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**FEATURES**

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The Legacy of Kreimer and the Legality of Public Library Access Policies Concerning Appearance and Hygiene
This article analyzes three significant legal cases where patrons were evicted due to their appearance or hygiene rather than for disruptive behavior and focuses on how policies should be constructed and enforced to avoid future litigation.

James Kelly

50 The Accidental Supervisor
In these days of reduced funds and staff cutbacks, it’s not unusual for people to be moved sideways into supervisory positions or to have a number of library pages suddenly added to their responsibilities. Here’s some advice for successfully managing this role.

Pat Tunstall

58 Ill Winds
Hurricanes and Public Libraries along the Gulf Coast
How did two powerful hurricanes affect public libraries in three states? With numerous library systems destroyed, how did public librarians meet the demands from hurricane evacuees?

Mary Cosper Leboeuf
What’s Up with the Cover?

Depicting a feature article on the cover can be tricky (we don’t want to get too literal, and we do want to make sure that you take notice of the journal sitting in your inbox). So sometimes our artist, Jim Lange, opts instead to portray a book, reading, or library theme. For this issue, he has transformed an iconic Modigliani painting—eye-catching, don’t you agree?

Now that you’ve picked up the journal to check out the cover more closely, be sure to take a minute and check out all this issue has to offer. In “Ill Winds,” Mary Cosper LeBoeuf details how Gulf Coast libraries have fared in the wake of hurricanes Katrina and Rita; and don’t miss James Kelly on library access policies concerning appearance and hygiene in “Barefoot In Columbus.” Also, if you’re thinking of nominating yourself, your library, or somebody else for one of the many library service awards out there in libraryland, then you’ll want to take a look at this issue’s Perspectives column, which features instructive essays by recent award-winners. (Then visit www.pla.org and nominate yourself, your library, or a colleague for one of our awards!) Be sure to check out all of the other informative and entertaining items in this issue as well.

With this issue, we say good-bye to PLA President Dan Walters, whose last column appears on page 7. Thanks, Dan, for your hard work on behalf of PLA this year and for your thoughtful, and thought-provoking columns. With the July/August issue, we welcome and look forward to hearing from incoming PLA President Susan Hildreth, state librarian of California.

Finally, send comments and questions about PL to khughes@ala.org; we look forward to hearing from you! Kathleen Hughes

Editor

Kathleen is reading Smashed; Story of a Drunken Girlhood by Koren Zailckas and 1776 by David McCullough.

Readers Respond

Social responsibility begins at home. In addition to the actions Michael Baldwin described in “Librarians As Knowledge Provocateurs” (Public Libraries, March/April 2006), public libraries can serve as models for accountability and transparency by publishing the following kinds of information on their own Web sites:

- recent and archived minutes of board meetings;
- budget and other financial information;
- current and past annual reports;

continued on page 6
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News from PLA

Don’t Miss These PLA Programs at the 2006 ALA Annual Conference

Please note: This is a preliminary schedule. Information is subject to change. Visit www.pla.org for updates.

Saturday, June 24, 2006, 10:30 a.m.–noon
- Changing Demographics: Marketing to Communities in Transition
- Good to Great: How to Rethink, Reconfigure, and Revitalize Your Library into Greatness
- Graphic Novels for Children? The Wave of the Future
- I Want to Speak to the Person in Charge! How to Effectively Handle Problems and Emergencies in the Public Library
- Intellectual Freedom in Rural Libraries: How to Keep the Library for Everyone
- That’s Tight! Teen Volunteer Success Stories

Saturday, June 24, 2006, 1:30 p.m.–3:30 p.m.
- Models of Engagement: Listening to and Learning from Adult New Readers and New Immigrants

Saturday, June 24, 2006, 1:30 p.m.–5:30 p.m.
- Get Strategic: Coordinate Public Relations and Marketing to Reach Your Goals

Sunday, June 25, 2006, 1:30 p.m.–3:30 p.m.
- How My Parents Learned to Eat: Dim Sum, Fry Bread, Collard Greens, and Tacos in the Library
- PLA’s Smartest Card Update
- Your Library’s Intranet, the Hidden Tool: Not So Sexy, But Oh So Satisfying

Sunday, June 25, 2006, 4–5:30 p.m.
- Brain Research: Programming For All Types of Libraries
- Meet Us at the Campfire: Telling Your Story

Monday, June 26, 10:30 a.m.–noon
- From Collaboration to Cohabitation: Partnerships that Build Communities
- From the Inside Out: How to Sell New Service Models to Reluctant Staff
- Helping Every Child Become Ready to Read: Care-providers and Librarians as Partners
- Natural Mentoring and Reverse Mentoring in the Digital Age
- building the Ultimate Portal: Selection Secrets of the Librarians’ Internet Index
- Exploring the Technology of Gaming
- Targeting Collections to Your Real Users

Monday, June 26, 2006, 1:30–3:30 p.m.
- PLA President Dan Walters invites Annual Conference attendees to PLA’s premiere event, the PLA President’s Program. The program, which will be held on Monday, June 26, from 5–6:30 p.m., will feature keynote speaker Anderson Cooper. Cooper hosts the nightly CNN news program Anderson Cooper 360°, and has anchored many major breaking news stories, including the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina. His book, Dispatches from the Edge: A Memoir of War, Disasters, and Survival will be available in June 2006. PLA is pleased to present Anderson Cooper as part of the ALA Auditorium Speakers Series. Following his talk and the PLA awards presentation, join PLA for a gala, music-filled reception. There is no charge for attending this event. PLA thanks HarperCollins for their support of this event.

PLA 11th National Conference Draws Record-breaking Crowd to Boston

More than 11,000 library staff, exhibitors, authors, and guests packed Boston’s Hynes Convention Center for the Public Library Association’s (PLA) 11th National Conference, held March 21–25, 2006. The conference offered hundreds of workshops, programs, author events, and social events that drew capacity crowds. Library funding, recruitment, privacy, serving diverse populations, and literacy are just a few of the issues that...
generated conversation and interest among attendees.

“Boston is known for its historic libraries, and PLA has loved being here to share ideas about the future of libraries,” said PLA President Daniel L. Walters. “This conference has been one of our most successful, bringing thousands within the profession together to discuss how libraries are changing to offer their communities the very best cultural and educational programs and services possible.”

The conference offered a series of preconference programs including best-selling author Nancy Pearl’s “Book Buzz,” wherein Pearl moderated a discussion about upcoming book releases that featured Marcia Purcell of Random House, Virginia Stanley of HarperCollins, Talia Ross of Holtzbrinck, and Nora Rawlinson of Time Warner. Interest in this event was so great that an audio feed was provided to the lobby outside the room so that those who couldn’t get a seat were able to listen.

The Opening General Session, held on Wednesday, March 22, featured outspoken journalist, award-winning television producer, and best-selling author Linda Ellerbee. The large crowd received Ellerbee’s speech enthusiastically as she detailed her life’s adventures and provided such advice as, “When all else fails, do it your way,” “Face a problem with a solution,” and “Because everything changed doesn’t mean that everything is different.” She also talked about the importance of helping to rebuild New Orleans’ libraries and asked that librarians from New Orleans stand and be recognized.

At Thursday’s Adult Author Luncheon, nearly one thousand conference-goers listened to best-selling author and civil rights activist Elie Wiesel, as the Holocaust survivor, writer, educator, and humanitarian discussed his life’s experiences and work, his belief in the power of the word, and his hope for the future of humanity. Attendees listened in rapt silence as Wiesel addressed the seeming futility of trying to put his death camp experiences into words stating, “You cannot know, nobody can; only those who were there.” Due to overwhelming interest in the session, an additional overflow room was made available for attendees to listen Wiesel’s remarks.

