information needs. We also wanted to have an active social presence in the Internet community. Public libraries have not historically just been information distributors. They are also community meeting centers. How could we set up this time-honored library tenet on the Internet? The answer was obvious to anyone observing our patrons in the computer room: MySpace. Our MySpace profile went live in August of 2006. Through our profile we allow patrons to become our "friends." In turn, their other friends can see the library profile and can become the library's friend as well, and thus the library became an Internet social presence to our patrons.

By using the MySpace bulletin and blog services, we make announcements and advertise our materials and services. By providing informational links in our profile, we direct our patrons back to our website without the need for patron website navigation. Because our patrons are already on MySpace and are familiar with the basic setup of profiles, the library's MySpace profile (www.myspace.com/pawtucketlibrary) becomes, in effect, a CliffNotes version of the larger library website. We also made use of the MySpace calendar (which can be used in any profile), added our instant messaging screen names, and incorporated a chat box for instantaneous communication with a librarian.

To promote our MySpace profile, we used many standard advertising techniques, including a large banner in our computer room.

The URL www.myspace.com/pawtucketlibrary was added to our pencils, pens, e-signatures, and business cards. The MySpace address was added to fliers and newspaper program announcements.

Our patrons not only enjoy PPL's MySpace profile's accessibility, but also appreciate the anonymity. I have received many questions through the MySpace profile, such as "Can you tell me if I have fines?" or "If my friend can't find a DVD that she borrowed, can she still take out books?" Because most people don't put their full names on their MySpace profiles, this gives our patrons an opportunity to see if they're still welcome at their library despite their misplaced

books or DVDs. It becomes far more personal when a circulation staff member is telling them face-to-face what they owe. Along with answering their individual questions, I also often provide library instruction related to their questions, like how they could get all that information by logging into the online catalog and typing in their patron number. It also affords me the outreach opportunity to inform them that even if they do have fines on their card, they can still use our library online resources.

Probably the most interesting effect that our MySpace profile has had as an outreach tool is on our Tutor.com Live Homework Help program. This is a Web-based program that matches students (including adult learners) with qualified tutors that assist the students in completing their homework and projects.

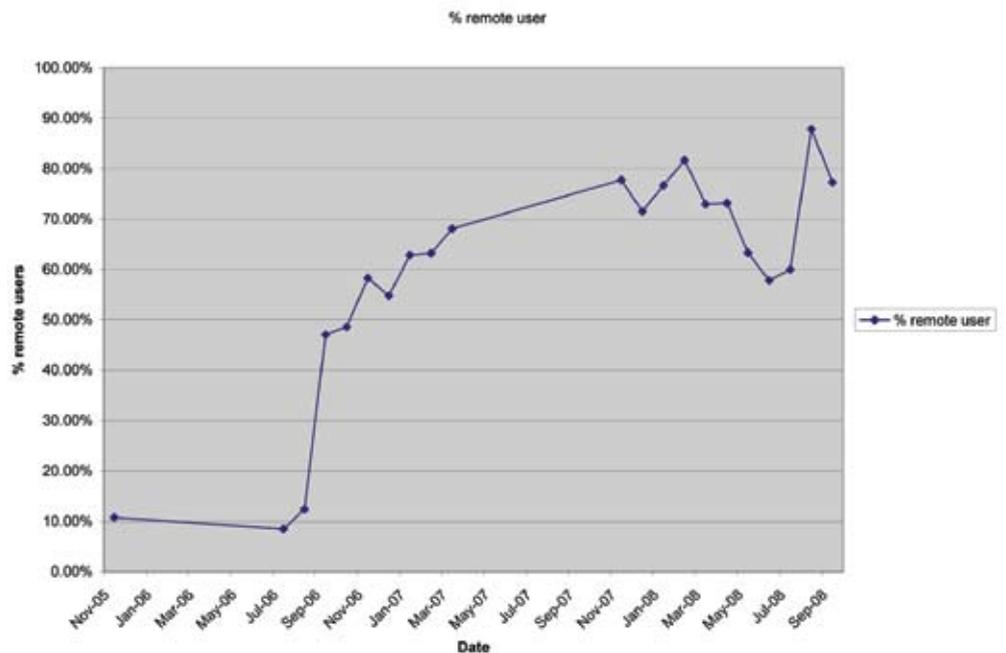


Figure 1. Increase in Use of Pawtucket Public Library's Website After Their MySpace Page Went Live in August 2006

When we initially started offering Live Homework Help, we had many more patrons using the program within the library than patrons using the program from home via our website (remote linking). The percent of remote users took a startling jump after the MySpace profile went live in August 2006.

The chart (see figure 1) shows that pre-MySpace remote linking to our website averaged 15.67 percent. Post-MySpace it averages 67.22 percent. This demonstrates a direct relationship between the library's MySpace profile and Live Homework Help remote users. The connection is obvious: electronic outreach is perfect for electronic resources. Social networks (MySpace is still the most used here in Pawtucket, but other networks like Facebook or Hi5 may be more effective in your community) are an excellent way to build an online interactive presence that you can use for outreach purposes.

Our patrons are sitting at home using their computers anyway— isn't it time to let them know how they can be using our fantastic online resources at the same time?

Outreach as Virtual Branch

JOANN SAMPSON (SAMPSON.JOANN@OCLS.INFO) HEAD,
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"Both my husband and I have to work full time and when we get home we need to take care of our kids so [there's] not time to go to the library. Requesting books online and receiving them at home allows us to provide our kids with the material they need to succeed at school and cultivate their love for books." This is just one of many comments from patrons of the Orange County (Fla.)

Library System (OCLS) in Orlando on the joys of remote access to their public library.

OCLS is dedicated to offering a virtual branch that provides services equivalent to physical locations. We offer reference service by phone, e-mail, online chat, and even text messaging. Patrons can experience library programs and storytimes through videos and podcasts. Computer classes are offered through an online classroom. Our robust online collection provides full-text databases, links to trusted Internet sources, downloadable audiobooks and movies, e-books, and more. But one of the longest running virtual branch services is the extremely popular physical material circulation arm—the Materials Access to Your Library (MAYL) home delivery program.

MAYL began in the early 1970s as an alternative to the traditional bookmobile service. The bookmobile model of outreach was being challenged by fuel costs and maintenance expenses. It required patrons to come to us at a specific place within a particular time period. OCLS was facing the issue of how to serve our more remotely located users and whether we could keep the bookmobile as a reliable service. Glenn Miller, the OCLS director at the time, decided it was time to truly bring the library directly to the user by delivering library materials straight to their home at no charge. Home delivery would save our patrons from waiting and scheduling for the next bookmobile visit or multiple trips to the library. We would help them save gas and keep them off congested roads. Home delivery also took away day and time restraints.

How does home delivery at OCLS work? Like other libraries, patrons go to the library website, search

the online catalog, and request an item. The difference here is that the default pickup location is home delivery. Every requested item is sent to one location, the Special Services department at the main library. Special Services processes all holds and distributes materials according to the preferred delivery method. Patrons who prefer to pick up their items at a specific library location must request this option and have a message placed in their account. Home delivery as the default means that the branches receive a small number of items and can dedicate a minimum amount of their valuable shelf space to items waiting for pickup.

Special Services checks received items out to the patron, packages the item for delivery, and then places it at designated areas according to delivery method. Packages are routed to a library location for pickup, sent for delivery through private courier, or stamped and sent through the United States Postal Service. Special Services handles an average of sixty-five thousand requested items each month. Only 8 percent of that amount is distributed to our fifteen library locations for pickup, with two percent of those items going to staff. The majority of items (85 percent) are handled by a private courier contracted with the library for residential delivery. Seven percent of requested items are sent through the U.S. Postal Service when the patron's address is a post office box, the address is not served by the courier company, or the patron requests this delivery method.

We are often asked, "How can you afford home delivery?" The real question for us is, how could we afford not to?

OCLS, like many libraries throughout the nation, has been faced with

budget decreases and increasing operational costs. The future of building physical library branches was discussed during recent budget talks. Is it better to build a brick-and-mortar location that serves patrons in a roughly five-mile radius or maintain the MAYL home delivery program, which serves patrons throughout the entire library district? The decision-makers could not abandon our virtual users—those who would stop using the library or use it a lot less otherwise. In a 2005 survey of MAYL users, 34 percent of respondents indicated that they use OCLS almost exclusively through the library website and MAYL. In a 2008 demographic survey, 77 percent of respondents indicated that they would find it difficult to use the library without MAYL.

MAYL was like Netflix before there was a Netflix. MAYL was green before “going green” was a catchphrase. Through the years, MAYL has continued to meet the needs of Orange County residents, by saving our users fuel costs, parking hassles, and the worry of how to fit a library visit into a busy schedule. District residents have access to more than 1,500,000 items in the system’s collection without leaving home.

The best evidence for why home delivery is needed just as much today came from those who depend on the program for this preferred method of library use. Comments from the demographic survey included:

- “I am a single mother who is raising a teenager, working two jobs, and going to school. I love to read. Using your home delivery system allows me to always have a book on me.”
- “Home delivery makes me feel like a part of the library, even when it’s tough to get there to

browse. I can do all the searching from home when the library might not be open, too. It puts the library on my schedule.”

Many librarians lament the advent of the Internet as a competitor; OCLS believes in taking advantage of the opportunity presented by the Web to deliver services in new and nontraditional methods. We are also grateful to the forward looking decision-makers of the 1970s who created a service that kept the library a feasible public resource and allows this generation of decision-makers to keep that service relevant in cooperation with the Internet. Libraries are more than their buildings—outreach has always been about going beyond our walls to serve our communities. How far are you willing to reach?

The Misguided Relationship: Learning from Outreach Experiences

REBECCA DONNELLY (RDONNELLY@CI.RIO-RANCHO.NM.US), LOMA COLORADO MAIN LIBRARY, RIO RANCHO, NEW MEXICO

Library outreach seems to be a relatively straightforward idea: library staff members share library resources with community groups and both partners benefit. The library spreads its message of community literacy and access to information, and the group gets a free program. I had this simple relationship in mind when I made my first outreach contacts with organizations in my community. The early literacy program I had developed for my library seemed like a good match for groups like Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and the alternative high school for teen parents. My experiences on my first visits to each of these organizations changed

my mind about the simplicity of that relationship.

I prepared a program very similar to one of my weekly lap-sit sessions and brought packets of library information.

The group I met at WIC was small—three mothers and their children, all primarily Spanish-speaking. The program coordinator sat in to translate and was all apologies for not finding more people to attend. One of the mothers left in the middle of the presentation to go to another meeting. This was disheartening, but we soldiered on and the mothers seemed to enjoy the lap-sit interaction, the rhymes, and little felt-board pictures, and my enthusiastic, if stumbling, efforts at Spanish. When I passed out the information I had brought, everyone was excited. They had just one question: Where was the library? In all my preparations, I had forgotten to put the library’s address on anything, and I had no maps and no printed directions. Families come to WIC from all over this mostly rural county, and many of them don’t explore too much else in town.

And so I identified problem number one in my approach to outreach. I had assumed that offering a small taste of library services would have everyone racing to the library for more. But the public library, even though it is one of the most accessible facilities in a community, doesn’t have the high profile among all sectors of the community that it has among the people we librarians are most familiar with—those who use the library regularly. It is hardly worth pointing out that people who come to the library know more about it than those who don’t, and that marketing the library to nonusers has to be done differently than when we are working in our native habitat. But it is so easy to overlook

the obvious: Don't assume anything about the population you are doing outreach with. Not how much they know, or how much they don't know.

This led me to identify a second problem: it is practically impossible to raise the library's profile with this critical group of potential patrons in one visit. A bridge has to be built between the library and each of these community organizations, and it has to extend past the e-mail group or phone list. There has to be more than just setting up the program, bringing the equipment, and barreling through. Each half of the relationship has to understand something about the mission, goals, and culture of the other half. I may be in a better position to present the material than the WIC coordinator, but she knows more about her clients than I do—how they are used to receiving information, and what approach works best in programming for this group.

When I spoke to two groups of teen mothers at our alternative high school, I met a different challenge. Because of the size of the school, the daycare was in an entirely separate facility, and none of the mothers had their children with them. Instead of going through the lap-sit program with them, I showed a video on reading with infants and talked about early literacy, including the six important early literacy skills and how to encourage their development. Useful stuff, I thought, and I doubted these mothers had heard it before. What I hadn't counted on was that not only were they not spending much time reading to their babies, many of them weren't spending much time reading at all.

When I talked to the second group, I brought a stack of books recommended to me by our teen librarian—manga, novels in verse,

even a copy of *Twilight* pilfered from the hold shelf. (I thought I would be forgiven in the name of that all-important, profile-raising goal.) The girls were polite, but not overjoyed. Not “Oh my goodness I have to read that Stephenie Meyer book right now!” like most of the other teens at our library. But they weren't like most of the other teens, and here I saw, in a different social context, the same disconnect between the library and the community. These teens were living very different lives from the teens I saw at work every day. Meyer was not at the top of their priority list, and neither was phonological awareness.

Recently I've seen a young mother hanging out in our teen room with her friends, and they take turns holding the baby. I would love to see all of our teen parents feel this comfortable in the library. I would love to have families that visit WIC drive the extra couple of miles and visit us, too. Successful outreach depends on building solid relationships. I wish I could say that reaching out will automatically bring them in, but it isn't so. The library reaches out because it has the resources and the mandate to do it. If we do our job well, if we are willing to learn, relearn, plan, improvise, improve, and try again, then when we reach out, we give the community the opportunity and the incentive to reach back.

Rethinking Outreach Service Budgets

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Before I entered the preschool classroom where I was scheduled to present an outreach library storytime, the teacher forewarned me:

“We have a new student. She just arrived from Mexico. She doesn't speak any English, and she has spent the entire morning crying for her mother.” Sure enough, as I entered the room, I spotted the little girl with tears streaming down her face. She was clutching one of the other teachers, and between sobs the little girl was repeatedly saying, “Mamá, mamá!” The poor teacher was obviously bedraggled from spending hours trying to calm the child.

I sat down at the front of the class and started singing my usual storytime opening song. The distraught little girl stopped crying when she heard my tune. I began reading *From Head to Toe* by Eric Carle. The girl looked at the pictures in the book. She wiped the tears from her cheeks and began to mimic the motions indicated on each page of the book, as I was asking the class to do. “Elefante!” she exclaimed when I turned to the picture of the elephant. She then stomped her feet like the elephant in the picture and the other students in her class. Later, the girl laughed at the monkey puppet I used to teach a song that included imitating the monkey's actions. This little girl smiled as she tried to do the motions for the “Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed” fingerplay. She joined in the other activities I had prepared for the class. During that entire thirty-minute program she did not shed one tear. Although she didn't understand all the words of my stories, she responded positively to the sound of my voice, the pictures in the books, the actions of the rhymes, and the melodies of the songs. For that brief period, this little girl forgot that she was homesick, scared, and in a land of strangers with a strange language. All because of some children's books. All because of a juvenile storytime. All because

the library provided outreach services to a preschool.

The benefit, experience, and influence of this storytime on that little girl cannot be measured within a paper budget. I cannot put a dollar value on the well-being this outreach program offered the little girl (or her teacher, who was equally relieved that the child momentarily forgot her tears). Unfortunately, when it comes time to examining library budgets and determining the areas to be cut due to budget crunches, outreach is often one of the first services to be considered for the chopping block.

Perhaps it becomes all too easy to view outreach only as “the van” or “the bookmobile” and forget that outreach is a clientele of people—elderly citizens who are dependent upon library materials being delivered to them, elementary students whose own school media specialists have already been scrapped because of a lack of school funding, and preschool children in at-risk populations who might otherwise

not have anyone to expose them to library services. These are the users and recipients of the library’s outreach services. Because outreach services do not necessarily include a brick-and-mortar building, and they sometimes do not even include their own designated collection of books, it is often easy to forget about the people to whom the outreach services and materials go.

Outreach is a library on wheels that brings resources and programs to people who might otherwise not have ready access to the library building. While we librarians know and understand these aspects of outreach, we sometimes forget these facts because we do not always see the bookmobile or van in action. We do not see the people that are being served. At a time when many libraries face budget reductions due to the current economic crisis, it is hoped that library administrators and trustees will take a few hours and accompany their outreach services employees on some of the

rounds. Visit those preschools and retirement centers. See the joy on the faces of the recipients of these services. And for at least thirty minutes of storytime, forget that budget crunches are inevitable and outreach services are temptingly easy to cut.

Conclusion

For many of our constituents the library is a place they’d use more often *if*. *If* it were more convenient. *If* it had things they wanted (if they knew what the library had). *If* they had time.

These examples of extraordinary outreach can turn those “we would *if*”s into “we do *and*”s! 

References

1. *Random House Webster’s College Dictionary*, 2nd ed., s.v. “Extraordinary.”
2. *Ibid.*, s.v. “Outreach.”
3. *Ibid.*

Hone Your Management Skills with PLA/CPLA Workshops

This year PLA is offering a full schedule of Certified Public Library Administrator (CPLA) courses, a series of continuing education workshops designed to meet the needs of library managers. Each course is an intensive, two-day program that focuses on one topic pertinent to managers—skills that may not have been taught in library school.