Other conference authors and speakers included: children’s book author Jon Scieszka; best-selling authors Anna Deavere Smith, Julia Spencer-Fleming, and Joe Finder, and producer and director Clive Brill; and young adult author Jerry Spinelli.

The exhibit hall also was sold out and filled with more than 800 booths from 420 companies including top book publishers, who discussed and demonstrated the latest in products and services for public libraries and their users.

Visit www.pla.org to get handouts from conference programs or to order the mp3/CD-ROM package that features all recorded programs. (PLA can only provide handouts or record programs that it has been given permission to do so from presenters.) Also, be sure to check out the PLA Blog (www.plablog.org). The blog contains reports of conference programming, descriptions of author and social events, and more.

PLA’s next national conference will be held in Minneapolis, Minnesota, March 25–29, 2008.

PLA Announces 2006 Award Winners

PLA’s Advancement of Literacy Award was awarded to READ San Diego, an adult literacy program based out of the San Diego Public Library. Sponsored by Library Journal, the award is given to a publisher, bookseller, software dealer, foundation, or similar group that has made a significant contribution toward the advancement of adult literacy.

Georgia Lynn Lomax, managing librarian at King County Library System in Auburn, Washington, will receive the Allie Beth Martin Award, which includes a $3,000 award donated by sponsor Baker & Taylor. This award recognizes a public librarian for demonstrating a range and depth of knowledge about books and other library materials and the distinguished ability to share that knowledge.

The Baker & Taylor Entertainment Audio Music/Video Product Award Grant went to the Granby (Conn.) Library. This grant offers the selected library $2,500 in audio music and video products for its circulating collections.
PLA’s Charlie Robinson Award has been awarded to Sandra Neerman, director, Greensboro (N.C.) Public Library. This award recognizes a public library director for implementation of innovative change. Sponsored by Baker & Taylor, this award consists of $1,000 and a gift to the recipient.

The recipient of the EBSCO Excellence in Small and/or Rural Public Library Service Award is the Williamsfield (Ill.) Public Library District. EBSCO Subscription Services donates $1,000 to honor a public library serving a population of 10,000 or fewer that demonstrates excellence in service to its community as exemplified by an overall service program or a special program of significant accomplishment.

The Highsmith Library Innovation Award was awarded to The Curtis Memorial Library of Brunswick, Maine. Highsmith, Inc, the award’s sponsor, provides a plaque and a $2,000 honorarium to recognize a public library’s innovative or creative service program.

Demco New Leaders Travel Grants were awarded to Rebecca Kennedy, San Antonio (Texas) Public Library; Tara Caldara, Zion-Benton (Ill.) Public Library District; Laura J. Cleveland, Fayetteville (Ark.) Public Library; and Alexandra B. Leinaweaver, Anne Arundel (Md.) County Public Library. Through this grant, PLA provides $5,000 to support the professional development and improve the expertise of public librarians new to the field by making possible their attendance at major professional development activities.

PLA also named the two winners of its annual contest for public librarians who publish articles in Public Libraries. The first-prize winner of ($500) is Heather Booth, literature and audio services librarian at the Downers Grove (Ill.) Library, for her article “RA for YA,” which appeared in the January/February 2005 issue. The second-prize winner ($300) is Rhonda Boyd, division director, planning, research, and development, at the Gwinnett County Library in Georgia, for her article, “Assessing the True Nature of Information Transactions at a Suburban Public Library,” which appeared in the July/August 2005 issue.

PLA will recognize all award winners on Monday, June 24, 2006 at the PLA President’s Program and Awards Reception, during the American Library Association’s 2006 Annual Conference in New Orleans. For more information, call the PLA office, 1-800-545-2433, ext. 5PLA, or visit PLA’s Web site at www.pla.org.

Readers Respond continued from page 2

- results of special reports, surveys, and focus groups;
- multidecade demographics for public library districts;
- collection and circulation information;
- collection development policy;
- comprehensive information for proposed major construction; and
- projects, tax increases, bond issues, and so on

Public library Web sites can also provide a means for patrons to give input to library operations through online surveys, discussion groups, and so on. Finally, construction of new libraries and library renovations should include consideration of energy efficiency and renewable energy measures as high-priority design criteria. —John Kintree, MLS student, University of Missouri, Columbia

On the Agenda

2006
ALA Annual Conference
June 22–28
New Orleans, Louisiana

PLA Implementing for Results Workshop
September 18
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

PLA Results Boot Camp II
November 13–27
Nashville, Tennessee

2007
ALA Midwinter Meeting
Jan. 19–24
Seattle, Washington

PLA Spring Symposium
San Jose, California
March 1–3

ALA Annual Conference
June 21–27
Washington, D.C.
Thoughts about Our Web Sites, Catalogs, and Databases

OCLC has done it again with its recent publication of *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, its latest follow-up to the 2003 *OCLC Environmental Scan: Pattern Recognition*. Unlike the 2003 *OCLC Environmental Scan*, which was based on OCLC staff interviews with librarians and vendors, as well as OCLC staff-conducted focus groups with senior citizens, teachers, and high school students, the new report is based on a comprehensive survey that “was administered electronically and in English. All respondents therefore use the Internet, are at least somewhat familiar with using electronic Web resources and took the survey in English.”

It is not possible to provide a thorough summary of the document in this column, but a few of the findings pertaining to our electronic resources and comparisons to conventional commercial search engines merit noting. This compilation of online survey data in *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Services* provides very interesting and often counterintuitive observations of how Web-savvy information seekers perceive the relative utility of search engines and contrasting observations about libraries and library Web sites, online catalogs, and their aggregated electronic resources. Responses are presented from total respondents as well as geographically from four areas: Canada; the United Kingdom; the United States; and Australia, Singapore, and India. The study also breaks down responses from different perspectives segmented by age from youth ages fourteen to seventeen and adults eighteen to twenty-four, twenty-five to sixty-four, and sixty-five and older.

To begin with, the participants in the study are familiar with libraries. Ninety-six percent of respondents have visited a public library in person, and 72 percent of respondents age twenty-five and older reported having a library card. Of those surveyed, college students are more likely to have a library card than any other segment surveyed, and in the United States, those ages fourteen to twenty-four are more likely to be registered than those older than twenty-five, with more than 80 percent of respondents indicating they have a library card.

Considering that these electronic participants know and use public library services, *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Services* provides important...
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Respondents’ observations about the value, utility, and reliability of library electronic resources—including online catalogs and electronic databases—challenge common assumptions about the higher value of our vetted electronic resources against standard search engine results obtained by using the Internet. Many of the results of this study also may startle those of us who believe that our electronic resources are fundamentally better and more accurate than results the great unwashed may obtain from information queries to Google, Yahoo!, Ask.com, and other search engines.

The study informs us that although search engines have really only been available for about twelve years, respondents are actually more familiar with them than our physical libraries, and are considerably more familiar with search engines than our online libraries.

More than 60 percent of all respondents, regardless of geographic region, are extremely familiar, very familiar, or somewhat familiar with search engines. Just 1 percent of all respondents surveyed have never heard of search engines. . . . Twenty percent have never heard of online libraries.4

With this groundwork laid, the study hones in on how this segment of library users approach the Internet as a resource for information. Perceptions of Libraries and Information Services points out that 72 percent have used search engines, while only 30 percent have used a library Web site, and only 16 percent have used an online database. Not only do the respondents have very favorable attitudes about the usefulness and reliability of commercial search engines, but 84 percent begin
their search for information on a particular topic using a search engine, while only 1 percent begin using an online database, and only 1 percent begin using a library Web site.5

A section of the study devoted to the “library brand” includes further perspectives on the trustworthiness of library resources and search engines. Sixty-nine percent of respondents find results from search engines at the same level of trustworthiness as a library information resource, while only 22 percent believe that information from a library is more trustworthy. This response carries across the geographic regions segmented in the study and is roughly the same for library card holders and non-card holders.6

These troubling findings are in keeping with many public libraries’ measurements of online database use and do little to assuage convictions that database utilization is inconsistent with licensing costs. While the study demonstrates that this segment of library users is not aware of the variety of online resources available at the library—including databases, downloadable electronic books, and audio—it is sobering that a segment of self-described knowledgeable users is unaware of or finds little utility or higher value in so many of a public libraries’ online resources. Perceptions of Libraries and Information Services raises questions about the extent of our continued investment and approaches to developing and managing our Web sites and their organized content when these respondents find innumerable Google page results sufficient for their needs.

There is much more grist for the mill in this important study that also provides observations about how those surveyed see the role and value of libraries in their communities. The news is not all bad. First and foremost, respondents associate the library brand with “books.”7 Survey participants also assert that a broader mission for the library is to provide access to information, and that information services should be free to all. They do want current collections, multiple copies of bestsellers, strong open hours, clean buildings, access to current technology, and many more amenities that we too desire to provide our patrons. They don’t like bad and rude service, dirty washrooms, limited hours, and other attributes we would agree detract from good public libraries and good service. Their positive and negative associations with libraries merit our collective consideration as we work to shape public libraries to effectively serve our communities in the years ahead.

I am grateful for OCLC’s continued research of these important issues, and I encourage public librarians to pick up a copy of Perceptions of Libraries and Information Services from OCLC. Perceptions of Libraries and Information Services and The 2003 Environmental Scan also are available online from www.oclc.org.

This is my final column as president of the Public Library Association (PLA). I am grateful to the membership of PLA for the opportunity to serve this wonderful association. I also extend my appreciation to members of the PLA board for their service to PLA; to PLA’s fine staff; to Kathleen Hughes, editor of Public Libraries; and to PLA executive director Greta Southard. ■

References
2. OCLC, 2003 Environmental Scan, 2.; OCLC, Perceptions of Libraries and Information Services, viii.
3. OCLC, Perceptions of Libraries and Information Services, Part 1, 2–3.
4. Ibid., Part 1, 7.
5. Ibid., Part 1, 12–17.
6. Ibid., Part 3, 6–7
The Librarian Who Reads Is Lost

In *A Splendor of Letters*, the third book in his series on the book world, Nicholas Basbanes makes a passing reference to a statement that grabbed my attention: *the librarian who reads is lost.*¹ This remarkable statement prompted a one-by-one sequence of references to my earlier reading that highlighted the unintentional, cumulative, and diverse ways in which information is acquired through the practice of reading. Stay with me as I detail my encounter with this phrase, explore its historical context, and look at the complex needs and unconventional search methods of avid readers and what they might mean to the library profession.

The statement dates from the nineteenth century, from the pen of Oxford scholar Mark Pattison.² But Basbanes invokes the statement in the context of a challenge to the relevancy of books, made in a speech by Florentine librarian and scholar Guido Biagi in 1904. At one point in his speech, Biagi predicted that new technology would allow people to listen to spoken books, and this would replace the need for reading and writing.³ While it is true, one hundred years later, that audiobooks have become quite popular, books themselves have not disappeared; indeed, they are being published in greater numbers than ever. Pattison’s statement rang a bell with me. I thought I had essentially seen the same idea in an amusing chapter of Robert Musil’s monumental unfinished novel, *The Man without Qualities*, which I had read several months earlier.⁴ I dug around in my files and found a photocopy of Chapter 100, which comes with the heading, “General Stumm invades the State Library and learns about the world of books, the librarians guarding over it, and intellectual order.”⁵ It includes an encounter with the general and a librarian who curtails his reference interview when he realizes the general seeks nothing less than the ability “to make connections among all kinds of ideas in every direction.”⁶ When queried as to how he finds anything in this “madhouse of books,” the librarian proclaims, to the general’s astonishment, that he doesn’t read any of the books in his charge—just the catalogs and bibliographies.⁷ “Anyone who lets himself go and starts reading a book is lost as a librarian,’ he explained. ‘He’s bound to lose perspective.”⁸ The librarian then hands the general a bibliography of bibliographies and leaves him to decipher it on his own. Fortunately for the general, a library attendant humbly approaches him and, based on his past experience with assisting military personnel, instinctively draws out what the general is seeking. With an understanding of the milieu in which the general operates, the attendant then proceeds to find some useful materials for him, relevant not
only for their contents but, coincidentally, for having also been used by the very person into whose favor the general is hoping to enter.

That Musil quietly incorporated Pattison’s notion into his novel made me curious about Pattison and the circumstances in which he coined this phrase. A Web search returned a letter to the editor of The Nation from 1912 that mentions that the phrase is from a biography Pattison had written on the Renaissance-era scholar and librarian Isaac Casaubon.9

Again, I experienced a jolt of recollection. Wasn’t Casaubon the name of the austere old scholar in George Eliot’s Middlemarch?10 A quick search, in a database this time, showed that, yes, this was the name Eliot used, and that many critics believe she based her character on the life of Pattison. This was becoming wonderfully convoluted and intriguing. Meanwhile, bits and pieces of Eliot’s novel were beginning to surface in my memory—the unfortunate marriage of Dorothea to Casaubon, and the provincial atmosphere in which the novel takes place. I noticed that I was even visualizing, in vague detail, the buildings and landscape that had formed in my mind when I read the book some twenty years ago. And given the mysterious workings of memory, I could see again the classroom and the maple trees outside the windows where I once studied Eliot’s novel. But standing out most prominently in my recollection was the image of the cold and aged Casaubon, mired in a grandiose obsession to compile the Key to All Mythologies.

Texts, Knowledge, and Finding Tools

From out of this referential swirl, I slowly returned to the phrase itself and its memorable, declarative shock value: the librarian who reads is lost. I began to think about it in the terms of Musil’s scenario: the drive to read and know the contents of a library collection pitted against the exercise of organizing information and retrieving it from massive catalogs, databases, and networks. Of course, both of these approaches are fraught with difficulty, failure, and even lunacy. That it is impossible to read firsthand more than the tiniest fraction of the written record is indisputable. As Musil’s librarian implies, reference librarians today have little choice but to become proficient with catalogs, databases, the Internet, and reference works. And difficult though it is, one of the library’s main purposes remains to provide this order and accessibility—certainly as far as our book collections go.

A little more research led me to A. D. Nuttall and his book, with its tongue-in-cheek title, Dead from the Waist Down, which looks at scholarship and focuses on the figures of Pattison, the real Casaubon, and Eliot’s character Edward Casaubon.11 Nuttall defends the scholarship of the real Casaubon but has this to say when comparing his personal wisdom with the tools of today’s scholar:

Today, in the first years of the twenty-first century, it is not uncommon for older academics, happily arguing about the source of a quotation, to be interrupted by a younger colleague: “I can find this for you within two minutes on the English poetry database.” It is indeed obscurely disquieting to reflect how much of Casaubon’s peculiar power, his sheer command of detail, has been effortlessly usurped by machines. Casaubon could no more have defeated the computer than the American folk hero in the story could defeat the railway engine.12

But I think librarians concede too much if we give our personal curiosity over to machines; if we lose our awareness of the pull and power books have on our library users. Librarians need tools to help ferret out facts, quotations, and other information, but books, at their best, provide rich, multifaceted, and complex narratives or theses that are unparalleled in helping us to make sense of the world—or perhaps to escape briefly from it. As General Stumm experienced with the attendant, despite our technical acumen and resources, it may well be the nuanced reference interview and our intangible personal knowledge that come to the rescue as we attempt to help patrons find the information they need. This last point is the subject of a recent book by Juris Dilevko and Lisa Gottlieb, which examines in great detail how both broad and specific reading habits improve reference librarians’ ability to provide quality service.13 Instrumental to this service is that same ability the general seeks: “to make connections among all kinds of ideas in every direction.”14

Accuracy and Thoroughness

Nuttall points out that upon assuming his responsibilities at the Royal Library in Paris, “[Isaac] Casaubon did what Pattison said no librarian should do: he began to read the books.”15 Casaubon’s fluent command of Greek and Latin, and his scholarly tenacity, resulted in the correction of numerous transcription errors and other mistakes, compounded throughout the centuries, in the
works of Aeschylus and Hermes Trismegistus; corrections that have been invaluable to our historical, literary, and cultural understanding of these authors.16 I can’t help but think of this in the context of the numerous errors routinely found in subscription periodical databases due to primitive scanning or data transmission technologies. Librarians at Rider University report that a renowned sciences’ database used in universities nationwide estimates that “at least 2 percent of its electronic journal content is missing.”17 It remains to be seen if newer technologies will be able to correct these transmission errors and lacunae, or if, as with the transcription of handcopied documents, old errors will be perpetuated even as new ones emerge.