Currently, thirteen courses—including Management of Technology, Strategic HR, Current Issues, Serving Diverse Populations, Marketing, Budget and Finance, Management of Buildings, and Fundraising—are being offered throughout 2009 in locations across the country. The full schedule of courses can be found online at www.pla.org.

The CPLA program is a voluntary post-MLS certification program for public librarians with three or more years of supervisory experience. However, librarians who are not enrolled in the certification program are also eligible to take CPLA courses. This series of continuing education workshops meets both the requirements for CPLA certification and the needs of librarians wanting to enhance their managerial skills.

For more information on becoming a CPLA, visit the ALA-APA website at www.ala-apa.org. To register or get more information on CPLA courses offered by PLA, including full course descriptions and instructor bios, visit PLA’s website at www.pla.org. 

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Brendan is reading *Heyday* by Kurt Anderson.

“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.

Mystery Man

An Interview with Ian Sansom

Ian Sansom is the author of several books, including *The Impartial Recorder* and *Ring Road*. He has recently turned to the mystery genre, charting the misadventures of British mobile librarian Israel Armstrong when he is relocated to Northern Ireland. The fourth in the series, *The Bad Book Affair*, will be published in late 2009. For more information, please visit www.iansansom.net. Sansom was interviewed via e-mail in December 2008.

Public Libraries: A big theme in your Mobile Library Mystery Series is Israel Armstrong’s search for a personal identity and sense of self. Why did you choose to make him a mobile librarian?

Ian Sansom: Let’s start with the easy questions! “Who am I?” is obviously one of the big questions. “How can I define myself?” George Steiner writes in *My Unwritten Books*, that “the fall of man into the morass and licence of the indefinite, into the gaps, which are often a chasm, between word and object, between name and essence, is the first exile.”

I wanted Israel to be a character in exile, in a gap, in a morass, in the indefinite, and in search of an identity—like all of us. And where better to be in search of an identity than a library? A library tantalizes us not merely with the promise of knowledge, but of self-knowledge.

PL: A lot of the Mobile Library Mystery books concern outsiders’ misconceptions about Northern Irish life. Was it important for you to offer a more accurate portrayal of Northern Ireland to readers?

IS: I think one purpose of the books has been to correct my *own* misconceptions about Northern Ireland! I lived here during The Troubles [a period of ethno-political conflict from the late 1960s through the late 1990s] and even then there was more—obviously—to Northern Ireland than The Troubles. Nowhere is ever entirely what it seems. I mean, Idaho? Hawaii? New York?

Your phrase “accurate portrayal” is nice. I’m all for accurate portrayal. Although I don’t think there’s a contradiction between accuracy and imagi-

nation. The most imaginative writing is the most accurate.

PL: Do Israel's struggles in adapting to the Northern Irish way of life reflect your own experiences?

IS: Gosh. No. Not really. And then again, yes. But I'm a guest in Northern Ireland, so it would be impolite for me to explain how or why! Israel does all my complaining for me.

PL: What made you interested in writing a mystery series?

IS: I've always loved mystery novels—not crime so much as mystery, in its full sense. Ellery Queen. Charles Williams. J. G. Ballard. Edgar Allan Poe. Charles Willeford.

But to be honest, I didn't really choose to write a mystery series, it just sort of happened. I always thought I'd write brow-furrowing highbrow literary fiction. Maybe someday I will.

PL: Your books always contain pretty exhaustive acknowledgments that list a wide range of people (friends, writers, musicians, filmmakers, and so on). Can you talk a little about why you include so many people (especially people whom you don't personally know), and how they have influenced you in your writing?

IS: Oh, how wonderful! I'm so glad you asked! No one ever asks about the acknowledgments.

Sometimes—Do you ever think this?—I think I'm just an echo chamber, or a container—even in my most private moments, the very recesses of the intimate, really deep down where my “me” is most me. I seem to be a composite of everything I've ever read, or seen, or consumed, or

enjoyed, and so it just seemed logical to me to try and express that sense of—What's the word? Interlinearity? Interactivity?—by some means. The acknowledgments are a very important part of the books.

That's the best question anyone's ever asked me.

PL: You've written previously about being an avid library user. Can you give our readers a snapshot of what library services are like in Northern Ireland?

IS: A snapshot? Yes. Absolutely. Here's a snapshot. Literally.

I'm sitting here now replying to your questions in my front room. Out of the window, across the road I can see our town library, which has just been extended and refurbished and reopened. It's beautiful. It's full of people. I can see old ladies going in and out, and young mothers with babies. And students. Libraries are the world at its best. And in Northern Ireland we are lucky to have some very good libraries.

PL: What roles have libraries and librarians played in your life?

IS: I don't want to sound too solicitous here, or too sentimental, but libraries and librarians—honestly—have made me who I am. They really have. I came from a family that did not have books in the house, so to be able to go to a library and get a book out, and not to have to pay for it—well, that seemed to me even as a young boy, and it still seems to me now, nothing short of miraculous. It was because of libraries that I stayed on in school, and then went on to university, and became a writer. Entirely. So libraries to me are sacred places. And I think librarians are heroes: I salute you!



Ian Sansom

PL: Can you give readers a hint of what's to come in the fourth *Mobile Library Mystery*?

IS: In the new book, Israel finds himself searching for a missing teenage girl who's been reading too much Philip Roth. He's lonelier than ever, having split with his girlfriend, Gloria. And he's grown a beard.

PL: Are you working on any other non-*Mobile Library Mystery* projects?

IS: Oh, God. Yes. Alas. I'm the sort of person who's always working on new things. Dozens. At the moment there's a children's book I'm working on with the illustrator Oliver Jeffers. And a book about saints. And a book of letters. And a book of poems. And a book of recipes. And a book set in New York. And a book set in the 1930s. And . . . well, suffice it to say, I hope I don't die too soon! There just aren't enough hours in the day. If anyone's looking for an unpaid internship as an author's assistant in Northern Ireland, could they please get in touch? [☐](#)



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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.

What Are You Doing Now?

And Do Your Patrons Care?

If you looked at our Twitter or Facebook (FB) pages right now, you might see messages such as “mac users—favorite ftp client?” or “At a koha interest group meeting in Lawrence” or “yikes! We need to write!”

These are called “status updates.” Twitter, FB, and other social networking websites have a status update functionality included as one of their services. What is a status? In the online world, it is a way to tell friends and colleagues your mood, activities, or thoughts at any given time.

Twitter is a great example of what a status update does, because that’s all it does. The whole purpose of Twitter is to answer this question “What are you doing?” in 140 characters or less. This answer is typed into a text box. When the update button is pressed, your status message is sent to everyone who has subscribed to your Twitter account (also called “following”).

But why would you care? Why would you want to tell everyone what you are doing right now? And, more importantly, would your library patrons care? Can a library use this type of service to connect with their customers? We think so. If you dig down a bit further into how status updates work, we think you can find some great ways to connect with library customers. In fact, we have a couple of fun examples of Twitter in use. Here’s the first one: once David started talking about the idea for our column, I wondered aloud on Twitter: “What do your tweets or FB status say about you? Anybody else see it like outreach in a library, but at the individual level?” Read on, you’ll find the answer at the end of this column!

More on Status Updates

Twitter explains its service this way: “Twitter has grown into a real-time short messaging service that works over multiple networks and devices. In countries all around the world, people follow the sources most relevant to them and access information via Twitter as it happens—from breaking world news to updates from friends.”¹

The key here is real-time. When Twitter users update their status and press the update button, that message is delivered instantly to that person’s

subscribers (called “followers” in Twitter-speak). Since many Twitter users tend to be connected to and reading Twitter updates throughout the day, it can be faster than e-mail. This type of status update is also different than an instant message, since the status update is delivered to a person’s subscribers.

Why Should I Care?

Status updates certainly can be used to send silly little “I’m eating ice cream now” messages. But the real power of status updates are in the community that forms around them, and how you interact with others using the service. Here’s how we use these tools to connect with colleagues:

- **David:** Yes, I do send little silly messages out sometimes, just telling people what I’m doing. But for me, the power of Twitter is seen when I interact with my library techie colleagues. For example, I recently asked my Twitter friends what their favorite FTP program was, and quickly received a dozen replies that introduced me to eight different FTP programs—with recommendations on which programs people liked the best. That’s pretty cool.
- **Michael:** I like to use Twitter and Facebook status updates the same way. I do try to make the things I put there either funny, mysterious, or serious. In fact, for just about every column we have written here in *PL*, Twitter has been a tool we have used to get feedback, leads and to learn about what is going on with libraries and library staff around a specific subject. Adding in appropriate humor, mystery,

and some selective silliness while the serious work is taking place makes for higher quality ideas, conversation, and results.

Expanding the Conversation into Other Services

David has connected his Twitter updates to his Facebook status updates. This way, instead of having to update both sites separately, he can update Twitter once, and Twitter sends his update to both places.

I have done a similar thing by using a service called FriendFeed (www.friendfeed.com), which has become my tool of choice when it comes to status update consumption. FriendFeed (FF) allows you to link multiple status update and content tools into one account. Then when people you have subscribed to in any of these services adds content, leaves a comment, or updates their status, you see all of them in one place. Watching this tool grow has been interesting because it has validated the idea that online status updates have real value.

Organizational Use of Status Updates

Can a library use status updates as an organization? And if so, what would they send? Here’s one non-library example to get us started thinking organizationally. David uses Mindjet’s MindManager software (www.mindjet.com), a mind-mapping software program to outline articles, books, presentations, and to brainstorm for meetings. It’s a great visual tool that David loves using—so much so that once in a great while, he sends a status update about it.

People working at Mindjet have noticed this, because they are also using Twitter to listen to their user community. Recently, some of Mindjet’s employees have started following David’s “tweets” (status updates on Twitter). This gave David the opportunity to share thoughts about MindManager. In a matter of minutes, he was able to connect with a Mindjet employee and share an idea about the product with the company. And the Mindjet employee was able to share David’s idea with the product team.

Status Updates for Public Libraries

At this point there seems to be plenty of room for public libraries to join in on the fun. We did some brainstorming and came up with these potential uses for status updates:

- connecting with patrons and colleagues
- connecting with other organizations
- advocacy
- answering and asking questions
- professional development
- using it as a listening tool to “hear” what your community says about the library
- broadcasting announcements
- throwing ideas around
- promoting services or events
- job postings

If you would like to see some of the above uses in action, here is a list of some libraries currently using status updates (their Twitter screen names are also listed):

- Ann Arbor (Mich.) District Library: aadl
- Scranton (Pa.) Public Library: scrantonlibrary

- Orange County (Fla.) Library System: oclslibrary
- Pierce County (Wash.) Library System: teenPCLS
- University of Alabama at Birmingham: UABLHL
- Casa Grande (Ariz.) Library: cglibrary

If you check out the above accounts, you'll see that most libraries using Twitter seem to be doing a lot of linking—to events, new titles added to a collection, webpages, or blog posts. This is a very practical, direct, and commendable use of Twitter.

We would love to see a few more general tweets reminding people about the value of the library—even the mission of the library! How about sending a quick statistic or two that might knock some socks off about

library usage in your community? How about updating followers with a quote from an appropriate library patron praising a library service? Don't be afraid to share how valuable your library services are with a larger audience!

And now, back to our real-time example of status updates in action! Remember that status update I mentioned at the beginning of this article, asking if status updates are a form of library outreach? I received three replies:

- “Definitely can be.”
- “Definitely. If I don't get comments on my FB status, I regard it as a failed update.”
- “Yes! Outreach promotes lib services + access to info. Tweets/ FB status/FF updates characterize the individual + share knowledge.”

So there you have it—an example of status update success! Still, a larger sign of success would be *you* getting on Twitter, FB, FF, or your favorite online status tool and letting your community know what your library is doing. You can even practice on us if you like. Our Twitter usernames are @davidleeking and @libraryman—drop us a message on Twitter and we'll be pleased as punch to read and share status updates with you! [📧](#)

Reference

1. Twitter.com, “About Twitter,” <http://Twitter.com/about#about> (accessed Feb. 2, 2009).

Harry Potter & the Order of the Court: The J.K. Rowling Copyright Case and the Question of Fair Use

The adventures of wizard-in-training Harry Potter may have ended but the drama continues, most recently in federal court in Manhattan, where a decision has been handed down in the much-publicized lawsuit brought by J.K. Rowling seeking to prevent the publication of a Harry Potter encyclopedia.

Harry Potter & the Order of the Court discusses the court's decision in the case and its broader implications for writers and bloggers.

The case was highlighted by Ms. Rowling taking the witness stand in her first courtroom appearance. Her dramatic testimony — offering insights into her creative process and her emotional attachment to the *Harry Potter* series — is included, both direct and cross-examination.

Beyond the star presence of Ms. Rowling, the case is of general interest because it involves an important but little understood aspect of copyright law: the doctrine of “fair use.” Fair use refers to situations where one is allowed to use material from a copyrighted work without seeking permission from the author, such as a book critic quoting from a novel or a music critic using a short clip of a song.

Fair use applies whether you write on paper or online. But the doctrine has taken on added importance in the Internet Age where almost all of us “publish” in one form or another, be it through creating websites, writing blogs or uploading content. And as authors or publishers, we often feel the need to quote, closely paraphrase, or otherwise use material others have created. This is where fair use comes in.

Harry Potter & the Order of the Court discusses fair use as it relates to the J.K. Rowling case and in terms of the broader application of the doctrine, offering many specific examples as to what likely does, and does not, constitute fair use.

The author is Robert S. Want, an attorney and editor, and publisher of NationsCourts.com, which reports on new cases in copyright and other areas of the law. There is no affiliation with Ms. Rowling or the *Harry Potter* books.



Contributing Editor **LEE PRICE** is the Director of Development at the Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts in Philadelphia. 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.

Lee is reading *The House of Mirth* by Edith Wharton and *Dry Storerroom No. 1: The Secret Life of the Natural History Museum* by Richard Fortey.

Special thanks to Lisa Kavanagh, program manager at the H.O.M.E. Page Café, and Kathleen Dougherty, assistant vice president for communications and development at the Free Library of Philadelphia Foundation, for graciously providing lengthy interviews in order to share the story of the development of the H.O.M.E. Page Café project.

“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.

The Story of the H.O.M.E. Page Café

The more complex societies get . . . the more people are forced in their own interests to find non-zero-sum solutions. That is, win-win solutions instead of win-lose solutions. . . . Because we find as our interdependence increases that, on the whole, we do better when other people do better as well—so we have to find ways that we can all win.—Former U.S. President Bill Clinton¹

At its worst, fund-raising is a zero-sum game. If a library gets a grant, it means that another non-profit agency doesn't. The quest for money devolves into a Darwinian struggle for survival of the fittest. Conversely, at its best, fund-raising is all about finding win-win solutions.

Homelessness and the Library

This column is about the development of creative solutions to disturbing, seemingly intractable problems. The story of the H.O.M.E. Page Café demonstrates the surprising benefits of facing difficult issues head-on, as well as the remarkable potential of interagency collaborations.

It begins on the streets of Philadelphia, although it could just as easily have begun in any one of thousands of other towns and cities throughout the country. Homelessness is not limited to Philadelphia. Not by a long shot. But it is certainly an ongoing problem in Philadelphia, including along the Benjamin Franklin Parkway and Vine Street area where the Parkway Central Branch of the Free Library of Philadelphia (FLP) is located.

Like many libraries, the Parkway Central Branch of FLP has struggled with the problem of homelessness for many years. It's the mission of public libraries to serve the entire community, and this includes the existing homeless population by nearly any definition. But, realistically, it's not that easy to be welcoming to a segment that often makes other patrons . . . uncomfortable.

Homeless people come to the library for shelter, to rest, use the restrooms, and to clean themselves. They come to visit with others in a safe environment. In some cases, they come to read and to learn. And sometimes they come simply to escape from the street.

Patrons make assumptions about who is homeless and who is not, based on stereotypes. The assumptions might not be true, but the perceptions are undeniable and can affect whether a patron returns or even whether the patron will allow their children to visit the library. If families feel the library is a dangerous place, they won't return.

Several years ago, FLP staff and board members fearlessly confronted this problem. Their goal was to make the library experience as comfortable as possible for all patrons, but without abandoning the homeless population that is a genuine, undeniable component of the Philadelphia community. The library needed affordable, creative ideas.

Problems related to homelessness resided throughout the entire library building, but it's rarely practical to look for large-scale solutions to broad problems. Instead, FLP wisely chose to engage the issue by looking at the component parts and choosing to initially address one seemingly small aspect of it. They started by focusing on the bathrooms.

The Restroom Attendant Solution

Word naturally spreads through homeless populations regarding the available bathroom facilities in their area. Public libraries are, by definition, open to the public. Once you're in, you're a patron and allowed to use the restrooms. Libraries aren't like restaurants, which can legally

refuse restroom use to non-patrons. Patrons are all the people in the library, and not just those with money and homes. Homeless people know they can't be denied access to these bathrooms.