Nuttall also takes a close look at Pattison and critiques his shortcomings, particularly his failure to document some of Isaac Casaubon’s major achievements (and for simultaneously projecting himself into the subject of his biography). Pattison’s scholarship does not match up to that of Isaac Casaubon, but it is also clear that he is in an entirely different league than Eliot’s dreary character. Here Nuttall goes beyond Pattison’s famous quote to get at the time-consuming demands necessitated by scholarship and research:

Looking back on his first term at Oxford he despises his own performance and castigates himself for not using compendia and summaries of information in his undergraduate years: “I dawdled from a mixture of mental infirmity, bad habit, and the necessity of thoroughness” (Memoirs, 151). This self-contempt is however laced with feeling of another kind. Part of Pattison actually approves of his youthful refusal to trust “epitomes,” and dawdling because of “the necessity of thoroughness,” so far from being a matter of real, keen shame, is almost something of which a scholar might be proud.18

As Anthony Grafton makes clear in Defenders of the Text, it was Isaac Casaubon’s thorough knowledge of classical literature and philology that provided the context that allowed him to identify anachronisms and inconsistencies in spurious texts, and that led to, among other accomplishments, his remarkable debunking of the origins and authorship of the Corpus Hermeticum.19 I am unaware of any information system that could provide a shortcut to this sort of knowledge.

Finding without Seeking
Let’s move away from Pattison and Isaac Casaubon to look a little more closely at readers and reading in the context of the library. Wayne Wiegand notes that 80 percent of library users come into libraries to check out a book, and that 65 to 75 percent of books borrowed are fiction.20 He observes that all kinds of stories attract readers, including history, biography, and other non-fiction told in a narrative style: “all cultures . . . have always used stories to validate their existences, make sense of their worlds, and pass on to future generations what they regard as their culture’s collective wisdom.”21 But he has found that library and information schools now teach next to nothing about the experience and social nature of reading. This is especially true in the United States, where the library profession has become fixated almost wholly on practical or useful information and the information systems utilized for retrieving it.

Catherine Sheldrick Ross has surveyed avid readers and has found that they discover information and acquire knowledge in many diverse ways.22 Sometimes information is accidentally encountered that may fill a previously unperceived information gap, trigger the reader’s memory, or lead to new research activity. She notes the importance of readers’ previous experience and their wish to construct meaning from what they read: “when reading extended narrative forms, particularly biography, history, and fiction, readers bring to the texts their own individual concerns and interests which act as a filter to highlight those aspects of the text that speaks to their concerns.”23 She has also found that skilled readers employ a host of techniques, often without really thinking about it, to scan their environment and assist them in choosing what book or information source they want to read next. For many, this process does not include a formal information query, such as keyword searching in an electronic interface.

Another thing that becomes clear in her survey of avid readers is the role of the emotive or affective dimension in determining what to read. She notes that “any theoretical model of information seeking that emphasizes matching of terms rather than the reader’s making of meaning is inadequate.”24 The reader may seek confirmation, emotional support, challenge, comfort, novelty, or any number of other emotional characteristics, but our information systems are ill-equipped to deal with readers’ complex emotional needs.

Informational Hierarchies and Their Limitations
My own experiences confirm what Ross has described. And in terms
of accidentally encountering information, I would add that it is an especially rich joy that comes from the spontaneous discovery of a link between books—for the librarian who reads, this is the real deal. Sure, with networked resources I could find such information about *Middlemarch* as plot summaries, criticism, and character analyses. I might even discover journal articles that analyze Pattison’s statement in relation to Musil’s novel. But without having read the books these would be merely academic exercises, the thrill of discovery but a momentary and superficial curiosity. What would I know of Musil’s characters and their philosophical struggles as they vacillate between the merits of thought and action, passion and morality; or Ulrich’s attempt to face feelings with the same urgency that our culture applies to reason? In Eliot’s story, how would I experience the obsession under which poor Casaubon works or Dorothea’s awakening disillusionment? How could I fathom the fullness and sensibility of these works if all I knew of them is what had been compressed into secondary sources and reference sources to its logical extreme. He describes a recent medical conference where different presenters repeatedly referred to a particular book, but when one attendee realized that none of them had actually read the book itself, he decided to track it down. In doing so, he discovered that all the libraries that had once owned the book had discarded it. He finally did get his hands on it, but only because a copy had been deposited, by happenstance, with the original publisher.25

This is not to imply that primary sources are without faults or limitations. Just as reference and secondary sources refer to and rely on primary texts, we expect primary sources to accurately or creatively reflect the world around us. But ultimately we must acknowledge the map is not the territory. Or as Proust has put it in terms of the reading of literature, “reading is on the threshold of the spiritual life; it can introduce us to it; it does not constitute it.”26 He continues:

As long as reading is for us the instigator whose magic keys have opened the door to those dwelling-places deep within us that we would not have known how to enter, its role in our lives is salutary. It becomes dangerous on the other hand, when, instead of awakening us to the personal life of the mind, reading tends to take its place, when the truth no longer appears to us as an ideal which we can realise only by the intimate progress of our own thought and efforts of our heart, but as something material, deposited between the leaves of books like a honey fully prepared by others and which we need only take the trouble to reach down from the shelves of libraries and then sample passively in a perfect repose of mind and body.27

An anecdote may help bring together the thrill of discovery in the accretion of knowledge with what Proust identifies as the personal responsibility of the reader and the limitations of reading. In 1963, Colin Fletcher took the historic first walk through the entire length of the Grand Canyon. Several weeks into his walk, he came to an understanding of the canyon through his own experiences and observations that surpassed his months of preparatory study. This caused him to note that when you discover something for yourself, “piecing the clues together unaided, it remains for the rest of your life in some way truer than facts you are merely taught, and freer from onslaughts of doubt.”28

Reading for Precision and Soul

In Musil’s *The Man without Qualities*, the protagonist Ulrich sees much expediency and ulteriority in the political, scientific, and commercial discourse that surrounds him, and he seeks a way of engaging the emotions with honesty and consciousness. He even proposes, half-jokingly, the creation of a World
Secretariat for Precision and Soul.29 Catalogs, databases, and search engines can provide some degree of precision in our information seeking, but only to the degree they are constructed to do so, and to the degree we know how to manipulate them. And, as Ross has observed, they are not especially effective in working with the complex emotional needs that are so important to readers’ decision-making and lives.30

Educator Mark Edmundson echoes, in essence, the Proust quote above—that meaning comes from the interaction of our queries with our own knowledge and insights; our willingness to challenge our own beliefs and to test each text “against the template of experience.”31 The interrelationships forged in our minds as we read, contemplate, and build our understanding; the progression of books and ideas to other books and ideas, and the internal dialogues, arguments, and syntheses they provoke; and the creative working of our minds and hearts in the pursuit of knowledge, individually but in the context of our collective recorded history, perhaps these deserve more attention from the library field.

Mario Vargas Llosa has argued that literature is unique in fostering and establishing the “rich and diverse language” we require to think and speak with clarity, subtlety, and rigor—and that these abilities are essential to a society of free individuals who wish to transform their lives or preserve the freedoms of the society in which they live.32 Vargas Llosa and Edmundson both express concern that the replacement of book reading with visual and electronic information leads to our intellectual and cultural impoverishment, as we lose the sharpened thinking and eloquence brought by literature to our thoughts and lives. Edmundson writes:

Many humanities teachers feel that they are fighting for a lost cause. They believe that the proliferation of electronic media will eventually make them obsolete. They see the time their students spend with TV and movies and on the Internet, and feel that what they have to offer—words, mere words—must look shabby by comparison.

Not so. When human beings try to come to terms with who they are and describe who they hope to be, the most effective medium is words. Through words we represent ourselves to ourselves; we fix our awareness of who and what we are. Then we can step back and gain distance on what we’ve said. With perspective comes the possibility for change.

To date books have proven remarkably robust. And while some people will continue to question their relevancy, studies of avid readers show that books are one of the most powerful aids for establishing relevance in one’s life and for constructing meaning. Indeed, recent research in the humanities and in library schools outside of the United States leads me to wonder if librarians have become lost, in the sense that we are focused so exclusively on electronic finding tools that we have lost our perspective regarding the 80 percent of our users who say they come to libraries specifically for books. Sadly, when we do think of reading, it is often simply in terms of book circulation or programs and events. The powerful experience of reading itself is hardly touched upon. On a more positive note, the increasing interest in readers’ advisory services and the popularity of library-sponsored book clubs perhaps indicate that librarians are finally beginning to turn their attention again to books and reading.

While libraries have become fixated on the burgeoning world of electronic information, readers continue to quietly wander through our book stacks and to borrow our greatest riches. Some of these titles will transport the reader almost effortlessly into another world, while others will demonstrate what slow and difficult work it can be to engage with, internalize, or contest a book’s ideas. At its most powerful and personal, the experience of reading transcends our own attempts to capture or contain it in words, or to map with precision its influence on the development of who we have become.

I would say that even for the casual reader, there is no substitute for the reading of a book—something is communicated that defies being boiled down, deconstructed, or subjected to any other linguistic, bibliographic, or critical analysis. And when reading a book you chance upon a phrase, style, or idea that expresses just what you yourself have struggled to say, or that recalls your earlier reading or experience in a sudden flash of memory, you know you’re hooked as a reader—and, allegedly, lost as a librarian.  

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16. Ibid., 152–64.
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Check Out These New PLA Publications

Public Library Data Service Statistical Report 2006 (ISBN 0-8389-8367-7, $100). Designed to aid in and enhance the public library planning and evaluation process, the Public Library Data Service Statistical Report 2006 is now available. The current edition will help library managers identify top performing libraries, compare service levels and technology usage, and provide documentation for funding requests. Also included are the results of a special survey on children’s services in public libraries. The Public Library Data Service Statistical Report 2006 is available from the ALA Store, 1-866-746-7252.

Demonstrating for Results: Using Outcome Measurement in Your Library by Rhea Joyce Rubin (ISBN 0-8389-3560-5, $50). By evaluating and presenting outcomes, libraries can document the positive work they do in a concrete way and gain financial support. This latest addition to the PLA Results series will help readers master the outcome measurement process. To order, visit www.alastore.ala.org or call 1-866-746-7252.
Architects and Librarians Unite in Harvard University Graduate Program

The Planning and Design of Public Libraries, a three-day executive education program from Harvard University Graduate School of Design, brought architects, librarians, library administrators, and trustees together to examine concepts and methods for the planning and design of public libraries.

The program, held in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on March 20–22, 2006, was scheduled in advance of the Public Library Association’s National Conference in Boston. Program participants explored the future role of public libraries and how their programming and design is evolving rapidly to meet the changing demands of patrons for library services and technology.

Meeting the needs of a diverse population of users and the demand for new computer technology, electronic media, and Internet access has had a significant impact on the function and design of public libraries. As a result, library design must take into account all of the issues that may affect its use in the future. Today’s public libraries must incorporate flexibility and adaptability for future changes and expansion while addressing the current information, educational, and cultural needs of the communities each serves.

Working in teams, program participants planned a small public library. They also examined case histories of recent and proposed libraries, and toured several library projects in the Boston area, including the Morse Institute Library in Natick and the award-winning Newton Free Library, designed by Tappé/Kallmann McKinnell & Wood Architects, both in Boston. Other topics the program covered include standards for programming space in small and large libraries, building design and technology, electronic workstation design, the evaluation of existing buildings for adaptive reuse, and post-occupancy evaluation techniques. Complete program information can be found at www.gsd.harvard.edu/execed.

Multnomah County Awarded Grant to Serve Slavic, Vietnamese, and Chinese Communities

Multnomah County Library (MCL) in Portland, Oregon, has been awarded a grant to help plan culturally competent library services to the county’s growing Chinese, Slavic, and Vietnamese communities. The $42,107 grant is from the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) through the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA).

Community services director Rita Jimenez will be the grant’s project manager. “I am so pleased we will have the opportunity to sit down with community leaders and organizations to learn about the information needs of these diverse communities,”
Jimenez said. Library director Molly Raphael agrees: “Our community’s population grows more diverse each day, and this grant will assist us in expanding our outreach to these three rapidly growing language groups.” With MCL’s Library Outreach in Spanish (LIBROS) program reaching hundreds of Spanish-speaking customers each day, Raphael added that improving services to the library’s other target language communities is a high priority. Grant funds will be used to conduct a needs assessment that will guide the library in developing culturally competent library services for county residents who speak Chinese, Vietnamese, and Slavic languages. In focus groups and community meetings, library staff will talk with community members about their information needs, current library usage, and possible partnerships to enhance library services and outreach in the years to come. For more information about IMLS/LSTA grants, visit www.imls.gov.

Brooklyn Public Library Reads to Babies

Brooklyn (N.Y.) Public Library (BPL) has launched an exciting new reading program especially for babies, toddlers, and their parents or caregivers. Brooklyn Reads to Babies (BRTB) is an innovative series of programs that underscores the importance of reading to children during their first years of life. The program is a major component of BPL’s First Five Years initiative, which enhances BPL programs and outreach to children.

The goal of this campaign is to reach every family in Brooklyn (with children from birth to age two) with the message that reading to babies can make a vital difference in their language development and their readiness for school. “Reading, singing, and talking to babies helps their brains to develop,” says Ginnie Cooper, BPL executive director. “BPL offers board books, computers, and First Five Years spaces for the very youngest ones. We want to help parents and caretakers get their babies engaged and ready to interact in life.”

BRTB is available at neighborhood libraries throughout the borough. Caregivers and their babies can share stories, songs, and rhymes in a group setting as well as practice reading and enjoy child-friendly activities. Toddlers can join Reading Is Fundamental (RIF) and get free books to build a home library. Parents and babies can receive their very own ABC library cards. BPL’s key goal is to make a difference in the lives of all Brooklyn’s children and to enable them to learn, succeed, and thrive. For more information, visit www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org.

Sacramento Public Library Receives Fourteen New PCs from Local Professional Basketball Teams

Sacramento (Calif.) Public Library’s Martin Luther King Jr. Library customers received two winter holiday gifts last year—a visit by men’s National Basketball Association’s Sacramento Kings and women’s National Basketball Association’s Sacramento Monarchs, and the unveiling of the new Kings Reading and Learning Center, located at the library branch. Sacramento Kings players Bonzi Wells, Corliss Williamson, Brian Skinner, and Ronnie Price, along with Sacramento Monarchs’ Ruthie Bolton, greeted the crowd and helped cut the ribbon to the new learning center that features fourteen computers with Internet access, educational software, scanners, printers, books, digital cameras, and furniture.