The main restrooms at the Parkway Central Branch are located on the basement level. The FLP board and staff realized that the homeless had a right to use their restrooms, but also that this right could be abused. The library restrooms were never intended for bathing, but a number of homeless people had started to use the facilities to serve their bathing needs. Other patrons were complaining. There was widespread agreement within the library that this was inappropriate, but any solutions had to be legal, ethical, and in line with the library's mission to serve the entire community.

If FLP had continued to endlessly wrestle with these tricky homeless questions on their own, they probably never would have moved forward. The staff members were very knowledgeable about library management, but had little first-hand knowledge about strategies to deal with homelessness. However, being librarians, they had some ideas about where to find answers. And board members brought their knowledge of other city nonprofit organizations to the table.

FLP called in outside experts, and a first-rate collaboration was born.

Collaboration and Fund-raising

FLP enlisted the guidance of staff at Project H.O.M.E., a nonprofit organization dedicated to ending homelessness in Philadelphia.

Project H.O.M.E. saw opportunities for doing real outreach through

the FLP situation. Their occupational services program staff members—who assist formerly homeless people by providing employment and educational opportunities—proposed to train a team of formerly homeless people, currently living in supportive housing through Project H.O.M.E., to work as restroom attendants at FLP. The restroom attendant responsibilities would be to report any illegal activity to library security, perform light cleaning, and serve as a friendly referral service to homeless people in need of outreach services.

FLP reaped the benefits from this work at virtually no expense. Project H.O.M.E. ran the funding through an existing channel of municipal support for homeless training programs. The restroom attendant program benefited the homeless, the City of Philadelphia, and Project H.O.M.E., as well as the library. The library's problem had flipped from being an internal weakness to a community strength, all because of the willingness to collaborate.

The restroom attendant program was launched near the end of 2006. It is still going strong. Nine part-time attendants are currently employed through the program. Success is evaluated through employment retention, personal growth as measured through performance reviews, and successful movement to employment outside the Project H.O.M.E. system.

Based on the immediate success of this program, FLP and Project H.O.M.E. embarked on another, more ambitious, collaboration.

The Café Solution

In recent years, many libraries have experimented with the addition of in-house cafés, usually launched in the hope of bringing new rev-

enue into the library system. In some cases, libraries lease space to an outside firm that assumes full responsibility for management of the café space. In other cases, the library designs the café and manages it through volunteer or staff time. With both approaches, the financial results have been mixed. Some library cafés have been great successes while others have been disappointing drains on limited resources.

The FLP's Parkway Central Branch had planned for a café that would be a key element in an upcoming major architectural expansion. But that would mean waiting around five years, and an alternative proposal was floated to move ahead with a café prior to the ambitious expansion.

Project H.O.M.E. offered to develop a new program where the primary purpose of the library's café would not be to raise money for the library, but rather to provide on-the-job training for formerly homeless people. Project H.O.M.E. agreed to raise funding for the project, and the library committed to using their

architect and staff to create a suitable space for the café within the library.

In 2007, Project H.O.M.E. staff wrote a grant request to the Bank of America for \$200,000 and it was swiftly approved. The grant covered design costs and all materials. The library committed to donating the cost of labor to build the space.

Two more important collaborators were recruited at an early stage. Starbucks committed to providing the coffee equipment and espresso machine, as well as an initial sixteen-hour training session for the employees. Metropolitan Bakery, an acclaimed Philadelphia business specializing in old-world-style breads and known for their commitment to social causes, supplied the baked goods and ongoing retail training.

The H.O.M.E. Page Café officially opened in early spring 2008, quickly establishing a following among library staff, patrons looking for good food and coffee, and socially minded patrons who are proud to support a good cause. In one recent month,

the café served more than three thousand customers. Revenue generated through the café goes to Project H.O.M.E., which has set a goal of having the café self-sufficient within four years. But the real purpose, of course, is to help the employees as they learn marketable skills and move ahead with the task of putting their lives back together.

Lessons to be Learned

Most libraries look at cafés as potential revenue generators. Often, they are disappointed. FLP avoided this pitfall by emphasizing the social service aspect of this business venture.

Through collaboration, FLP was able to design and build a handsome new café for their patrons for only the cost of the labor of in-house library staff. Then they reaped the benefits of all the publicity that the innovative project generated.

In nonprofit agencies, the fundraising arm usually goes by the fancier name of "development department." This is because fundraising is really just one tool within the arsenal of strategies that can develop programs and grow healthy organizations. With the development of the H.O.M.E. Page Café project, FLP offers an apt demonstration of how creative thinking and collaboration can be just as important as the actual task of "bringing in the money." ■

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Contributing Editor

MICHAEL GARRETT

FARRELLY is a Youth Services Librarian and graphic novelist living in Chicago; mgfarrelly@gmail.com.

Michael is reading *Wastelands: Stories of the Apocalypse* edited by John Joseph Adams, *Batman & Dracula: Red Rain* by Doug Moench, Kelley Jones, Malcolm Jones, and Eric Van Lustbader, *The Ages of Gaia: A Biography of Our Living Earth* by James Lovelock, and *Homicide: A Year on the Killing Streets* by David Simon.

“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.

Tweet, Tweet

Do you ever think about Thomas Jefferson? I do, frequently. Of course I also think about spider webs, singularities, Velvet Underground lyrics, and glaciations, but Jefferson comes up quite often in my mental miasma.

Beyond being the principal author of the Declaration of Independence, the second vice president, and third president, he was a fiend for gadgets. In 1804 he began using a device which was, at the time, called a polygraph. It was not a lie detector, but rather a simple machine fitted with two pens that allowed Jefferson to write two letters at once. Thomas Jefferson would have loved Twitter.

Do you use Twitter? The micro-blogging service that asks “What are you doing?” is all the rage. You can post from your desktop, laptop, or mobile device. Just a quick update—random notions and headlines from your life—in 140 characters or less. That’s all you get and for many young adults it’s all they need. You can send messages to other users and follow feeds on any number of small programs for your computer or phone. “Tweets,” as the messages are called, are a constant stream of information about the lives and times of the “twitterati” which includes rappers like Kanye West, the BBC News service, the Mars rover, and that guy on the bus hunched over his iPhone. And it’s the best library outreach tool since the website.

So does your library twitter? You should be. Is it a lack of content? You don’t have to post a boring list of events. Turn your library’s twitter stream into a random fact machine: *Did you know that a catkin is a slim, cylindrical flower cluster that can be found on oak trees? The Bur Oak can produce up to five thousand acorns in a year? Or that the year is precisely 365.242222 days long?* Twitter even allows you to add links, so you can provide sources for further reading. How about book recommendations with links to the books in your catalog? There are even free services that allow you to post links to pictures in your tweets. With the most basic camera phone and a decent text plan, a librarian can share the library with the world quickly.

Twitter is just one service, one step in the eventual interconnection of people through the Web that’s already redefining public life. Facebook was something sniffed at as just another time hole for bored office types and college students on the make. Now it is seen as what it really is, a platform for providing deep, systemic connections between people regardless of distance.

All you need is Web access to reach out to a whole world of people.

Fliers and postcards are fine, but compare those costs to promoting your library using Web applications like Twitter and Facebook. Of course there's the question of the digital divide—patrons who can't access the library from home or don't make use of mobile phones. But the beauty of

using emerging Web technologies as a platform for outreach is that they don't add a significant cost to traditional methods. You're doubling your outreach without doubling your budget.

Reaching young adults with technology seems almost cliché at this point, and it can be if the efforts are focused on the technology and not

the content being delivered. Twitter will be replaced by some new service all too quickly (instant audio and video messaging perhaps) but getting young people's attention and making them aware of everything possible at their library (and @ your library®) is what good outreach is all about. 

After-School Chicago Website Unveiled

An interactive website (www.afterschoolchicago.org) has been created to help families research and choose from thousands of different after-school programs located throughout Chicago. The After-School Chicago website is one of the most comprehensive of its kind in the nation and will include a diverse variety of afternoon, evening, and weekend program options that span organizations including the Chicago Public Libraries, Chicago Department of Children and Youth Services, Chicago Public Schools, After School Matters, and the Chicago Park District. The coordination and development of the After-School Chicago website was led by the Chicago Department of Children and Youth Services and funded by The Wallace Foundation.

"The benefits of after-school programs are far-reaching and can have a significant impact on the safety and development of our children," said Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley. "They let young people discover new interests or pursue activities such as art or music. They also support parents who are increasingly busy at work, particularly during the hours between 3 and 6 p.m., the peak period for teens to be victims of crime."

Powered by Google Maps, the easy-to-use website allows users to simply input their address or ZIP code and choose from eight program interest areas. Search results are plotted on an interactive map with a brief description of each offering, including information about dates and times, related fees if applicable, and the age range for activities. The search results also include Chicago Transit Authority routes for reference.

Mary Ellen Caron, commissioner of the Chicago Department of Children and Youth Services, says that the After-School Chicago website not only makes finding activities easier, but also serves to provide agency partners with more information about the landscape of after-school programming in every community.

"Through the After-School Chicago website, our partners can examine the nature of programs they offer and how they compare to other programs available in the same area. It can also help us to identify gaps in service resulting from a neighborhood's changing demographics," Caron said. "This data will enable us to more efficiently and effectively coordinate our services."

The After-School Chicago website was coordinated through the Out-of-School Time Project—an initiative developed to provide citywide supports for programs aiming to reach teens through out-of-school time programs that help maximize their opportunities for success.

Funded by a grant from The Wallace Foundation—an independent, national foundation dedicated to supporting and sharing effective ideas and practices that expand learning and enrichment opportunities for all people—Chicago's Out-of-School Time Project was launched in 2006 when Chicago was chosen as one of five cities to receive funding as part of a national effort to pioneer ways to build stronger, sustainable after-school systems and develop and share lessons based on that work.

For more information on the After-School Chicago website, visit www.afterschoolchicago.org or call (312) 743-1511. For more information on the Out-of-School Time Project, visit www.cityofchicago.org/cys or call the Chicago Department of Children and Youth Services at (312) 743-0300. 

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AIMING HIGH, REACHING OUT, AND DOING

Good

HELPING HOMELESS LIBRARY PATRONS WITH LEGAL INFORMATION

LINDA TASHBOOK is Librarian at Barco Law Library,
University of Pittsburgh School of Law; tashbook@pitt.edu.

Linda is reading *Housekeeping* by Marilynne Robinson.

Nearly two years ago, at a Dunkin' Donuts in Maryland, a stranger slipped me a note. He had been listening to my conversation and wanted to talk to me later. I had been talking about homeless people's legal privacy rights. He was homeless. His note said to locate him at the Kensington Park Community Library. "They know me as Chad," he wrote.

Now, there's a terrific library patron. He goes eagerly after information, whether or not he is at the library, and when he *is* at the library he's known by the library staff. He may even be an instrument of outreach if he tells other people about using the library. In his rampant zeal for information seeking, another thing that he may be is a nuisance to the library staff. It wouldn't be unheard of; we have all seen professional literature about implementing behavior policies and taking other actions to deal with homeless people who all but take up occupancy in public libraries.¹

There are lots of things that this patron might be, and lots of ways that we might describe him, but as long as we dwell on those we are not paying attention to his information needs. That shift of focus from which group the patron is a part of to what the patron wants to know is the key to making a successful transition from library outreach to an ongoing individual relationship with the library. It is also the critical element of managing an individual patron's use of a librarian's time.

Library outreach is typically practiced as a bundle of services directed to groups with common demographics: the elderly, the homeless, people in institutions, daycare centers, and so forth. It often means that library workers physically go out of the library to reach patrons. Groups with common demographics tend to have some similar information needs and the library outreach project that satisfies those needs is likely to also entice members of the group to make continued use of the library. It is a tried and true pattern of service.

Even when there has not been a targeted program or service to a particular demographic group out of the building, it can be said that conscientiously angling in-library service toward a patron's demographic is a form of outreach; it is the "bringing in" extension of outreach. Developing and marketing a substantial collection of large print books could be a form of outreach to the elderly and vision impaired. Offering a library-based business development lecture series might be outreach to new entrepreneurs.

If outreach proceeds successfully—in that a member of the targeted outreach population becomes an

ongoing library user—the patron’s demographics become insignificant and his or her continuing information needs define the relationship with the library. But when working with the group represented by my eavesdropper at the donut shop, i.e. the homeless, this transition seems unusually difficult. Maybe it is because homeless patrons demand a lot of attention or else seem only to want the library’s soft chairs and restrooms rather than its information resources; those phenomena have been reported by numerous libraries and can be fairly considered characteristic group behaviors.² They demonstrate that even though people are already physically in the library, they may still need library outreach.

Just in acknowledging that these group behaviors exist, we can see a theme of common information needs among the homeless: law, justice, and the individual’s interactive role with government. The reason for spending long hours in the public library likely arises from police accusations of loitering in other buildings or obstructing sidewalks or otherwise not having a legal right to be someplace other than the public library. Also, when you think about the reasons for lengthy lounging in the public library, you have to consider the notion that the simple act of sitting in the public library feels like the exercise of a legal right. After all, libraries are the bastions of democracy where the public is supposed to be able to become informed about government and other civic matters, an informed populace being essential to democracy.

Grooming and bathing in library restrooms could be necessary for people who might not otherwise be able to exercise common social rights such as the right to use a public facility³ or the right to patronize a restaurant. Restaurants can turn people away simply for having no shoes or shirt, so they certainly have the option of turning away someone who smells bad or looks dirty and who might repulse other prospective customers.⁴ There is an ironic cruelty in the fact that the seminal legal case upholding library patron behavior policies allowed the library to exclude a homeless patron whose bad odor was a nuisance to other patrons⁵ while case law about the use of public restrooms declares that users can be limited to perform only “excretory and ablutional acts.”⁶ If it were acceptable for people to bathe in public restrooms, unwashed library patrons could clean up and not smell so bad, in which case they’d be allowed to stay in the library rather than being banished as nuisances.

Librarians who listen and watch for legal issues affecting their homeless patrons will be able to steer

their relationships with those patrons toward information seeking and away from resentment about facility use. The law-related explanations for homeless people’s library behavior are merely introductory examples of how the law is involved with homeless life. In every aspect of their daily living, the homeless encounter the law in ways that are different than anyone else.⁷ Public librarians can provide in-library outreach service to homeless regulars by being alert to their prospective legal interests and using those as a foundation for developing mutually more comfortable individual relationships.

The Reference Question That Hasn’t Been Asked

At the core of library outreach is the belief that libraries cannot simply wait for questions to come to them. Reaching out to prospective and present yet disconnected homeless patrons with legal information engages their interest and also helps reduce their disenfranchisement; they can’t be completely distinct from society if a venerable institution like the library knows about the facts of their existence and acknowledges that they have legal rights applicable to that existence.

There are many formats by which libraries might use law topics as the basis for approaching homeless people. Working with shelters, your American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) chapter,⁸ or homeless advocates,⁹ you can find ways to go out into the community and present library programs to groups of homeless people. Library publications are probably an even more sensitive way of approaching this population because, unlike personal contact, written source leads do not cause people to think that you are asking about their personal legal affairs.

Written communications such as bookmarks, research guides, blogs, and webpages are the most elementary and also the most accessible form of library outreach. They can be available in lots of different places at any hour of the day. We publish these items in case they strike a nerve with someone who happens to see them. Sometimes people don’t even know they have a particular information need until they see a library publication showing that the information exists. At other times, seeing these library publications reminds people of topics that they have wondered about but not fully pursued. And, of course, there are times when folks see library publications and think, “I know all about that.” All of these attentive responses represent some variety of satisfaction.

Librarians have to grab control of the reference interview with good, old-fashioned active listening skills. This too is a way of guiding the patron to talk about what he wants to know.

The disenfranchisement that is central to homeless identity is also central to many of the legal issues that apply to homeless life. The lack of an address alone raises law-related questions: Where can a person get mail? How can you even apply for federal benefits if you don't have an address to put on the application?¹⁰ If you store your possessions in someone else's house and that person ruins or destroys your stuff, do you have any rights?¹¹ If a homeless person is found dead without identification in a public place, does any government authority have a legal obligation to try to identify that person?¹²

Interactions with police and courts are also interesting to people who, simply because of their transient existence, so often deal with those entities. Do you have to tell the police your name if you weren't doing anything wrong and an officer just asked for it? Is there anything you can do if the police take away your possessions? What legal rights do you have if the police are rough with you?¹³

There might never be a time that a homeless patron in your library actually presents one of these questions at the reference desk, but they are likely to have experienced similar problems and—whether they are already present in the library or are out in the community—likely to relate to printed outreach. Imagine how interesting and helpful it would be for your library to publish a page of definitions and law sources connected with squatters' rights.¹⁴ If you could get a sponsor to print it on foil, outdoor-survival blankets the content would get more attention and much longer use.

What if you made a succinct list of state government agencies¹⁵ that handle things such as unclaimed assets,¹⁶ consumer complaints,¹⁷ and tainted food reports?¹⁸ Wouldn't that resource serve as a basis of beneficial conversation for you *and* individual homeless patrons? It would enable you to get to know the patron as a distinct consumer of knowledge and it would give the patron some practical help. You might even make resource guides for the homeless patrons who do nothing more than sleep in your library; give them a neighborhood map with marks indicating places where they *can* sleep.