For more information, contact Don Burns in Sacramento Public Library’s community relations office at (916) 264-2919.

Palm Beach County Library System Implements Intelligent Media Manager

The Palm Beach County (Fla.) Library System (PBCLS) is offering a convenient new way to check out DVDs from its main library while maintaining much tighter control on the collection. This is the first location in the country to offer the Intelligent Media Manager (IMM), a Library Automation Technologies product. PBCLS staff says patron reaction has been very favorable.

IMM is a self-check-out kiosk that holds as many as fifteen hundred DVDs. It is a compact, three-feet-by-three-feet cabinet topped by a computer monitor. The DVDs are stored in randomly assigned slots, and the corresponding cases are displayed as usual. To use, the patron selects a
TALES FROM THE FRONT

DVD case from the library’s browsing shelves, then takes it to the IMM. Patrons are guided through the checkout process with both visual and auditory instructions. First, they scan their library card, then the DVD’s barcode. IMM retrieves the disc from its slot, and the DVD slides out for the patron to put into the case.

Oleg Boyarsky, president and CEO of Library Automation Technologies, explained that “IMM is essentially a way for libraries to address the annoying problem of theft of DVDs and CDs.” Aware of the severe problem libraries are facing with the loss of DVDs, Library Automation Technologies worked with librarians through the entire development process. IMM interfaces with the library’s ILS using the SIP2 protocol. PBCLS uses the SirsiDynix Unicorn system.

Director Jerry W. Brownlee says that PBCLS was attracted to IMM because it was the first product to offer both self-check and security for audiovisual materials. “It is the first step in our whole upgrade to increased convenient self-check service, and we’ve been delighted with the way the public has accepted it.”

For more information, contact Kathy Boyes, PBCLS manager of marketing and community relations at (561) 233-2768 or boyesk@pbclibrary.org.
Throughout the years, I’ve attended many awards ceremonies at national and state library conferences. I’ve pored over the scrapbooks compiled by the winners, runners-up, and nominees for the John Cotton Dana Awards. I’ve been awed by the innovative programs that libraries have created. I’ve admired the devoted and creative service that librarians have provided. And I’ve wondered if the recognition for a completed program or for a long-time career has made a difference in the years after the honor has been conferred.

The short answer is definitely yes. The contributors to this issue’s column all say that the award has not only honored what they’ve already done, but it has also inspired them to continue and expand their work.

Award Winners—Why and How

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Doing the Homework: The Benefit of Research

CINDY MEDIAVILLA, LIBRARY PROGRAMS CONSULTANT, CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY; CMEDIAVILLA@LIBRARY.CA.GOV

In 1991, I was hired by the Orange (Calif.) Public Library to oversee a federally funded homework center called The Friendly Stop. As a result of this experience, I developed a boundless passion for providing homework assistance to young people. This passion continued even after becoming a doctoral student at the University of California–Los Angeles (UCLA) in the department of information studies. While there, I applied for and received the American Library Association (ALA) Loleta D. Fyan research grant. That $10,000 allowed me to travel around the country visiting homework centers in public libraries.

The Fyan research project had a profound impact on my career. I suddenly became the nation’s leading expert on the subject of public library
homework centers! Until then, no one had studied such programs, and there were few articles on the topic. In fact, there was no consensus as to what exactly a homework center was. My visits to successful programs enabled me to identify the elements required to provide effective after-school homework assistance: (1) staff or volunteers who are trained to help kids with their homework; (2) space designated for student use; and (3) a collection of materials related to young patrons’ curricular needs. I described these elements in Creating the Full-Service Homework Center in Your Library, published by the American Library Association in 2001.

I completed my doctorate in 2000 and became a part-time lecturer at the UCLA library school. That same year, Virginia Walter and I received another ALA research grant to study the impact of teen involvement in afterschool homework programs. Our research revealed that positive outcomes occur for young adults participating in public library homework programs, whether they are providing or receiving homework help. We were also able to test a group of survey instruments for soliciting input about homework assistance programs. (For more information, visit Homework Center Outcomes, http://is.gseis.ucla.edu/research/homework.html).

Because of this second ALA-funded project, Walter and I have been asked to assess homework programs locally as well as nationwide. The California State Library hired us in 2002 to evaluate Live Homework Help, the online service provided by Tutor.com. We were also invited to speak on panels at recent Public Library Association and California Library Association conferences. On my own, I have led homework center workshops in New Mexico, Ohio, and twice in Ontario, Canada. Last year, I led a series of workshops throughout California on how to use basic reference skills to provide effective homework assistance to students of all ages.

Certainly my interest in homework centers has become a major focus of my library life. I have written articles on the topic for American Libraries and School Library Journal, and became a part-time lecturer at UCLA library school. That same year, Virginia Walter and I received another ALA research grant to study the impact of teen involvement in afterschool homework programs. My publications and workshops have brought me some moderate fame—and even more moderate fortune!—in the library world, but what's most rewarding is the impact my research has had in communities from as far south as San Diego, California, to as far north as Kitchener, Ontario. Nothing is more thrilling than to hear librarians say they used my book in designing their own homework centers, and that those programs are now flourishing. This never would have happened without the Loleta D. Fyan Award.

Librarians are extremely practical people. The grants they pursue tend to be those that will directly improve services for their constituents—money, say, for international language materials or outreach services to young families. Rarely do librarians apply for research grants or funds to evaluate existing programs. Most librarians, in fact, are a lot more brilliant at providing service than they are at measuring the effectiveness of that service. Still, it is imperative that we validate what we do through assessment and investigative research. Such research might take the form of a list of best practices gathered through a survey or one-on-one interviews. Or perhaps the library could use itself as a case study model for other librarians to follow. If staff members do not have time to conduct such a study, then grant monies should be pursued to hire an outside consultant to do the research and write a report that can be shared with others. We need to be far more proactive in communicating our good deeds so funders and other community members can more fully appreciate our worth.

Of the many grant proposals I have written, the most truly rewarding are those that have enabled me to do much-needed research. There are many topics still to be investigated—what benefits are gained by kids who participate in summer reading programs or library story times? What circumstances are required for schools and public libraries to work well together? How do business reference collections help strengthen the community's economy? I encourage everyone to pursue these and other important questions by applying for grants, doing the research, and sharing what you've learned. Only then will we be able to educate others—and ourselves—about the true value of public libraries.

Basking in the Afterglow

JANE JACOBS, ASSISTANT COORDINATOR, CATALOG DIVISION, QUEENS LIBRARY, JAMAICA, N.Y.; JANE.W.JACOBS@QUEENSLIBRARY.ORG

I won two awards for a cataloging translation program that I worked on with a team of librarians and information technology (IT) people here at Queens Library and a freelance programmer. In 2003–2004, we developed MARC::Detrans, an open-source software that converts bibliographic records from one format to another, allowing libraries to share resources more efficiently.
I have always been highly motivated by wanting to do a good job and doing what fascinates me. If you had asked me if I was the kind of person who would have cared much about getting an award, I would have laughed it off. But to be very honest, I loved getting the awards!

source code program that would translate Russian MARC records that already existed in transliteration into native Cyrillic script using a computer. In 2005, the project received the inaugural Nylink Achievement Award for Innovation in Technology and Service to the Collaborative. Also in 2005, I was named Queens Library's Lamplighter of the Year, an in-house award given to the individual or team who makes the most noteworthy contribution toward the library's strategic initiatives.