The other side of the map could quote the library rule about sleeping, the local loitering ordinance,¹⁹ local park ordinances, policies from neighborhood churches and shelters, and so on.

The Reference Question that Might Be Asked

If your homeless patrons do use the library for its information sources and services, the thought of delving into law-related reference work might initially worry you for two reasons: liability and longevity. You don't want to mistakenly give legal advice and you don't want to have a constant conversation about every development that might ensue over the months or years that a patron pursues his rights through the justice system.

Everyone knows that it is illegal to practice law without a license.²⁰ But when somebody approaches and asks, "What should I do?" "How do I do this?" "What does this mean?" or "Why is it like that?" good listeners and kind responders are tempted to begin a reply with a variation on "here's what you should do . . ." The variations might involve stories of similar problems, memories of personal traumas, or an ordinary (though possibly television-influenced) urge to solve a problem. Whenever you answer a legal reference question by interpreting the law you are probably giving legal advice. Providing legal advice when you are not a lawyer is the essence of practicing law without a license.²¹

Librarians have to remember that when someone asks a legal question, the answer should be "I'll show you where you can find out about that." This response epitomizes the act of moving away from thinking about whom and how the patron is to think about what the patron wants to know. In this situation, however, the librarian is guiding the patron through the transition.

In addition to the request for legal advice, the other worrisome legal reference question that might come from patrons who, due to their lack of a job or household, have endless time is the never-ending inquiry. It might begin with one story and evolve into

several others. It might be a tirade against the government. It might just be an unformed expression of confusion. All versions of the neverending question are hard to sit through. But it is then that librarians have to grab control of the reference interview with good, old-fashioned active listening skills. This too is a way of guiding the patron to talk about what he wants to know.

The details of legal troubles are usually so irrational that people experiencing them need to talk about them in order to make sense of their problems. For decades, fundamental reference skills have incorporated techniques that encourage patrons to talk about themselves so that librarians have a full context within which to recommend fitting resources.²² These methods are absolutely vital to interactions with homeless patrons researching legal questions.

Only through active listening will you learn whether the patron truly wants to fight for justice rather than simply reading something to feel better. And only through active listening will you get a sense of the kind of reading that is likely to make a patron feel better. There comes a point when you know patrons very well and you understand their plight and you've pointed them to some material and they still want all of your attention. It is at this point that you are no longer providing reference service if you simply sit and listen to the patron's stories and opinions. You might be doing something perfectly nice, but it isn't reference work and you might also be victimizing yourself or compromising your work on other projects or with other patrons.

To end the neverending conversation, I tend to say something like, "I have to get back to other things right now. Let me know how you make out with this stuff I've given you" or "I'm going to set you up on a computer [or at a reading table] over there so you can start looking through these sources." If you have heard and recognized patrons' information needs and you have pointed them to resources likely to satisfy those needs, there is no reason to think that the factors of homelessness and legal research should influence the way you close a reference interview. Even if the librarian went outside and enticed a homeless person into the library with promises of a warm chair and a waiting ear, endless chatting with the reference librarian is not acceptable library behavior.

Sadly, you may discover at the end of a long conversation—which you thought was a reference interview and which the patron thought was a pleasant opportunity for social contact—that the patron truly does not want to read anything. He or she is not

asking for help, leads, or answers, but simply wants to talk. I believe that listening to that patron is still a library service. In those circumstances the purpose of the information exchange is interpersonal and life affirming.

If patrons talk about themselves, then the librarian will learn more about the neighborhood and homelessness and with that knowledge will be better equipped for all kinds of work. And if the conversation is not about homeless life, say the patron simply likes to visit every day, the librarian can be prepared to convey the same interesting news or facts that anyone would enjoy hearing and which we always use with patrons (although I still think it would be potentially helpful to sprinkle in occasional material about homeless people's legal rights). Library service is often about creating opportunities for future reading and information finding. Recall that casual conversation with homeless patrons not only helps you appreciate them as individuals, it also teaches them to trust and appreciate you and your services. Someday, that patron *will* have an information need.

For the fifteen minutes or so that Chad was listening in from the next table at the donut shop, I was telling my companions about charges of lewdness and public indecency being used against homeless people who change clothes and bathe outside. I was setting forth my argument that homeless people should assert peeping tom laws against those who spy on them when they're trying to dress or wash behind trees and bushes. I wasn't answering anybody's reference question; I was merely having a casual conversation when my topic happened to touch on an issue that Chad had been thinking about. So it may be that you will create a reference opportunity by chatting with patrons who are not yet interested in research.

Answering Legal Questions

Let's get back to the substance of homeless people's legal reference questions. There is hardly ever a handy reference book to fall back on for law questions. There is, however, a pattern of analysis that can guide your reference interview and remind you where to look. First, think about the level of government associated with the question: federal, state, or local. Then consider who made the law: Legislatures make statutes declaring what the law is. Executive agencies (such as the U.S. Department of Education and the Environmental Protection Agency) tell how to follow the law. Courts analyze how the law applies to particular situations. Within each of these divi-

sions are predictable questions and standard types of resources available.

If you are beginning to get nervous at this point, remember that you have probably handled lots of income tax questions over the years. You know to show your patron the IRS website and to navigate to forms, instructions, regulations, or frequently asked questions. Responding to homeless law questions will be functionally comparable to dealing with the tax questions and much of the research can similarly be done through government agency websites. Homeless day laborers who have been cheated or abused can read about their rights on the U.S. Department of Labor's site. People seeking disability benefits can see forms and claim requirements on the Social Security Administration's site.

If you do not know which federal agency is connected with a legal issue either contact your county law library, browse through the Library of Congress's agency list²³ or use the Government Printing Office's search engine.²⁴ State agencies are usually accessible through their federal counterparts or by following the [www.state.\[two-letter state initials\].us](http://www.state.[two-letter state initials].us) URL. If your city or county does not have its agency fact sheets and service guides available online, perhaps your library should compile print copies in a notebook.

Patrons representing themselves in court will have predictable categories of questions.²⁵ Mostly, they will want to know about procedures: how to draft documents, present their case, and interact with the other party. They will also want to know how to get evidence. Evidence gathering will be familiar factual library reference work.

One of my library's memorable evidence questions from a homeless patron was "At what time did the sun rise?" on a particular date. This patron was defending himself against a charge of assaulting an officer. In fact, it was the officer who assaulted him; the plain-clothes officer had entered the abandoned building where this patron was sleeping and shone a flashlight in the patron's face to wake him up. The patron awoke with a start and swung out not knowing who was there. The officer claimed that he approached the homeless man in broad daylight. Matching the time of the officer's official report submission against the sunrise time noted in the newspaper and the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Association's website,²⁶ the patron was able to prove that the officer was lying.

The procedures for drafting documents, communicating with the court and the opponent, and presenting the case are set forth in the "rules of court."²⁷ There are rules for the individual court that will hear

the case as well as rules for the system in which that court functions. To comply with court rules, patrons often want legal forms.²⁸

When legal reference questions ask whether the government has treated someone fairly, the research will look at state and federal constitutional due process rights.²⁹ Due process claims are substantiated by demonstrations that the government entity's own rules or routines were not followed. If that entity does not make its policy manuals available to the public, find the internal taxpayer-funded library for that entity and request photocopied pages.

When litigant patrons need to know about substantive law—that is, what rights they have—they might be able to start their work with a legal encyclopedia or an online introduction,³⁰ but they will most likely need to do the bulk of that research in a law library. They will need to read treatise chapters and compare their situations against cases that have been decided in your jurisdiction. Although courts now publish their opinions online, the databases typically have to be searched according to docket number, date, or case name. The ordinary litigant looking for precedents needs to search by topic or keyword. Better than databases are the print indexes to case decisions, which are known as "digests." Certainly, your case-related reference work might include searching for local attorneys who handle your patron's type of case.³¹ Most attorneys handle occasional cases on a voluntary basis.

The major legal aid services for the homeless are generous about publishing plain English explanations of legal rights and samples of their own case documents.³² Those will help public library patrons to define and describe how they have been wronged and what they hope to accomplish. One of your outreach handouts will probably identify the national, state, and local homeless advocacy offices and the resources they provide.

While becoming familiar with the homeless advocacy sites, you will learn about social and government treatment of the homeless. That awareness will help you notice patterns of local legal trouble when you talk individually with your city's homeless patrons. Equipped to confront those community-wide legal issues, you will put together a program to address attendant information needs. You'll bring in speakers³³ and print handouts. Your every action will be aimed at the homeless as a group because of the demographic similarities behind their legal issues. And then, new individual patrons will emerge out of that group who, with your help and attention, will be able to seek justice. It will be good, old-fashioned

You will want *everyone* to know when you give good service to homeless people. You will be proud of that work. Even if the patron is suing God or the president.

outreach work that makes your heart beat quickly. You'll want the mayor to know about it.

You will want *everyone* to know when you give good service to homeless people. You will be proud of that work. Even if the patron is suing God or the president for millions of dollars on the basis of something completely irrational, you will know that you heard someone who doesn't always get listened to. You acknowledged his intellect and fed it with new knowledge. If he has a genuine legal problem and you have put him on the road toward solving it or preventing it from happening again, you have been a good librarian. Rarely will you see a homeless person who has the money to buy books or any other research tools. Even rarer is the homeless person who lives without legal troubles. Public librarians who provide the homeless with helpful resources that explain, reduce, or fix those troubles are the best kind of neighbors for those with no place to live. ☐

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 33. Use your program planning ideas to help your individual homeless patrons. When one asks a law question that you don't know how to answer, think about who you would bring in for a panel discussion if that person's problem were community-wide. Then contact those prospective panel participants and ask what information they might have for your lone patron. When you're dealing with homeless law, you might have to reach out to information sources as much as you reach out to prospective patrons.

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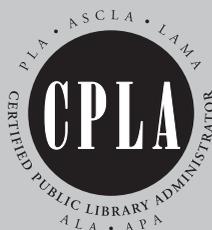
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Archives

IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

ERIC LINDERMAN is Adult Services Manager at Euclid (Ohio) Public Library; elinderman@euclidlibrary.org.

Eric is reading *Edward Steichen: In High Fashion* by Todd Brandow and William A. Ewing and (to his sons, Brody and Brennan) *Mummy* by James Putnam.

Public librarians typically do not understand the value of archival resources as an asset to the local community. This has to do with a lack of knowledge about handling certain non-book materials, possibly combined with an assumption that handling archives is an academic practice that is not generally relevant to the functions of a public library. Archives and related special collections are seen as arcane, while public librarians of this century are more in touch with the real human needs of the library customer. The idea that is usually neglected, if not entirely forgotten, is that archival sources have real, everyday usefulness. Libraries—big and small, public and academic—can improve services to their patrons by integrating a records collection and retention procedure into their core collection development practices.

Public libraries possess an intrinsic wealth of useful information resources that are given limited attention because librarians often lack exposure to the practices of the archival profession. For example, public librarians are often not fully aware of the scope of archival materials, which are not necessarily limited to organizational records and personal papers, although these types of materials comprise many of the larger research libraries. In fact, ephemera, such as pamphlets and privately published newsletters, are commonly found in archival repositories and are often suitable for collection development in public libraries.

Why Archives Are Not Fully Understood in Libraries

A core problem behind the common misunderstanding of archives in libraries is a fundamental difference in the way that archivists and librarians organize information. Intellectual organization of content is the philosophy that motivates the librarian, while physical organization drives the archivist. This rift has grown deeper in the past century as mass publishing has diminished the physical value of the book.

To put it another way, it is usually problematic to try to organize archives by *subject*, as you would a book. So, archivists prefer to use *provenance*, whereby materials are organized around a single person or an organization. An archivist might work with the papers of Abraham Lincoln, while a librarian would work better with a book about Abraham Lincoln. The challenge for libraries is to understand this difference and to include archival practices in collection maintenance procedure. Sometimes this idea requires modifying archives terminology to make it more understandable to the public. Although technically improper, a librarian might use the term “collection” instead of “record group.”

Archives take many forms. Traditional archivists work with *records*, materials that chronicle the organizational functions of an agency, and *papers*, roughly the letters and other original works related to a person. Photographs, ephemera (pamphlets), manuscripts, and artifacts can be subsets of either of the two categories. The typical public-service librarian works frequently with archives without recognizing the potential values of them as an aspect of the core collection.

Increased Awareness and Use of Archives in Public Libraries

The key to helping public library staff to understand and utilize archival resources is to underscore the real-life applications of archives for public needs. A link between archives and literacy is not often made, but it should be. The usefulness of archival resources for school reports is important and will be discussed further in this article. Also, building archival collections that document the activities of local organizations is an effective way of building a stronger base of community support that benefits the library, its users, and also other institutions within the service area.

The thought of archives is often associated with pack-ratting obscure records, or else with manuscript collecting, a related practice associated with historical papers. Archives have more pedestrian application however; for example, most public libraries have a microfilm reader with local newspapers, and some hold high school yearbooks and school board minutes. The main difference between these resources and the book collections is that they are not as easily subject-classified according to the conventional numbering systems. Consequently, while most employees have some idea where to find a book about pregnancy, it requires someone with more special knowledge to retrieve an article about a local festival in 1978.

There are other potentially useful reasons for archives in public libraries, which often reflect a form of literacy support. This is to say that archival resources possess a unique way of working for people in need of literacy support that books and many online sources do not. By literacy here, we are not speaking so much of basic literacy, but other forms including information literacy, functional literacy and cultural literacy. Here are a few useful reasons:

1. Archives can promote cultural literacy. For example, collections of pamphlets, letters, or photographs can be used by people of various ages to learn about the history of an ethnic or racial group.
2. Archives are good for your health. Public libraries can arrange to become a deposit center for newsletters, pamphlets, and materials circulated primarily to hospital or office patients.
3. Archives provide a broader spectrum of research materials for students who use the public library. Collections of letters and photographs can provide high school students with the opportunity to begin using primary source materials for their papers.

4. Archives can build an important link between the public library and other organizations in the community. A typical procedure already in place in many libraries is the ongoing collection of local meeting minutes from school boards as well as local ordinances. Public libraries can also strengthen their relationship with area businesses and nonprofit organizations by collecting records that may be of use to people who use the services or products of these institutions. One good example of this activity is the collection of programs and event calendars of social organizations and churches. This material, which is probably not on the Web, can serve to maintain a historical record of the community that uses the library.

“Currency” is the keyword in health sciences literature, and “old” is better used to describe archives. Or is it? An archival retention policy may call for the short retention of a given item, just as one would limit the shelf life of a health encyclopedia. Most libraries have the occasional offering of health-related pamphlets, but it may be of greater value to consider a fully developed and maintained collection of such materials, which may be even more up-to-date than the books, and also more relevant to clinics and hospitals in the community.

Building a Public Library Archive Program

The basic problem with archival resources in public libraries is that they are treated as marginal resources and not built into the structure of the organization. The following aspects need to be considered before implementing an archive program:

1. **Space limitations.** Usually an archive consists of print resources and will require space. It may be necessary to locate space for additional file cabinets, space for storing archival boxes or other special formats, and additional public-access computers. It should be understood that archival materials are usually kept in closed stacks for preservation purposes, and that the processing of archives requires additional workspace and storage space for tools and materials.
2. **Staff knowledge and skills.** To properly maintain the collection, library professionals and support staff will need to understand the contents of the collection and how to handle collection

development and preservation matters. Preservation is an entirely different world than book preservation and requires substantial ongoing staff training. One challenge in archival maintenance is keeping paper materials in order, which requires careful numbering of boxes and folders. Handling patrons also requires tighter control and access than with books. Not only is the opportunity for theft greater because the items are not usually cataloged at the item level, but the possibility of disrupting the filing orders can easily become a problem.

3. **Acquisitions.** Should the library actively collect archives or be limited to the arrangement and preservation of existing materials? This question may be difficult to answer because it places the desire to build on an existing body of materials against the need to manage the physical and intellectual scope of the collection.

Building Archives into Collection Development

Handling the public library archive program should be seen as an extension of the larger collection development program because it needs to be continually maintained and subjected to ongoing evaluations for relevancy. Librarians can bring archives into the larger collection development plan by constructing collection development policies and procedures that merge the philosophies of the archival and library professions. This can be done by building an archive collection plan that pulls together like materials by provenance, but works them into the larger subject-based library scheme. For example, a collection of pamphlets released by a local hospital may be contained in the same physical location, and also given subject access by way of virtual collections and by creating a single MARC record for the collection.

Just as with books, public library archives should have a policy for collecting and weeding, or records retention as it is usually known to archivists. Collecting archives requires more footwork than is often familiar to librarians. Book ordering is done by contacting vendors—today often by megavendors like Ingram. Archival collection development requires more time on the phone with people who have papers, or organizations that do in-house publishing. Some libraries still have the pre-Internet pamphlet file, which is a basic way of doing this, but does not utilize the organizational possibilities of digitization.