I have always been highly motivated by wanting to do a good job and doing what fascinates me. If you had asked me if I was the kind of person who would have cared much about getting an award, I would have laughed it off. But to be very honest, I loved getting the awards!

Catalogers everywhere believe that people (including other librarians) don't understand what they do or appreciate the importance of it. We cheerfully admit that cataloging is not glamorous. My entire department is proud of the Lamplighter Award. Their take on it is: "Wow, somebody notices what we do!"

There are two problems with having received these honors. The first is that you can't escape feeling a little guilty. Every library project is collaborative by nature. How do you recognize the collaborators without giving awards to so many people that it becomes meaningless? MARC::Detrans had strong supporters throughout the organization from the outset. The Queens Library director sent notes to several of my coworkers in recognition of their efforts in support of project. They truly appreciated it, but it isn't the same thing. And there were so many people who had a hand in the development, it wasn't possible to recognize everyone by name. Still, the project could not have gone anywhere without their knowledge and hard work.

The second is the inherent contradiction in the awards process. Awards are generally given for doing something out of the ordinary. There are lots and lots of people here who knock themselves out every single day to serve customers and help the library achieve its goals. It's part of their everyday work, business as usual. At the end of the day, what's more important: to do a great job every day, or to innovate? Surely both are equally important. There just doesn't seem to be a lot of external validation for our profession's everyday heroes.

My fellow catalogers take pride in their work. They want to be accurate and use good judgment in applying some pretty arcane, technical rules. They try to put themselves into the patron's mindset. How will a customer try to find this? In the long history of librarianship, I would bet no customer has ever written a letter of appreciation, no apple-cheeked child has ever delivered a hug, for an elegantly crafted bibliographic record. But it is so important! The catalog is the library's core business. Excellence is what is expected. There is so much good work around, but there isn't a good, institutionalized mechanism for recognizing it in the same way we recognize projects with star quality.

It is too early to tell what long-term effects receiving these two awards will have on my career. There was some publicity in the local newspapers when the awards were first given. That has since died down; nobody asks for autographs. When I make a proposal about a new project, I expect it will probably be considered more seriously than it would have been before the awards. There have been numerous opportunities to publish journal articles on the work. I enjoyed writing for publication, but most people find those articles rather dry and technical. I don't expect an offer from HBO.

I would like to see the MARC::Detrans program used more widely by other libraries. Making it openly accessible was one of our motivations. MARC::Detrans has configuration tables for Russian, Bulgarian, Ukrainian, and Urdu. It will machine-translate records into native script for any of those. It can be downloaded free from http://search.cpan.org/~esummers/MARC-Detrans-1.2/lib/
Recognizing Outstanding Customer Service

DONNA J. ALWARD, DIRECTOR, HOUGHTON LAKE (MICH.) PUBLIC LIBRARY; DALWARD@HLPL.LIB.MI.US

Back in the 1970s, a popular song proclaimed “it’s hard to be humble when you’re perfect in every way.” Espousing perfection requires one to shed any reticence to brag, but bragging is exactly what the State Librarian’s Excellence Award required. To qualify, libraries had the opportunity to sing their own praises by providing examples of excellent customer service. Humble library folk across Michigan were sure to have a difficult time doing that—unless they considered the $5,000 check that accompanied the award. At the Houghton Lake Public Library (HLPL), staff decided to set humility aside and to assuage our discomfort with what might be accomplished with that cash.

So HLPL sang our hearts out, and we won! On November 7, 2001, the Library of Michigan Foundation awarded the first State Librarian’s Excellence Award to HLPL for exemplary public service. The jury panel cited HLPL’s enthusiasm, positive attitude, passion for excellence, and can-do attitude as factors in its selection for the honor, which awarded $5,000 in privately raised funds to our library.

Why would a small, rural library take such a bold step to submit an application when the competition was so daunting? One staff member, Kim Frazho, who often had really good ideas, just kept nagging our technology coordinator and trainer, telling us that we should submit an application. She felt very strongly that the library deserved the honor.

As we contemplated what to include in the State Librarian’s Excellence Award application, the library staff realized that we were proud and probably a little crazy, too. We recalled a harried trip to the airport ninety-one miles away to ensure timely delivery of a first-year Universal Service Fund grant, which resulted in the library receiving an award of almost $8,000; how the loss of electrical power during the Gates Foundation training left us in the dark; how often we had moved furniture and book stacks for a program; and how we got grants for furniture and a SmartBoard for our renovation project. Management guru Tom Peters noted when you have a passion for excellence, there are times that you “swing from dedicated to obsessed,” and we clearly had been there a few times.

We were stunned when the call came to notify us that we had won the excellence award from the state library foundation. Local and regional media picked up the announcement and provided positive coverage. Colleagues were excited for us. The board of trustees, Friends, and our families were proud of our efforts. Library patrons were delighted that their library had won!

Perhaps we shouldn’t have been so shocked—or so humble as to think we didn’t deserve it. Physically, the transition from a facility in disrepair, with duct-taped orange carpet, a too-small staff, an outdated collection, and practically no services, to a clean, organized, renovated facility with a board and staff committed to excellence was a major accomplishment.

Our new customer service mantra was that each patron should be personally greeted when entering the library and served politely in a timely, efficient manner. Financially, we committed to grant writing with a vengeance to provide the same kind of programs and services that larger libraries provide, such as literary evenings with award-winning authors and interesting programs to draw people into the library. For example, when staff attended a performance of the Wild Swan Theater at the Rural Libraries Conference in 1999, we immediately wanted a presentation in our library even though we had no meeting room, presentation space, or the $1,200 to pay for it! We wrote a grant, pushed the furniture out of the way, and hosted two hundred people at the two performances. The library’s open-door policy allowed seasonal residents, tourists, and visitors to take advantage of all these free programs and services because nonresidents incurred no fees.
The staff wanted the award money to be spent on something that would be directly accessible by library users. We used the $5,000 award to build a fireplace flanked by shelves, which would be used to display new books. Comfortable upholstered chairs near the hearth would welcome visitors to sit and read by the fire.

We heard plenty of positive comments from patrons, such as: “Who would have thought that our little library would have such a beautiful fireplace?” Everyone loved it! However, one day, a disgruntled lady came to the main desk and loudly inquired, “Why on earth does a public library have a fireplace? Who okayed that decision?” Library assistant Sharon Bradley responded, “Oh, why not? Come over here, and let me tell you about our wonderful fireplace.”

Sharon seated her in one of the comfy chairs in front of the warm fire and told her how the fireplace had not cost taxpayers a single dime, and wasn’t it just an incredibly comfortable place to sit? Sharon told the woman how people liked to browse among the new books and read quietly in front of the fire. I thought, “What a terrific example of quality customer service.” Sharon had addressed a complaint, promoted the library in a positive manner, and invited the woman to stay and enjoy the fireplace.

Some of the other great things that have happened as a result of our excellence award:

- Taxpayers were made aware of our grant-writing successes and expressed appreciation for library enhancements that involved no additional cost for them.
- Other small libraries realized that they could qualify for the excellence award.
- The library collaborated with Bank One and the Houghton Lake Area Tourism and Convention Bureau to deliver a customer service-training workshop for local merchants just before Tip Up Town, a local snow festival that supports the area’s economy. “The Art of Giving Great Service” shared the Zingerman’s Experience, a model program developed by Zingerman’s Deli in Ann Arbor, Michigan. This program has received industry-wide recognition for unique, creative merchandising that generates excitement and builds sales. Ordinarily, this type of training would cost hundreds of dollars and involve trips to a larger city, but our collaboration brought the seminar directly to the library’s meeting room so local merchants could participate easily, conveniently, and at no cost. The library staff also took advantage of this innovative training to add a little zing to our customer service.
- Four years later, our crystal excellence award is still proudly displayed near the fireplace as a constant reminder to do our best every day.