A major difference between the public library archive and that of a commercial body or a historical papers collection is that it may be subject to more ongoing weeding. This is because the public library archive must demonstrate its usefulness to the general public, whose characteristics change over time. Unlike historical papers, an archival collection such as deposited pamphlets of a local social service organization will not necessarily be needed if the organization goes out of service; unless, however, the archives are deemed valuable as a local history resource.

To maintain this complex acquisition and weeding schedule, a thoughtful collection development policy should be constructed and maintained. This policy should include:

1. **A collection scope, both in terms of physical and intellectual content.** It may be decided that the library will only want to branch out beyond monographic sources for certain subject areas. For example, a library located in an African American community may want to limit archival resources to this interest.
2. **Format restrictions.** It should be noted if the library is not equipped to handle special formats such as obsolete sound and video formats.
3. **Instructions for weeding.**

Managing a Public Library Archives Program

While there is no available manual for developing an archives program specifically for public libraries, Gregory S. Hunter's book, *Developing and Maintaining Practical Archives*, provides the best guidance for handling and promoting archives that are made available for public access. Hunter's book goes into some depth about planning and hiring for archives work and give some recommendations for financing and fund-raising.¹

Funding is a major consideration for the public library considering such an undertaking, because archives are generally not figured into the usual operating expenses, nor are they often considered high priority when regarded next to bestsellers, literacy, and homework support. Part of the challenge for public librarians is to understand and promote the value of archival resources within some of the mainstream priorities of the library.

Special funding structures and staff adjustments must also be considered for the longevity of the archives program. Grant funding can be considered,

Part of the challenge for public librarians is to understand and promote the value of archival resources within some of the mainstream priorities of the library.

however, such sources are unreliable for the permanent placement of the resources.

Before beginning any serious archival aspect of library collection and service, the ongoing expert staffing of such a program must be considered, as must the future maintenance and preservation issues. It is definitely advisable that the consideration of an archive or manuscript collection be put through the library's long-range planning process.

It may be helpful here to see how a real-life, urban library has handled a decision to build archives into its permanent practices. The East Cleveland (Ohio) Public Library is a small, independent system (not linked to the Cleveland Public or Cuyahoga County libraries) in one of the poorest parts of the Cleveland area. The decision to take on a very large donation of materials related to African American history was well beyond the current staffing and budgetary constraints; although the collection itself was determined to be of special importance and potential usefulness to the community. Titled the Icabod Flewellen Collection, it comprises the personal papers of Flewellen, a notable collector and museum founder. This collection includes a large amount of Flewellen's personal correspondence, as well as a multitude of pamphlets on various topics related to the African American experience.²

The plan for handling this project was to first obtain grant funding to hire a professional project archivist to process the materials and also to provide training to the staff for future maintenance of these materials. A generous grant from the Cleveland Foundation made the first part of this possible, although the processing took much longer than originally expected, and some unanticipated tapping of the library's general fund was necessary just to complete the initial project.

It was also determined that training the permanent library staff on maintaining the collection would be more difficult than expected. Furthermore, it became clear that the location of the collection would require a physical placement of staff that was not possible with existing personnel. In order to continue the project as an ongoing facet of library services, the project

archivist, an MLS, was eventually brought on as a library-funded staff member, with her work divided between general reference service and ongoing maintenance of the Flewellen collection.

Processing Archives in the Public Library

Processing, as it is usually called, is the preparation of archives for use. In the case of the public library, this use is by the public. Processing includes five major steps: (1) appraisal, (2) accession, (3) preservation, (4) arrangement, and (5) description. Digitization is another process that may be considered to be either a sixth step or a sort of function that is applied to the other steps. An Australian book, *Keeping Archives*, is one of the best manuals that describes the international standards for processing archives.³

Accession

Accession is the acquisition of the materials. Archives accession often involves going out to a home or place of business to inspect and discuss the materials with a donor. Discussions usually include the terms of the agreement: mainly whether the collection will be permanently in the custody of the library, whether there will be restrictions on who is permitted to view the contents, and whether the library will be free to weed and destroy materials that are not needed.

Accession is one area where the public library can differ considerably from the private or academic archive. For one, it is not uncommon for donors to place restrictions. For example, in the case of personal health records, the archive may agree to not allow anyone outside the family to view that portion of the archive. In the case of a public library however, such restrictions would most likely not be considered due to its commitment to public access.

Also, the criteria for inclusion may differ considerably in a public library as compared to the private archive. Mainly, it may be more important in the public library to include only archives that relate directly to the collection development policy for

books, which would translate into greater and more frequent weeding of the contents. It would be of considerable importance to make a donor aware of these terms. The two books cited earlier in this article give examples of accession agreements that can be adapted to the needs of public library archives.

Appraisal

Appraisal is the determination made by the archivist or librarian as to the research value of the contents of the archives. As with books, multiple copies are often discarded. Traditionally, the primary consideration in appraising content of archives lies in the relationship of the materials to the donor or donating agency. For example, donations of personal papers often come with personal contents such as receipts and bills that may or may not have much value for the researcher. This judgment is a difficult skill that is best acquired through years of experience in archives processing. In the public library, the value of the archives for public use is an added consideration that could serve to either simplify or complicate the appraisal process.

Arrangement and Description

These combined archival processes are most closely related to the book cataloging process, although there are some significant differences. *Arrangement* refers to the organization of the materials. In pure archival work, the object is to retain, as closely as possible, the original orders of the papers or records in order to preserve the intentions and practices of the creator of the materials. *Description* refers to the notations that are made by the archivist that indicate to the user how the materials are arranged.

It is in these processes that some modification of archival practice must usually be undertaken in order to best suit the needs of the public library. This often means some kind of a compromise between the concepts of provenance and subject arrangement, in order to provide better accessibility to the topics within the materials, that do not necessarily relate to the person or agency that created them.

A good example of this type of adaptation is the previously noted Flewellen Collection in East Cleveland, which includes an abundance of pamphlets related to African American history. If this were an academic archive, the life of Flewellen and his collecting history would be the primary focus of the archivist, and the pamphlets would likely not be given too much attention. In this situation, however, the needs of the general public, including many local high school students, had to be considered. So,

while the biographical nature of the collection was granted much publicity in the Cleveland area, it turns out that the unique pamphlets that Flewellen collected are of special importance for the public library, and were carefully studied and arranged in terms of subject content regardless of their relationship to Flewellen's life and work.⁴

Preservation

Preservation of archival materials is usually handled while the arrangement is being completed, and then maintained throughout the life of the archive. Cleaning documents and putting the materials in acid-free folders and boxes is usually the core task involved in a preservation project. Sometimes transparent plastic encapsulation is also used or specialized containers for artifacts, nonprint media, and archives with unusual shapes and sizes.

In a public library, attention to the preservation of archival materials must include the understanding that materials will be handled more frequently by patrons. Damage and theft are necessary considerations, as is the maintenance of organization. A thoughtfully arranged group of pamphlets will quickly turn into a hodgepodge of scraps without the proper planning. This may require placing each item in a numbered folder and documenting its location. It also requires that any staff handling the materials must be fully trained in how to keep track of them.

Electronic Considerations for Archives in Libraries

Many libraries have been successful in building electronic website collections that complement the book collections very well. This is because hypertext linking works nicely for the subject grouping of essentially archival, virtual material. Traditional archivists have been generally as slow to pick up on this possibility as librarians have been to incorporate archival practices. A new challenge, and one that could serve to bridge the unnecessary division between archives and libraries, will be to incorporate paper archival materials with electronic library collections. This possibility requires, as mentioned, the records collection policy, combined with a fully maintained digitization program.

EAD

Encoded Archival Description (EAD) is an encoding standard for the electronic networking of finding aids. In most cases, this can be viewed as a standard

similar to MARC that allows libraries to make finding aids accessible using an online database search. In many cases, and perhaps ideally, the online book catalog and the finding aid library may be searched simultaneously. The best overview of how EAD is currently employed is found in Hunter's book, noted earlier.⁵

The EAD initiative began in the early 1990s, and was slow to build momentum due to early problems with Web compatibility. More recently, EAD has become a more effective tool since it adopted the XML (extensible markup language) tagging structure as a standard for marking up digital finding aids. EAD has made a solid impression in academic libraries and has also begun to impact public libraries. At this time, any library considering a serious archives project will need to give thought to the future importance of digitization using the EAD standard. A good example of a public library that has employed EAD is the Denver Public Library. In this example, you can access the library's EAD records directly through the homepage by selecting the online catalog and limiting the search to manuscripts.⁶

Virtual Archives

An unnecessary rift between the physical libraries and electronic services through these libraries is complicated by the disconnection of the library website from the practices within the library building. As we approach an age in which digital literacy is as common as the spoken word, the public library treats the computer as a special feature that is maintained by specialized staff for specialized patrons. A digital preservation program that involves image scanning is a good way to help correct this problem because it presents a logical link between a physical object and a virtual presence. Although the digital posting

and organization of images has fallen greatly within the domain of academic libraries, such work can also serve the general public in significant ways. Local history photography is perhaps an obvious example.

The uneasy marriage of print and electronic information sources is perhaps faced with more anxiety in the library than in any other institution, and the introduction of archives into this situation further complicates the matter; however, the inclusion of archives in the public library collection can help to add a component that strengthens library effectiveness for both in-house patrons and those who access the library electronically. Building community collaborations, integrating archival resources into the collection practices of the library, and using these collections to enhance the library's online presence are steps to building a public resource that is of unique usefulness to its public. 

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PLA's 13th National Conference will be held March 23–27, 2010, in Portland, Oregon. Offered biennially, the conference has a reputation for excellence. PLA 2010 will include more than 150 top-quality continuing education programs, talk tables, social events, networking opportunities, and a bustling exhibits hall. Information about program topics, registration fees, housing, special events, and more will be updated regularly at www.placonference.org, the official PLA National Conference website. Registration will open in early fall 2009.

For more information about the PLA National Conference, contact the PLA office at (800) 545-2433, ext. 5PLA, e-mail pla@ala.org, or visit www.placonference.org. 

THE LIBRARY Link Sites

SUCCESS STORY

ALIVE AND THRIVING MORE THAN FOUR YEARS LATER

CHARLOTTE COX is an independent consultant based in Laconia, New Hampshire. She was the volunteer coordinator who helped develop and launch the Library Link Sites program; charlottecox@metrocast.net. Charlotte is reading *Away* by Amy Bloom *The Year of Fog* by Michelle Richmond, and *Dreams from My Father* by Barack Obama.

Can public libraries increase their outreach efforts enough to fulfill their mission of public access, in these days of tight budgets and lean staffs? Is it really possible to reach more underserved groups like the elderly, rural, or disabled, while also competing for customers with big-city bookstores that offer comfortable chairs, wireless services, and unlimited reading choices? It's not easy to come up with a viable plan, and harder still to sustain one over time.

When an enterprising regional library in the Midwest decided to take on these tough questions four years ago, the challenges looked large and complex, and the pilot concept—something called Library Link Sites—seemed interesting but idealistic. Today, after a year of planning, more than four years in continuous operation, and growing the original three sites to ten, the Library Link Sites program of the Lake Agassiz Regional Library (LARL) system in Moorhead, Minnesota, has clearly found some answers—enough to merit winning PLA's 2008 Highsmith Library Innovation Award. How did they do it?

Improving Remote Access

Because LARL's thirteen existing branches serve 135,000 people in a seven-county region roughly the size of New Jersey, the impetus for the Library Link Sites program grew out of the need to improve access, particularly for the far-flung rural population, when the bookmobile service dwindled and became no longer cost-effective. The initial idea was to form innovative community-library partnerships that could use existing facilities and personnel to provide a small browsing collection for interested local customers, while also linking them through new technology to all the resources LARL has to offer.

"When we first started this project," said LARL Director Kathy Fredette, "our goal was simply to answer a practical need for more library access among the small outlying communities in our own region. We found almost no models for this idea anywhere in the country, but we realized that many regions like ours with widespread populations have the same need." Fredette was excited about pioneering the endeavor and, at the same time, about fulfilling LARL's mission "to link people and communities to resources and experiences for learning and enrichment."



A Library Link Sites volunteer hard at work.

The breakthrough came when grant funding allowed LARL in 2004 to hire a volunteer coordinator for the first time to take on the tasks of research, exploration, promotion, recruitment, and training that would be necessary to lay the groundwork for these community-library partnerships. Fredette appointed a small steering committee of regional civic leaders and library experts to provide networking support and political credibility for the volunteer coordinator. When this group of planners tested the waters with informational public meetings across the region, more than a dozen communities sent serious delegations to propose their towns as pilot sites. “Apparently we struck a nerve of passionate library needs among our rural citizens,” said Fredette. “They were primed and ready to hear what we had to offer.”

From Partnership to Ownership

The planning group proceeded to draft a partnership agreement that would spell out exactly which responsibilities the towns would take on and which ones the library would bear. This simple document specified that the pilot communities would provide a secure space, furnishings, volunteers, and publicity for a new library service site. In turn, LARL would provide the library materials, computer equipment to access the regional collection, delivery services, volunteer training, staff support from existing hub libraries, and a part-time site coordinator hired from the community. Because Fredette wanted to start small and to be sure the concept worked well, the Library Link Sites program began with three pilot sites in 2004. LARL increased the sites to eight in 2005 and now, in 2009, has a total of ten successful sites running on



Another happy Library Link Sites customer.

this model—with substantial interest among other communities to add sites.

“The interest has been phenomenal,” said LARL Board President and Wilkin County Commissioner Bob Perry. “The key was giving our small communities a sense of ownership in the program, and they took it and ran with it. It promoted a healthy pride in their ability to offer library services, and it gave them a leg up in the friendly competition with other towns. That sense of ‘It’s ours!’ is what gives this program its vitality.”

Board member and Becker County Commissioner Barry Nelson added: “Many communities would like to try a Link Site, but as we add them, the key will be to see if there is strong and sustainable local support—the commitment needs to start at the grassroots level. When that happens, of course, the bonus is an increased acceptance by county planners towards libraries as a priority for the county. It helps ease budget discussions when we can show that the Library Link Sites program is serving more taxpayers than ever before.”

As the early phases of the program developed, creative thinking emerged from all sides. One by one, the communities came up with the right ingredients: a grassroots planning committee; a secure space in a multipurpose facility such as a senior center or rescue squad building; furnishings such as donated desks or used shelving; publicity for the new Link Site through local newsletters or city council involvement; and fifteen to twenty local volunteers who were willing to work at least two hours per week. Such achievements for tiny communities with populations of two to five hundred citizens were often challenging but carried out with enthusiasm.

Fourteen Steps to Successful Library Link Sites Program

1. Develop the vision and promote it thoroughly.
2. Hire a volunteer coordinator as project manager.
3. Establish a high-profile steering committee.
4. Specify benefits and responsibilities of the partnership.
5. Visit every qualified location to evaluate site potential.
6. Start with a limited number of pilot sites.
7. Enlist local leaders as community advisers.
8. Let the advisers recruit the best volunteers.
9. Hire a local site coordinator and designate a staff liaison.
10. Be willing to supply comprehensive volunteer training.
11. Educate library staff about high volunteer potential.
12. Equip the sites with the best computers and newest materials.
13. Celebrate in style with community grand openings.
14. Each community is different—build in flexibility for change.

In return, LARL supplied each site with three to five hundred items for the shelves, including bestsellers, large-print books, children's books, audiotapes, videos, DVDs, magazines, and newspapers. The most important benefit to the communities was that each site received a computer hookup that connected them to LARL's entire regional collection of more than 350,000 items. (The sites have all gained wireless access since then.) Customers are now able to request specific items from any library in the region, as well as interlibrary loan titles, to be delivered to them at their own site. They can even make the requests from their own homes.

Most important, the process of planning a site, setting up the actual space, and training the volunteers to be self-sufficient turned into a rewarding learning experience for all concerned, including the regional library staff. Typically, community leaders such as the mayor, city council members, or business heads participated in working out a formal partner-

ship agreement, and some of the planning committees turned into permanent local advisory groups. The regional staff was gratified to find that while the volunteers were initially anxious about their computer skills, most were conscientious, reliable, and eager to learn. Hiring a paid site coordinator from the local community provided professional stability, and appointing a library staff liaison from each hub ensured training and support as well as guidance for growth. Some of the more enterprising sites are now experimenting with senior programs, homebound deliveries, and storytimes for young children.

Regional and National Impact

"We knew the Library Link Sites program would benefit both the small communities and the library system as a whole," said Fredette. "The communities now have access to a wealth of library resources they would not have had otherwise due to their limited resources. The regional system benefits from the enthusiasm and input of more community customers. Large or small, we all learn from each other and everyone has something to contribute." According to Fredette, the name "Link" says it all: "Through these sites, we link people to resources via computer technology and staff-volunteer collaboration, and we also link people to experiences—our customers now have increased opportunities to connect with each other, to share books and information, and to meet one another in a welcoming environment."

The potential impact for other public libraries, in any region serving a widespread population base, is that the Link concept makes the following possible:

- Increased library access for underserved populations, especially seniors or young families.
- An economical and easy-to-implement partnership plan for communities and libraries.
- An effective collaboration between professional library staff and community volunteers.
- Encouragement for small communities to feel ownership and pride in their library services.
- A way for regional networks to serve more residents without adding more library buildings.
- A simple model for other public libraries to replicate, using a minimal investment of financial support, easily available resources, and a moderate degree of risk.

Has it been easy or difficult to keep the Library Link Sites program going strong for the past three years? Fredette said it's a little of both: "You have to

be willing to make mistakes, to change something if it isn't working, and at the same time, to keep going when it might seem easier to quit. Part of the challenge is to hold onto the volunteers you have and to find new ones when necessary. It's also key to keep evaluating how we're doing, to see if we can work smarter or more efficiently."

To ensure the evaluation effort, informal surveys were distributed periodically to administration, staff, site coordinators, volunteers, and customers throughout the pilot period in 2004, and some details such as hours open and computer procedures were tweaked as a result. Then during 2007, the sites' third year of operation, a formal survey was undertaken by the team of Hall & Willms, consultants from Library Strategies, to evaluate overall progress. Their report concluded that "LARL is in an enviable position where new models of delivering customer service for the most part are working extremely well. Our research indicated that there are no major red flags in how the system works." To enhance the Library Link Sites program's effectiveness, they recommended "clear definition and understanding of processes and responsibilities" among staff and volunteers, plus "enhanced communication within and across the various agencies in the system around specific issues."

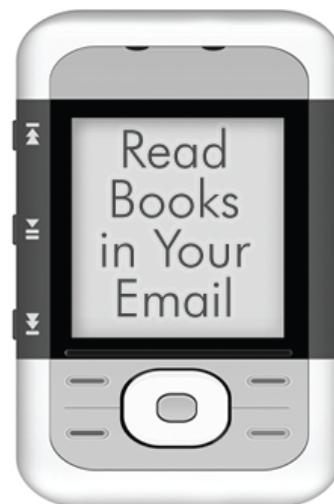
Meeting Management Challenges

These comments seem to be in line with what staff and volunteers have said. LARL's three hub supervisors, who each coordinate workflow among four to five branch libraries and three to four link sites, agree that while most of the Link Sites are thriving, some have faced a few hurdles. Detroit Lakes Hub Supervisor Mary Haney, for example, said that two of her Link Sites are "almost problem-free," but another has had trouble keeping volunteers, community advisors, and site coordinators, due to families moving out of the area, so that "both recruitment and training are issues." Haney's goal is to hold more frequent meetings with her Link Sites coordinators, to gain insights by sharing common problems. Due to budget restrictions, there is no longer a regional volunteer coordinator on LARL's staff, and while the hub supervisors are quite willing and able to oversee the Link Sites, Haney speculates: "A volunteer coordinator would be helpful keeping up with changing community relations and rebuilding new networks where needed."

Moorhead Hub Supervisor Anne Fredine commented: "The communities are energetic in providing the volunteers, but skill levels are uneven, and

turnover varies from site to site." In some cases, the site coordinator is so good and so motivated that he or she does it all, and volunteers tend to drop off if they don't feel needed. According to Fredine, "The challenge is to keep the volunteers trained, retrained, motivated, and appreciated. It's a tall order, but the most successful sites seem to know instinctively how to do this." She reports that while there are big costs in management workload, there are also big benefits for library usage: "Our most avid customers are multiple users of the links, branches, and hub libraries, and with the increased efficiencies we've found for our rotation and delivery systems, the Link Sites continue to be more visible than the bookmobile ever was. Also, Link Sites volunteers tend to become ambassadors for the library throughout our region. I'm sure the Norman County Commission

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rewarded LARL with more financial support in 2007 because of noticing the new sites we've added in that area."

Up in the far northern reaches of LARL's service region, Crookston's acting hub supervisor, Sister Eileen Beutel, believes that the Link Sites are important to small towns not only because they connect people in remote locations to library information, but also because they are community gathering places: "These sites are offering improved library outreach to seniors who have transportation issues, but they also provide a wonderful venue for social interaction among customers of all ages. The specific requests are increasing, and the regulars look forward to Friday deliveries when they can call and say, 'Did my books come in?'" All of Beutel's sites are doing well so far, and she said volunteers are well up to learning new tasks, including new computer procedures and streamlined delivery methods. When asked whether it might be more efficient to trade the volunteers for paid staff, Beutel stated: "It would be a toss-up between the two—of course, better trained staff would lower the number of processing mistakes, but the volunteers provide a connection with community involvement that would be irreplaceable."

Reports from the Front Lines

One of Crookston's site coordinators, Nancy Nelson at the Shelly Link Site, says their town's response has been enthusiastic from the beginning. With a large senior population, Shelly's citizens simply did not want to travel to branches in other towns. Now, with circulation booming and more special requests than ever, she hears nothing but positive customer comments, such as "This is one of the best things that ever happened to Shelly!" According to Nelson and her co-coordinator Marjorie Eia, they still have the same number of volunteers they had at the beginning, except for a few who have passed away. "The volunteers have become more adept at computers," Nelson said, "and now they don't require as much oversight." Despite the prevalence of seniors, the Shelly site held a successful children's summer reading program. Would they change anything in the future? "We're doing just fine the way we are!" Nelson said.

Clete Utz, site coordinator at Twin Valley, agreed: "Even though our Link Site provides a limited service, customers here think it's heaven. The mobile library was more hit-or-miss; the Link Site offers more customer convenience." Twin Valley has a mixture of ages in town, and its summer reading pro-

gram typically draws twelve to thirteen children per week. As for volunteers, Utz said, "Yes, we lost a few through moves, but then I just recruited more, right from the library customers. I guess a site coordinator has to take the initiative, do the follow-up, and spend time talking it up around town." Have things changed since he started out in 2004? "Well, I got a little smarter at tweaking the circulation software, and now I notify people of requests by e-mail instead of making all those phone calls! I've never gotten any negative feedback—people just say how grateful they are to have this site," said Utz.

At the Cormorant Link Site, coordinator Donna Lutz said that their older population likes having a comfortable place to gather with other readers. "But the mixed demographic of our lakes area township," she added, "includes families with young children and professionals who drop in at the site after work." Lutz makes it a point to keep up good relations with the township board by making periodic reports about the library services: "You have to network, put yourself out there, write a column for the newsletter, and then your local support will take care of itself. They all tell me, 'If there's anything you need, just ask!'"

Bonnie Julius is site coordinator for Frazee, one of the newest Link Sites. She said her customers are amazed that their site has all these movies, magazines, and books on CD, in addition to the fiction and nonfiction, and they still can't quite believe they can order *anything* from the regional collection, even interlibrary loans from other states. Her volunteer staff started out small and scheduling is sometimes tight: "I come to help them when they need it, but mostly I let the volunteers do the work themselves. I've had training experience, and that's how they learn." Her advice to anyone considering setting up a Link Site: "By all means, do it. It'll be the best thing that ever happened to your community."

Balancing Costs and Benefits

What are the benchmarks for all this perceived increase in access and usage? Using 2007 year-end circulation figures and comparing them to the initial figures from each site's first year in operation, the growth curve has been substantial in almost every case. Since the inception of the Library Link Sites program, overall circulation at the sites has increased by 23 percent; the number of customer visits has increased by 17 percent; and the number of registered borrowers has increased by 96 percent.

"I believe the advantages far outweigh the negatives," said Fredette. "These new customers we're

servicing have paid for library service through their taxes. Without the Link Sites, they would have to drive much farther for it, and some would not have any access at all. By partnering with the small communities, we've been able to bring library service into their backyards, so to speak." Fredette said that the planning has gotten much easier with experience, and that by the time LARL added the most recent sites, they could do in two or three months what initially took nine months to implement.

What about the stress on the regional system's workload, to deliver these additional services with a very small increase in staff and equipment and virtually none for capital expenses? Fredette said emphatically, "Our hubs, our branches, and our region as a whole are stronger for having implemented the Link Sites. No one even knew what Link Sites were when we started out. Without a doubt, they've surpassed our expectations. And I believe that they've spurred all of us on to find new ways—of marketing materials, of reaching out, of using our resources—to continue that success."

Not Just Innovative But Unique

According to Fredette, almost no other program like this exists, either in this country or abroad. Extensive research during the formative phases in 2004, as well as follow-up research in 2007 and 2008, revealed only a handful of marginally similar programs in the United States. These include clusters of kiosk-type library outposts on campus at Rutgers University (N.J.) and at the Kessler Health Education Library of Harvard's Brigham Women's Hospital (Mass.); a single-satellite library unit at Karlstad in the Northwest Regional Library System (Minn.); a story-hour program hosted by Ukrops Supermarket in partnership with the Williamsburg (Va.) Regional Library; and small collections that support children's homework assignments, sponsored by the Fort Worth (Tex.) Housing Authority.

Further searches have revealed a few remote delivery services in Canada, Australia, and Brazil, but nothing like the community-based partnerships that are working so well for LARL in Minnesota. While no other U.S. regional system has yet tried to replicate the Library Link Sites program, recently Fredette had an inquiry from Ireland for information about the project, as that country hopes to establish a similar program on a nationwide basis. In short, after more than four years in operation and based on extensive

surveys of the field both in 2004 and 2007, LARL believes the Library Link Sites program is not only innovative but currently unique for the following reasons:

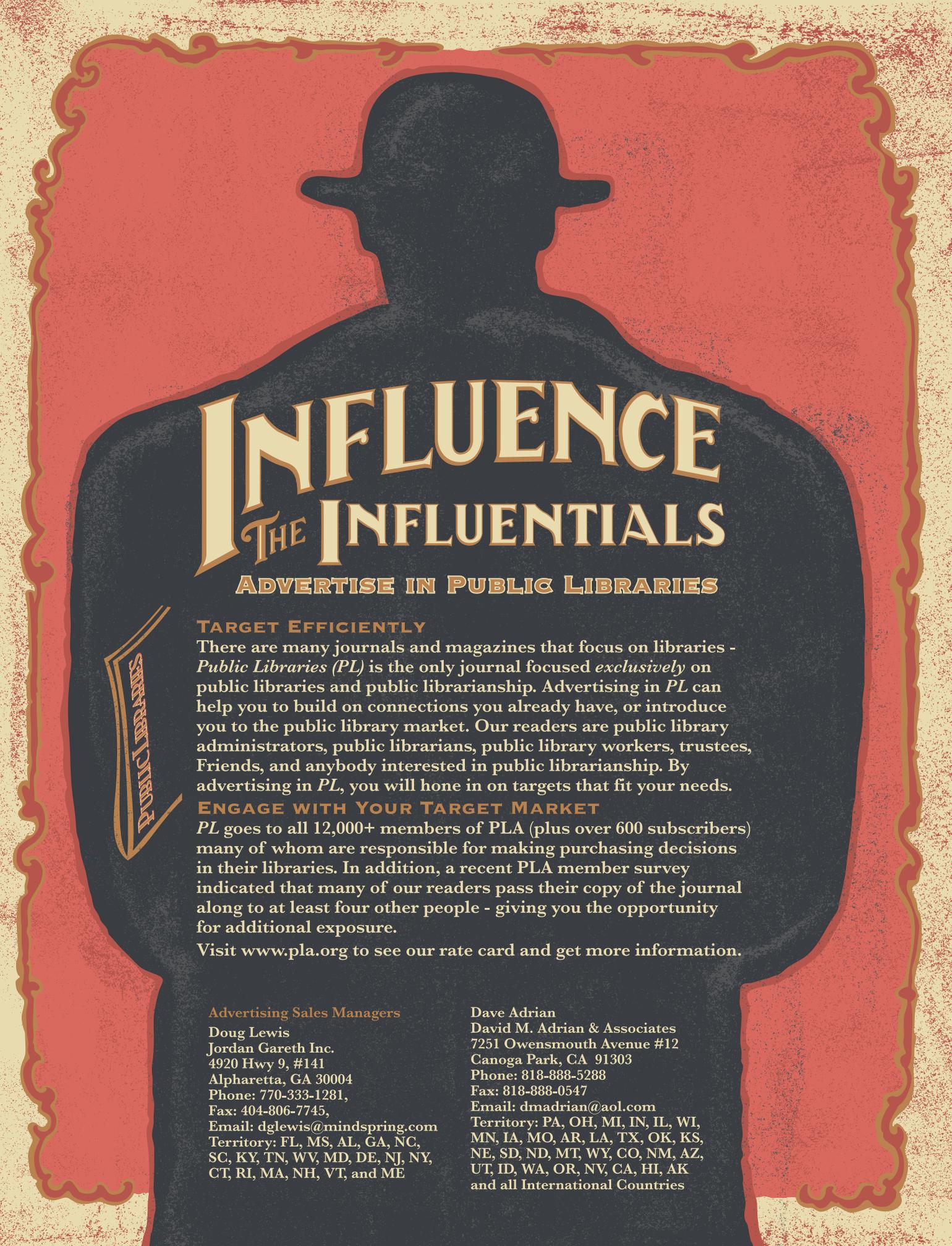
- It provides far more cost-effective and user-friendly access for underserved populations in small rural communities than the bookmobile did.
- It uses existing resources in communities and in the regional office for little added cost and zero capital investments.
- It generates a new wave of community interest in library service and library support.
- It builds new bridges between library staff, volunteers, and community leaders, with an increase of trust and respect on all sides.
- It fosters not only greater good will for libraries in general but also greater political support for specific library funding issues.

Through all of these benefits, the implicit message from libraries to communities in LARL's region has been revitalized. "We value democracy in library access. Size doesn't matter. Any motivated community in this region can learn to feel ownership of its library services and satisfaction in its community achievements," Fredette said.

Would this concept, or some variation of it, work in a big city or suburban library environment? "Definitely," said Fredette. "The idea of libraries forming partnerships with their local communities is in no way reserved for rural areas. All library networks contain underserved populations, including metropolitan and inner city environments. There are always people who don't feel connected or empowered enough to use library resources, and it's up to us as public libraries to make sure we reach out to all people. In short, we'd love to see another kind of venue test the adaptability of the Library Link Sites experiment."

Some people have wondered whether Fredette, knowing about the many ups and downs of this project four years later, would do it all over again. She said, "Without a doubt. For all the time it's taken, for all the funds we've had to expend—for materials, equipment, training, promotion, telecommunications—you can't put a price on the return on investment. Well, you can—and it's priceless!" ■

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ALEX POTEKIN is Head of the Reference Department at Laredo (Tex.) Public Library; alex@laredolibrary.org. Alex is reading *What We Say Goes: Conversations on U.S. Power in a Changing World* by Noam Chomsky and David Barsamian.

The Laredo Public Library (LPL), serving the Texas-Mexico border community of Webb County, has a history of offering extensive programs for children and adults. The programming developed each year targets all age groups and includes computer classes in English and Spanish, storytime, after-school art classes, movie nights, book clubs, and knitting classes. Many of these programs have relied on collaborations and outreach with schools and other community organizations.

In 2008, the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio (UT HSC) opened a new branch library in Laredo and expressed interest in collaborating with LPL on community projects. After discussing the health needs of the community and possible projects, LPL applied for a \$5,000 award from the National Network of Libraries of Medicine—South Central Region (NN/LM—SCR) to support a summer program focused on health information outreach to children. UT HSC agreed to serve as a primary partner for this project, and other key partners included the City of Laredo's Parks and Leisure Department and the Health Department. Additional partners included Laredo's PBS station, KLRN, as well as the Laredo Children's Museum and the Laredo Fire Department.

The residents of Laredo and Webb County, most of whom are Hispanic, experience health disparities as a very real part of their lives. Access to health services is a significant concern within this community, and the prevalence of preventable diseases such as diabetes is higher than in many other Texas communities and in the United States as a whole. To help address these community challenges, LPL decided to focus its project on promoting the health of children and families, with programming to be delivered in a fun and interactive environment during the summer months.

Program Design

As originally proposed, the project aimed to use LPL's bookmobile to deliver health-oriented programs to children at five of the summer day camps organized by the city's Parks and Leisure Department. The project's second focus was a children's health fair at LPL's main library, scheduled for a Saturday in July. Ultimately, the Parks and Leisure Department included the library's summer health program at eight day camps, allowing LPL to reach 815 children. The children's health fair at the main library attracted 334 attendees.

The plan for LPL's outreach to the summer day camps called for library staff to bring LPL's bookmobile to the community center or school where each day camp was being held and lead programming for three hours in the morning. The children were divided into three groups: ages 7–8, 9–11, and 12–15, with each group rotating among hour-long activities. The plan called for each group to spend an hour exploring and using the bookmobile. The second hour was intended for a session about sources of health information led by librarians, and the third hour was a health-oriented activity supervised by day camp staff.

The staff from the library who conducted the sessions at the day camps included two children's librarians and the bookmobile driver. A school librarian from the public school system also volunteered to assist with some of the day camp sessions. To prepare for the session about sources of health information, library staff developed separate handouts for each age group, highlighting LPL's website and important sources of health information such as MedlinePlus (<http://medlineplus.gov>) and MedlinePlus en español (<http://medlineplus.gov/esp>). They also planned to demonstrate these resources using issues and questions relevant to each age group. When library staff realized that Internet connections would not be available at the day camps, they developed a "health and nutrition bingo" for small prize bags, which included books, stickers, and bookmarks. All children received the age-specific handouts about sources of health information, but library staff members were not able to conduct the live demonstrations they had planned.

The children's health fair at LPL's main library was scheduled for four hours on the afternoon of Saturday, July 19, 2008. Based on previous experience, LPL staff knew the importance of promoting special events through multiple sources. They notified the city's public information office three weeks in advance to ensure that announcements would be

made on local radio and television stations as well as the newspaper. They also posted an announcement on the library's website and notified staff at schools and children's organizations in the area. Finally, the project's planners made sure that all library staff were aware of the event and were prepared for questions about it.

LPL's relationships with other community organizations and UT HSC contributed to the success of the children's health fair. The event was held in the library's 3,600-square-foot multipurpose room, with space allocated for each community partner to have a booth or activity area. Planning for the children's health fair entailed communication with community partners about their space, Internet, and electricity needs. Two weeks prior to the event LPL staff also began developing a banner for the children's health fair as well as other decorations. They also contacted a local grocery chain and received bottled water and other refreshments.

Five booths were arranged for the city's health department. The city planned to provide free immunizations as well as dental screenings, although a family emergency prevented the dental hygienist from being part of the health fair. The health department also had booths staffed with personnel responsible for environmental safety, animal safety and control, nutrition, and children's and women's health. The health department decorated each booth and supplied information packets as well as small gifts. The immunizations were provided in a separate area, apart from the other booths at the children's health fair.

All the children at the health fair had the opportunity to have their photographs taken with two costumed characters. KLRN arranged for the appearance of a character known as "Piggley Winks" from the PBS show *Jakers*. KLRN coordinated the shipment of the Piggley Winks costume to LPL and provided staff who brought the character to life and who introduced the children and families to Piggley Winks. The children were also photographed with "Reader Bear," LPL's mascot.

At their booth, staff from the Laredo Children's Museum facilitated hands-on activities for the children. These included making toys and participating in educational games. The fire department parked an ambulance as well as a fire engine in LPL's parking lot and provided tours of both. Staff from the fire department also distributed information about household and personal safety.

LPL staff prepared a booth to display a sample collection of health-related books, videos, and DVDs available for checking out. The UT HSC libraries occu-

plied a corner space at the health fair, where two medical library staff conducted demonstrations of health information resources from the National Library of Medicine, highlighting MedlinePlus en español and the MedlinePlus Go Local directory of health service providers (<http://medlineplus.gov/golocal>). Library staff from UT HSC also demonstrated environmental health resources of interest to children such as Tox Town (<http://toxtown.nlm.nih.gov>) and ToxMystery (<http://toxmystery.nlm.nih.gov>).

H-E-B, a local grocery chain, provided water and other refreshments. An area was set aside for children and families to sit, enjoy the refreshments, and review the materials they had collected from the booths.

Budget

Staff from the National Network of Libraries of Medicine—South Central Region office were very helpful with suggestions about the project's \$5,000 budget while the proposal was being developed. The major expenses for this project were related to information technology, including a laptop computer, projector, and mobile printer. The shipment of the Piggly Winks costume was included as part of the budget, and the health department charged LPL a modest fee for the services provided as part of the children's health fair. Incidental expenses included gas for the bookmobile and office supplies used for publicity materials. H-E-B greatly reduced the charges for printing the photographs from the health fair.

Lessons Learned

The staff at LPL responsible for the children's health fair and the day camp programs gained valuable experience from this project. Perhaps the most important lesson learned was the importance of collaboration and partnerships. LPL's success with this project relied on strong partnerships with other community organizations. In planning and implementing this project, LPL staff drew on existing relationships with staff at other city agencies and community organizations, and fostered a new partnership with UT HSC.

Regular communication among and within partnering organizations about this project contributed

to its success. A minor setback occurred as staff at LPL were preparing to implement their programs at the day camps and discovered that their contact at the city's Parks and Leisure Department had not informed the staff at each of the day camps about the project. This did not create a significant problem, but it was a reminder about the importance of communication.

To attract the desired number of participants at the children's health fair, staff at LPL knew it would be important to promote it through multiple channels. To do this, they relied on traditional media as well as word of mouth among colleagues at other community organizations.

This project also reinforced the importance of flexibility when planning and implementing outreach. LPL staff had to respond quickly when they discovered that the Internet connections they were expecting at the day camps proved to be unavailable. While they were unable to conduct the online demonstrations they had prepared, LPL staff were still able to use their age-specific handouts and to introduce health and nutrition concepts to children at the day camps.

Through the programs at the day camps and the children's health fair, this project reached a total of 1,149 children and parents in the Laredo community. It succeeded in raising awareness about LPL as a resource for health information. UT HSC also benefitted from this project by promoting the availability of in-depth health information at its new branch library in Laredo, which is open to the public. This project included LPL's first experience hosting a health fair, and it was gratifying to help families become aware of health services available in the community as well as specific sources of health information.

Public libraries across the United States can apply to the National Network of Libraries of Medicine for funding to support their own community health projects. Information about funding opportunities is available at <http://nmlm.gov/funding>. 

This project was funded by the National Library of Medicine under NLM Contract NO1-LM-6-3505 with the Houston Academy of Medicine-Texas Medical Center Library.

FROM CLASSROOM TO Courtroom

OUR ROLE IN THE COMMUNITY

KATHY McCLELLAN is Youth Outreach Librarian at Johnson County (Kans.) Library; mclellank@jocolibrary.org.

Kathy is reading *Mockingbird: A Portrait of Harper Lee* by Charles J. Shields.

It's not unusual for outreach librarians to find themselves in remarkable places. In November 2007, on National Adoption Day, I found myself on the steps of the Johnson County Courthouse in the company of parents, politicians, judges, lawyers, caseworkers, and families, all with eyes lifted, watching as white balloons were released and sailed upwards into the bright blue sky. We looked skyward with hope for the nine children and one adult participating in adoption ceremonies this day. It was a day of celebration and ritual, and you might wonder: What does any of this have to do with libraries? To answer that question I look back nearly twenty years, to about the time that the adult adoptee was born and shortly after the beginning of my work as an outreach librarian for the Johnson County (Kans.) Library (JCL).

Outreach Fundamental—Developing Partnerships

Like all communities in the 1980s, our library saw a shift from stay-at-home moms to families using child care centers and preschool classrooms to care for their children. The youth library staff realized that developing partnerships and collaborations with care providers would be vital to the future of public library service to children and could be the foundation for youth outreach services. As a result, an advisory committee made up of representatives from Head Start, Parents as Teachers, the Parks and Recreation District, the YMCA, resource and referral agencies, child care directors, and classroom teachers was formed. Based on their recommendation, JCL began outreach visits to the places providing early care and education.

The idea that libraries can play a critical role in the lives of children began with a simple request for a visit by a home-based child care provider in Gardner, a small Kansas community. The problem was that she only had five children in her care. How could I justify the time and resources for such a small group? With hesitation I added her site onto a scheduled visit to a larger center in her area.

Entering her home, I was greeted by four children; the fifth was sick at home. I sat down on the floor with the children and began my program. As I read from and showed *Bear on a Bike* by Stella Blackstone, one of the children, a small boy of no more than four years old, got very excited about the pictures. He could hardly contain himself and began naming every picture on the page. "That's the sun!" he exclaimed. "That bear is on a boat!" he continued. "Look, there's a dolphin!" This was great feedback and I was encouraged to have him so engaged.

As I left, Mrs. Smith (that really was her name) thanked me. She was genuinely moved that the library offered this service and I told her I was happy we were able to work it out. Then she said something that shaped the way I have come to look at library service. "You don't understand," she said. "That child is in foster care; he's been with me for two weeks, and those are the first words he has said." Stunned, I left feeling very

grateful and a little dazed as I began to understand and appreciate the impact literature can have on people of all ages. I became as excited as that little boy. If stories and books could influence a child in that way, what power could they also bring to others in difficult times?

Strategic Plan Gives Direction

The opportunity to explore that question came in 2001 when JCL adopted a new strategic plan, appropriately called Connections, which included a focus on at-risk youth. Several years later, as the youth outreach librarian, I find myself in a position to be able to offer books, reading groups, and sentencing alternatives for children that find themselves in the legal system for a variety of reasons. Prior to that, the State of Kansas had adopted a juvenile justice reform that states “youth are more effectively rehabilitated and served in their own community.”¹ In other words, the community was being called upon to become involved in prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation of youth offenders.

History of a Partnership

In 1997, JCL's youth services coordinator read an article in the local paper about a judge who was sentencing teens to read and report on a work of classic literature. The idea intrigued her, but she had some concerns. At the time, the library was lucky enough to have an attorney on the library board who was a strong advocate for young people and represented teens in court. During his visit with a client at the juvenile detention center, he saw the residents watching TV, playing pool, and generally just hanging out—nothing very productive happening. The convergence of these incidents resulted in an invitation for JCL to “be at the table” and involved with an ad hoc group of community partners assembled by that judge to investigate ways that literature and reading could be encouraged among the incarcerated population. Two programs emerged from that group: Read to Succeed (for juveniles in detention) and Changing Lives through Literature (CLTL), an alternate sentencing program in which offenders are referred by a judge or probation officer to participate in book discussion groups.²

Building on Partnerships

As a result of being involved in these programs, a third opportunity presented itself in 2004 when

Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius appointed Kathleen Sloan to the 10th District Court, Division 10. Judge Sloan would handle all Child in Need of Care (CINC) cases and our collaboration would provide me with the chance to come full circle with that boy in foster care.

I'd been told that Judge Sloan loved books and would likely be a strong advocate of the CLTL program. So before she even moved into her new office, I arranged an appointment to meet her and request her participation in that group. Being an avid reader herself, she was extremely open to the idea and agreed to become involved in the book discussion groups with teen offenders. And what a coincidence when we discovered that *The Giver*, which is on the CLTL reading list, is one of her favorite books! She started suggesting to teens appearing in her courtroom that they read the book, and she asked if the library could provide several copies. Because of donations we'd received for our other programs for at-risk youth, we had money to make these purchases. Her involvement in CLTL sparked an idea that would result in an innovative program for children coming into her courtroom.

Books in the Courtroom

Judge Sloan recognized how vulnerable and alone the youngest children coming through her doors must feel. Shortly after she was appointed, she began collecting donations of stuffed animals to give to the children who visit her courtroom. Because of JCL's involvement in CLTL, we discussed our shared belief that books could provide an equally satisfying result. When Judge Sloan said she wanted to solicit book donations from attorneys and other judges, I was thrilled and knew the library should be involved.

We realized early on that we didn't want used books; we didn't want these children getting the message that they were receiving leftovers. I created a list of preferred books that donors could purchase and submitted a request to the Johnson County Library Foundation (JCLF) for a donation to establish a beginning collection of new books that would be gifts to children coming into her courtroom.

In May 2006, the foundation donated \$1,000 to the cause; in the meantime, the Eagle Scout son of another judge built a bookcase for the corner of her courtroom. Subsequently, the JCLF has become the mechanism through which donations can be made specifically for this project. The Junior League of Kansas City and assorted individual donors have provided funding for the project. A librarian selects

and purchases books with the library's vendor discount and organizes and inventories the books on a monthly basis.

To date, more than 1,500 books have found homes with children visiting the courtroom. And the program has expanded into the courtroom of District Magistrate Judge Farley. In Judge Sloan's words, "It's often a sad time, and it's scary to be in [court]. I think books can have some type of positive experience in their life and they need that. It's a good step in the right direction."³

Children in Need of Care

Unlike the teens that take part in CLTL book discussion groups, most of the young people that Judge Sloan sees aren't criminal offenders; many times they're there through no fault of their own. In 2005, there were 594 Children in Need of Care (CINC) cases in Johnson County, the majority of which were for abuse, neglect, or runaway behavior. Many of them found themselves placed in foster care. Judge Sloan expressed concern about several female runaways and wondered if it would be possible to start a reading group for them similar to CLTL. JCL administration was supportive of the idea. It was summer and a good time to occupy the girls with a productive activity. I was invited to attend a meeting of guardians *ad litem* (attorney-advocates assigned to represent children in court) and caseworkers to discuss possible opportunities. The main obstacle, along with their varying ages, would be that the children were spread out in foster homes all over the county, but we agreed that it was worth a try. Remembering that young foster boy from so long ago, I was more than ready for the challenge.

Focus on Foster Care

When children in Johnson County are taken into custody by Kansas Social and Rehabilitation Services because of abuse or neglect, they are primarily referred to KVC (originally Kaw Valley Center) Behavioral Healthcare which then provides case management and related services. To begin planning a program in response to Judge Sloan's concern, I met with a caseworker from KVC and a guardian *ad litem*. Over the summer we implemented a book club for eight teen girls. My hope was that they would stay on and help with a follow-up group of younger children in the fall; three of the girls did. We chose a centrally located library to be our meeting place.

These children and the extraordinary families that care for them have many demands made on them,

so I wanted to make this worthwhile and give them something special to look forward to. In my mind, an idea was brewing that would prove to make this a unique experience for all of us and would focus on the younger group of children.

It was the summer of 2006, and plans had been confirmed that author and Newbery Award winner Kate DiCamillo would be visiting our library in the fall. The idea that she would spend time with this special group of children before presenting her program to the public lodged itself in my brain. When I pitched the idea to the author, she enthusiastically agreed. In a more recent interview, DiCamillo admitted, "I had never done an event like that before. I was intrigued, I guess. And also a little nervous. I didn't know what to expect."⁴

Eight children between the ages of eight and twelve were referred by the caseworker to a new book group. The children and I would prepare for the author's visit by reading all of her novels plus one more. We met once a week for five weeks; the sixth meeting featured a brunch with the author.

The Reading List

Our reading list began with *Pictures of Hollis Woods* by Patricia Reilly Giff, a story to which each of these children could relate. As I introduced the book, the youngest boy looked around the table and happily recognized that this book was about someone in foster care like him. Some of the children read the book themselves; others were read to by their foster parents. It was exciting to think of the opportunity the reading provided for them to spend time together. When we met, we talked about the book, then made letter collages and bookmarks using the first letter of our names and by finding pictures in magazines that reflected things we like.

Our next book was DiCamillo's *Because of Winn Dixie*. One of the girls, who had been in ten different foster families exclaimed, "I've read this book *seven* times—I *love* it!" When I told her she would get to meet and eat with DiCamillo she was beside herself with excitement. I was once again impressed with how a good book can have such a personal connection. This girl could relate directly to the character of Opal and the theme of abandonment. When DiCamillo was asked whether she writes for a specific audience or theme in mind, she said, "I never really write with themes in mind. But after I'm done, I can see that certain themes are there, and that they repeat themselves from book to book. Abandonment is one of those themes for me. I keep coming back to

it unwittingly.”⁵ After discussing this book, each of the children shared with the group ten things about themselves.

We followed with other works by DiCamillo: *Tiger Rising* and *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane*, concluding with *The Tale of Despereaux*. The latter book, too, was especially relevant to the children. They quickly understood that Despereaux was an unlikely hero, small but brave, whose parents were preoccupied with other matters, and that Miggery Sow was in need of love. Two of the girls also felt a special connection to music; one volunteered to sing and the other played her clarinet for us. Our activity for this book was to make a “map of your heart.” The older girls helping with the group responded to this with great insight. Our final project would be a group collage that would be displayed at the program with the author.

Special Event

DiCamillo’s program was scheduled for a Saturday and began with a catered brunch for the author, the children, and their families—foster or biological. Judge Sloan, several library staff, and a caseworker joined the group. The projects the children had created were on display and each child got to describe what he or she had done. Every one of them spoke to the group with ease and excitement. To our great delight, the singer and clarinet player also performed for the assembled group of about twenty-five guests. Children had the opportunity to talk with DiCamillo and have their books signed before she appeared at the library’s “Meet the Author” event for the general public.

When asked to comment about the experience, DiCamillo had this to say: “They made a huge impression on me. They were brave and open and tender. I feel lucky to have spent time with them. I guess what I took away from the whole thing was how we all need to be seen apart from labels (“foster kid,” “foster parent” “writer”), how much we need to interact as people. That happened there for me, with those people. I felt connected to them.” She advises librarians that might consider this kind of event “that it’s worth all the time and trouble because it shows to be true what we know to be true: books, stories can change lives.”⁶



Obviously, this type of event requires a great amount of staff time and commitment and would be difficult to replicate on a regular basis. But the basics are already in place for libraries that have reached out to develop partnerships with the agencies and organizations in their communities. Providing books to special populations lies well within the scope of most libraries’ mission statements. Like any relationship, partnerships need to be nurtured on an ongoing basis. Staff turnover and new workloads require ongoing communication with the partners, along with creativity and flexibility in seeing how divergent paths intersect.

In retrospect, I see that it was an interaction with a four-year-old boy that triggered the awareness that literature paves a road that can connect humans at all levels—and that librarians have a role in establishing the partnerships that create the infrastructure. That road leads to child care centers, homes, courtrooms, classrooms, detention centers, drug treatment centers, and wherever else libraries and their partners can imagine it could go. 

References and Notes

1. Kansas Juvenile Justice Authority, www.kansas.gov/jja (accessed Jan. 6, 2009).
2. For a description in greater detail of these programs, see *VOYA* 30, no. 5 (Dec. 2007).
3. Gerald Hay, *Good Morning, Johnson County*, May 8–15, 2006, first edition. This is an internal newsletter that is only archived for six months.
4. Kate DiCamillo, e-mail interview with the author, Nov. 16, 2008.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*



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

Julie is reading *A Voyage Long and Strange: Rediscovering the New World* by Tony Horwitz.

“By the Book” reviews professional development materials of potential interest to public librarians, trustees, and others involved in library service. Public Library Association policy dictates that PLA publications not be reviewed in this column. Notice of new publications from PLA will generally be found in the “News from PLA” section of *Public Libraries*. A description of books written by the editors or contributing editors of *Public Libraries* may appear in this column but no evaluative review will be included for these titles.

Read 'Em Their Writes: A Handbook for Mystery and Crime Fiction Book Discussions

By Gary Warren Niebuhr. Westport, Conn: Libraries Unlimited, 2006. 249p. \$35 (ISBN-10: 1-59158-303-9) LC 2006012711.

You may have already read a lot of manuals about setting up and running a reading group (for example, those by Rachel Jacobsohn or Jenny Hartley), so now you wish to find the best books that are suitable for future discussions. Well, this is the kind of book that you need. It's a useful tool, based on the author's opinion that a reading group will work well if the moderator prepares in advance some notes and quotes—but especially the right questions to ask its members—in order to stimulate discussion and to add rhythm to it.

Niebuhr's selections are restricted to crime fiction and mystery books, mostly by authors from North America, with a few exceptions from the United Kingdom and two or three other countries. For each listed novel he provides various data such as the author's biography, a plot summary, the geographic setting, and time period, but also some notes about the series, readalikes, websites, readers' guides, and subject headings. Good novel-into-film

discussion titles are indicated and appeal points are highlighted. All this valuable information makes this book a readers' advisory tool. Of course this work can also be used for reference and fiction collection development.

Though short, the introductory guide about the potential of the genre and the organization of groups includes very good tips and techniques. Indexes (subject, location, and time period) complete this work. Fifty additional plot summaries are added to the main list of a hundred. Next time, why not combine them with a list of novels which, though valid for other reasons, did not work in past discussions and are more suitable for silent and private reading?—*Corrado Di Tillio, Head Librarian, Biblioteca Raffaello, Rome, Italy*

International Librarianship: A Basic Guide to Global Knowledge Access

By Robert D. Stueart. Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Pr., 2007. 247p. \$45 (ISBN-13: 978-0-8108-5876-3) LC 006022209.

The second installation in Scarecrow Press's Libraries and Leadership: An International Perspective series provides a tre-

mendous amount of information. The author notes in the preface that the book is “intended [as] a basic guide for those interested in and committed to exploring the concept of universal librarianship” and that the “book’s goal is to provide basic background information for those seeking to study libraries and librarianship in the global arena” (ix). *International Librarianship* meets both of these goals and blends practical and concrete information with more theoretical explorations of the subject matter. Highlighting the importance of international developments for the future of the profession, Stueart lays out the challenges facing and opportunities available for those interested in both international and comparative librarianship.

The text is very readable. The central chapters focus on major libraries and associations throughout the world. Chapters include contact information (including Web addresses when available), information about the founding and mission of each institution and organization, and, when possible, the primary publications and responsibilities of institutions and organizations. Though Stueart points out that the lists are not exhaustive, they are nonetheless extraordinary collections of major libraries and associations throughout the world. His lists of national libraries and associations are particularly comprehensive and include libraries from countries on almost every continent.

This book would be an excellent addition to a class on international librarianship and is likewise a fine addition to the reference shelf of most libraries.—*Julie Biando Edwards, Ethnic Studies Librarian and Multicultural Coordinator, University of Montana–Missoula*

Babies in the Library

By Jane Marino. Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Pr., 2007. 160p. \$32 paper (ISBN-13: 987-0-8108-6044-5; ISBN-10: 0-8108-6044-9) LC 200212022.

In a manner designed to reassure those new to working with babies—inside or outside libraries—Marino offers up insightful advice about creating entertaining and educational programs for the newborn to two-year-old set. She provides ten well-constructed and detailed programs that include up to sixteen rhymes and two short book recommendations, along with the text of the rhymes and actions to accompany them.

Five programs each address the different developmental needs of walkers and pre-walkers, and there are pointers throughout for helping caregivers translate the library experience to home or daycare center. Appendixes include rhyme and song collections, recommended lists of picture and board books, videos, music, and resources for professional caregivers.

Marino’s slim volume, a paperback reprint of an earlier 2003 edition, provides thoughtful commentary on the philosophical reasons for reaching down to include this age group in a comprehensive public library youth services program. While acknowledging the reasons librarians may be reluctant to program for patrons this young, she points to the research that indicates that learning accelerates at birth, and notes that providing such programs support this important early development. According to Marino, “those who are working with babies in libraries and elsewhere know that the repetition of rich language presented in a warm, loving environment is some of the best, most nutritious food a baby can receive” (2).

Particularly useful for new librarians or those just beginning work with babies, this book is the complete package—from how to approach the service, to mixing and matching the material for individual program sessions.—*Cindy Welch, Assistant Professor, Coordinator of Youth Services, School of Information Sciences, University of Tennessee*

Crash Course in Storytelling

By Kendall Haven and MaryGay Ducey. Westport, Conn.: Libraries Unlimited, 2007. 136p. \$30 (ISBN-10: 1-59158-399-3) LC 2006030670.

Crash Course in Storytelling is a part of the Crash Course series and is written by two experienced storytellers. Haven has twenty-five years of experience as a storyteller and Ducey is a professional storyteller and former children’s librarian.

The authors have organized a self-help book for anybody who needs more encouragement in becoming a better storyteller. With each chapter the techniques progress and develop from how storytelling fits in your library to techniques to help in your storytelling. The authors use published studies to show how storytelling is beneficial to children. They cover important techniques for storytelling and provide encouragement for those just starting out. Some important chapters include how to choose a story, learning stories, practicing, and first aid. The authors discuss recovery methods when story details are forgotten. Elements of storytelling such as voice and movement and how these can enhance or hinder a performance are explained.

The pros and cons of using props, costumes, flannelboards, and audience participation are discussed. In addition, there are several useful

appendixes that cover story structure, importance of storytelling, copyright, definitions of traditional tales, and a detailed bibliography.

Crash Course in Storytelling is a very concise, easy-to-read, and positive work for anyone who has an interest in storytelling. A must-read for all librarians in children services.—*Jen Dawson, Coordinator of Academic Support Services, Citrus Research and Education Center, Lake Alfred, Fla.*

Nonfiction Readers Theatre for Beginning Readers

By Anthony D. Fredericks. Westport, Conn.: Teacher Ideas Pr., 2007. 193p. \$25 paper (ISBN-13: 978-1-59158-499-5). LC 2006037631.

Readers theatre is an “oral interpretation of a piece of literature read

in a dramatic style that provides opportunities for sharing and creative interaction with others” (xiii). Fredericks, a former elementary school teacher and reading specialist, is no stranger to readers theatre having written a teacher resource book titled *Tadpole Tales and Other Totally Terrific Treats for Readers Theatre* (Teacher Ideas Pr., 1997) geared for first through third grade teachers and containing readers theatre scripts dealing with adaptations of Mother Goose rhymes and fairy tales (xii). This time around the author provides scripts dealing with nonfiction so that children will become “active participants in certain science and social studies concepts” (ix). The scripts provided in this book are on a first- to third-grade readability level based on content standards for science and social studies for those grades.

There are three scripts in each section that are written in Spanish and correspond with an English script. Each script is one experiment for the science scripts and one to two hands-on activities for the social studies scripts. For each science or social studies script there is a list of nonfiction books dealing with the script subject.

This resource will appeal to all elementary school teachers and reading specialists catering to those children who are beginning readers. It is very easy to follow and provides great tips for the best utilization of the scripts.—*Jen Dawson, Coordinator of Academic Support Services, Citrus Research and Education Center, Lake Alfred, Fla.* 

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NationsCourts.com.....31
 PLA..... cover 2, 3, 37, 58, 72, cover 3



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.

Vicki is reading *Gale Force* by Rachel Caine, *The Patron Saint of Liars* by Ann Patchett, *The Virgin of Small Plains* by Nancy Pickard, and *Bess of Hardwick* by Mary Lovell.

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.

Books for Babies

www.folusa.org/outreach/books-for-babies.php (Note: This URL will soon change to www.ala.org/altaff)

Books for Babies is a national literacy program that acquaints parents of newborns with the important role they play in their child's development. Parents are presented with a Books for Babies kit containing a board book, baby's first library card, and a variety of brochures with reading tips and early literacy information from nationally recognized educational organizations.

Libraries partner with Friends groups, women's clubs, and Junior Leagues to purchase Books for Babies packets. Groups often supplement the packets with information about local resources, including library locations and contact information as well as details about lap-sit and preschool story hours.

Books for Babies kits are available from Friends of Libraries U.S.A. (FOLUSA) in English or Spanish.

E-Card Online Patron Registration Extends Library Services Beyond the Physical Library

www.quipugroup.com

The Quipu Group's e-card online patron registration application con-

tinues to grow in popularity. In addition to the numerous library systems that have already implemented their e-card patron registration, Quipu Group is currently working with members of the Horizon ILS community on a system-specific version that will allow their patrons to complete library card applications remotely and receive immediate access to the library's resources.

Additional functionality and user tools have also been incorporated into Quipu's e-card application ensuring greater local control and ease of use. The Solano, Napa, and Partners Library Consortium (SNAP) wanted to provide remote users with as much access to library resources as possible, particularly electronic databases that usually require a library card number for authentication. These virtual customers have the option to upgrade to a full-access library card by visiting any one of the SNAP libraries and presenting acceptable identification and proof of address. But even if they don't, their e-card is still valid for three years.

At Baltimore County (Md.) Public Library (BCPL), online library users have the same options for library resource usage, but have added a section on the e-card application form that requests demographic information from the applicant. BCPL wanted to find out more about its virtual customers in order to serve them better. The custom

e-card application form allows them to gather usable and important feedback from a group of library users who have in the past been somewhat elusive.

GoLibrary Automatic Library Machine

www.go-library.com

GoLibrary is a self-contained, fully functional remote library branch. Storage of books, loans, returns, and administration are all handled by GoLibrary. Library service can now be offered 24/7 in almost any location. Typical installation sites include shopping malls, commuter stations, public buildings, hospitals, and residential areas.

GoLibrary is fully automatic and communicates with the users through a clear and simple interface. The user browses through the selection of books and receives the selected title directly from the machine. Returns are done the same way, which means the books are instantly available for the next user. All loan activities are monitored through the library's regular circulation system.

The Contra Costa County (Calif.) Library is the first in the country to begin using GoLibrary, installing the machines in Bay Area Regional Transit (BART) commuter stations.

3M's e-Branch Library

www.3M.com

With the 3M e-Branch Library system, libraries can provide remote library service to the community 24/7. The 3M e-Branch Library can increase the visibility of the library

within the community, extending services without major overhead costs. This ATM-like workstation provides library access wherever customers need it. The system can be installed at convenient locations including malls, supermarkets, retail stores, and community centers. This freestanding terminal provides users a direct link to library databases, services, and information at the touch of a button.

In some installations, the 3M e-Branch Library is combined with a locker-type system and book return so that patrons can pick up and return materials through the 3M e-Branch Library kiosk. Materials can be loaded into the lockers by staff, and patrons can pick up their materials at any time of the day or night.

Overdrive's Digital Bookmobile Touring the Country

www.overdrive.com
www.digitalbookmobile.com

The Digital Bookmobile is a community outreach program for public libraries to promote downloadable e-books, audiobooks, music, and videos. It began touring the country in August 2008, and will continue to promote digital downloads from public libraries through 2009 with events scheduled across North America.

The Digital Bookmobile, developed inside a seventy-four-foot, eighteen-wheel tractor-trailer, is a high-tech update of the traditional bookmobile that has served communities for decades. The community outreach vehicle creates an engaging download experience around the host library's digital media collection

and "Virtual Branch" download website. The vehicle is equipped with broadband Internet-connected PCs, high-definition monitors, premium sound systems, and a variety of portable media players. Interactive computer stations give visitors an opportunity to search the digital media collection; use supported mobile devices; and sample e-books, audiobooks, music, and video from the library.

Manga in Spanish

www.multiculturalbooksandvideos.com

Manga has become extremely popular with children, teens, and even adults in public libraries. Libraries serving Hispanic populations can now get manga in Spanish from Multicultural Books and Videos.

Multicultural Books and Videos has been a one-stop source for foreign language materials for twenty years. They carry Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, Vietnamese, Korean, Persian, Russian, French, languages of India, world languages, and bilingual materials.

Organize Book Club Kits with KitKeeper

www.plymouthrocket.com

KitKeeper will enable library systems and individual libraries to easily track book club kits on their travels.

Libraries will be able to list all available kits on their websites and make them available to reserve online. Users may filter the kits by author, genre, home library, and age group.

Youniquely 4 U: The Next Frontier in Library Marketing

www.checkpointsystems.com

Youniquely 4 U is a customer-oriented, Web-based, interactive marketing program that's branded for each participating library. It acknowledges the customer's unique needs and interests and, with that information, enables the library to engage customers with personalized experiences.

Youniquely 4 U recognizes the subjects of the materials that customers are checking out, while protecting their privacy, and produces a colorful newsletter receipt that provides an invitation to join the program, along with a "category code" that matches with the customers' interests.

The invitation to join, along with the category code, drives customers to the library's website, where they register for the Youniquely 4 U program. After opting in, customers enter their unique code (matching with the subject of their resources) and are taken immediately to events, expertise, information, and rewards relevant to their unique needs and interests.

Pop Goes the Library: Using Pop Culture to Connect With Your Whole Community

www.infotoday.com

You loved the blog—now read the book! *Pop Goes the Library* (Information Today, 2008) will help librarians connect with users and energize staff. Pop culture blogger-librarians Sophie Brookover and

Elizabeth Burns define what pop culture is (and isn't) and share insights, tips, techniques, and success stories from all types of libraries.

Librarians will discover practical strategies and ideas for incorporating the pop culture passions of users into collections, programs, and services, plus a range of marketing and outreach ideas, technology tools, and ready-to-go programs they can start using today. This is an eye-opening book that may be as much fun to read as it is to apply.

Altarama Introduces RefChatter for IM Reference Services

www.altarama.com

Altarama Information Systems announced availability of RefChatter, a new module that joins RefTracker, DeskStats, VRLplus, and SMSreference in the Altarama suite of integrated products for managing online and personal reference services in libraries. RefChatter is a totally Web-based system for delivering online reference services to the increasingly large number of patrons who use instant messaging (IM) as their preferred electronic communication method.

Designed by librarians and library automation experts specifically for the library industry, RefChatter addresses the issues that have prevented many libraries from offering IM-based online reference until now. First, while patrons can use a wide variety of standard IM software, RefChatter's breakthrough IM aggregator and routing technology allows one or more reference staffers to chat with multiple patrons from

multiple queues simultaneously. Second, RefChatter requires only a standard browser on the library side, so concerns about loading IM software disappear. Third, transcripts are available for statistical and quality analysis. And finally, a library-customizable widget can be inserted in the library's webpages so patrons without IM software can be served equally well.

Libraries and Mega-Internet Sites

www.researchandmarkets.com

This Research and Markets System report presents data from more than 120 academic, special, and public libraries about how they use and relate to the mega-Internet sites such as Google, Yahoo!, Facebook, MySpace, eBay, Amazon, and others.

In many ways the mega-sites have transformed library management, fostering change in information literacy education, library marketing and public relations, cataloging, digitization, collection management, and other aspects of librarianship. Library patrons often learn their initial information searching skills from the Internet, as well as their formative information gathering experiences, creating a set of experiences and expectations that they bring to the library.

This report provides hard data on exactly how libraries are dealing with the emerging Internet giants, how they are adopting, negotiating, repelling, embracing, and in every way developing strategies to provide the best possible information services to their clientele. 

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www.pla.org

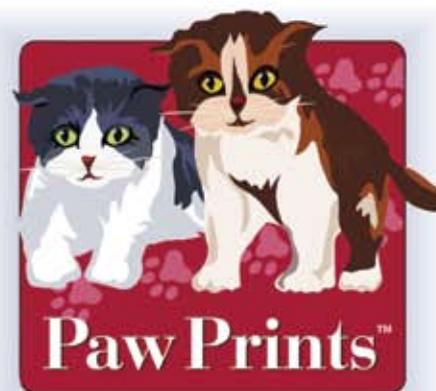


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A division of the American Library Association

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