The staff had their good work acknowledged, which made our community more aware of library services and programming through the publicity generated by the award.

Coming Up Taller at the Rapides Parish Library

SUSAN F. BAKER, PRESCHOOL OUTREACH PLUS MANAGER, RAPIDES PARISH LIBRARY, ALEXANDRIA, LA.; sfbaker@rpl.org

We won! We won! Those words rang throughout the Rapides Parish Library (RPL) in August 2004. Several months earlier, we applied for the Coming Up Taller Award presented by the President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities and its partner agencies, the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). This national award was created to reward programs that offer children, especially at-risk children, exposure to the arts.

RPL’s Preschool Outreach Plus (POP) was honored with this award for our unique service for preschool children. Every three weeks, Head Starts and other childcare centers receive deliveries of books, puppets, music, and other materials for classroom use and story times. This service addresses several community needs.

With both parents working, many young children spend more time in childcare centers or Head Start programs and don’t come to the library very often. We decided to take the library to them. Our goal was to provide reading readiness as well as foster a love of reading and libraries. We have found that the topic-based bags we provide are often used as the center’s primary teaching tools. Our library materials equip the centers to prepare these youngsters for school and life.

Why did we decide to apply for this award? I use the following analogy. We knew we had a beautiful baby. Why not enter it in a beauty contest? We believed in our program and knew it was making a difference in our community.

Winning the prestigious Coming Up Taller Award has been a unifying element within the library organization. All the employees celebrated together and shared a sense of
accomplishment. We also gained the library community attention and support. There was lots of media attention—newspaper, television, and radio coverage. We have used the momentum created from winning this award to network with such national organizations as First Book and Feed the Children. POP members helped evacuees from hurricanes Katrina and Rita—we took story times to shelters and delivered used books, coloring sheets, and toys.

After attending a leadership conference provided by the Coming Up Taller organization, we assembled a staff team to plan year-long publicity. We threw a gala celebration, with state and local dignitaries attending. Banners announcing the award were hung at all the library branches. The outreach vans all received magnetic signs with the library’s Coming Up Taller Award logo. We spoke at local council meetings, Head Start meetings, and other charitable organizations. We created parade throws with the award logo on them, as well as provided all library staff with a shirt bearing the Coming Up Taller Award logo to wear. We printed bookmarks with the award logo and put them out at all the library’s branches. All the childcare centers were given certificates that recognized their part in the POP program. We gave a presentation at the Louisiana Library Association’s conference about the POP program winning the award. The library’s annual bookmark contest used the Coming Up Taller theme.

There was an overwhelmingly positive reaction to the library’s winning this award. The local government entity, Rapides Parish Police Jury, gave us another award for our outstanding program. The childcare centers, who are our patrons, decorated the whole library with artwork. The award gave both RPL and the POP program stature. We are recognized by the state library as a role model for other libraries. Additional funds have been allocated in the library’s budget for POP. We received a grant that has provided the library and community with more than five thousand books. One national organization has expressed interest in helping our program grow and eventually introducing it to libraries nationally.

Winning the Coming Up Taller Award has been a wonderful experience for RPL and POP. We are better equipped to handle the needs of the children of central Louisiana. With this award has come more work and greater responsibility. What a great problem to have!

Life Is Just That Way!

EDWARD ELSNER, DIRECTOR AND CONSULTANT; DELTON (MI.) DISTRICT LIBRARY; delton@msn.com

The phone call came from Renée Vaillancourt McGrath, then-features editor at Public Libraries, and it caught me completely by surprise. There is no nicer phone call than one announcing you are a winner, especially when it’s not attached to a sales pitch or scam. I had won a contest I wasn’t aware of entering: the Public Library Association’s 2002 Feature Article Contest. The $500 award would be given at the ALA Annual Conference in Toronto.

The article, “The Evolution of PLA’s Planning Model,” began in an independent study course at the University of Kentucky’s School of Library and Information Science. I rewrote the paper into the format requested for submission to Public Libraries and sent it in. When the July/August 2002 issue of Public Libraries arrived in my mailbox, I was shocked to see cover art matching my article! Having my work in print was honor enough. I had never considered it being featured on the cover, and never expected to win an award from PLA.

I still claim the best benefit of the award was a guaranteed seat at the PLA President’s Program featuring Margaret Atwood! I made sure to say so when my time to speak arrived. To walk up in front of hundreds of people, feeling I was the lone winner with no speech prepared, was exhilarating. The local paper in Grayling, Michigan, ran a story about the award and my trip to Toronto to receive it. Right next to “Library Celebrates First Birthday” and a picture of balloons and cake, the headline read, “Elsner Wins Top Award in Library Article Contest.” Returning victorious from Toronto, the library board bickered as usual, this time in regards to paying for my travel expenses to the conference—even though I took the train, stayed at the Neil Wycik hostel for pennies a night, and the board had approved the whole trip before I left. Such is life.

The first prize plaque is now in my second public library office, along with a plaque from the Friends of the Crawford County (Mich.) Library. Their first merit award “to express our deep appreciation for the supportive and dedicated services you have provided to the friends of the Crawford County Library System.” I now run the Delton District Library, north of Kalamazoo and Battle Creek, Michigan, and am again working on getting a structurally balanced budget where yearly revenues match or exceed regular expenditures. Thankfully the Crawford County Library now has an operating millage and is financially set for years.

The award’s $500 went toward work on a book contracted by ALA
More and more, we see that award criteria are less about the library per se and more about leadership, community building, collaboration, and impact—making a difference, in addition to awareness of library resources and replicability.

Editions, which also sprang from my feature articles. The Public Library Helper was finished in May 2005 and eagerly anticipated by both public librarians and staff at ALA Editions. The project was unfortunately cancelled several months later, or fortunately, depending on how you look at life. I took the fortunately route because I was able to post the entire book online to freely help everyone! The $500 covered most of my direct monetary costs with the book, such as legal fees, transportation to libraries for research, and illustrations. My time is now a gift to small public libraries everywhere; check it out at www.mei.net/~elsner.

Check out page 5 to see all of this year’s PLA award winners.

Strategic Application

PATRICIA L. HASSAN; DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS COORDINATOR, JOHNSON COUNTY (KANS.) LIBRARY; hassanp@jcollibrary.org

In 2005, the Johnson County (Kans.) Library (JCL) received:

- the National Service Award from the Institute of Museum and Library Services;
- the ASCLA/KLAS/NOD Award for Literature for the Learning Disabled Adult;
- a Diversity Best Practices Award for JCL’s Diversity Council, Diversity Training, and Hispanic Heritage Fiesta (Governmental Affairs Division) from Kansas City Harmony;
- three National Association of Counties (NACO) Achievement Awards;
- five National Association of County Information Officers (NACIO) Awards in the Public Participation, Media Relations, and Annual Reports categories; and
- Third Place, America’s Best Libraries, Hennen’s American Public Library Rating Index (HAPLR Index).

In addition, two staff members were named by Thomson Gale/Library Journal as Movers & Shakers for their work with teens in the justice system.

That’s twelve national awards and one local award, if you’re counting. We didn’t apply for two of them—the HAPLR Index (it isn’t technically an award, and one doesn’t apply for it, but we’re proud of our ranking and always list it) and Movers & Shakers (a Wyoming librarian made the nomination). All the same, that’s the most awards JCL has won in a single year. It’s due largely to the simultaneous maturation of a number of programs that sprouted from the new strategic plan, Connections. We typically apply for several awards annually, and we win a lot of them.

Each year, we create a listing of all award application deadlines with possible matches within our library, which is brainstormed by a management group.

When weighing whether to submit an award application, the staff begins by asking—just as we would for a potential journal article—what we can contribute to the professional dialogue:

- Do we have a program or achievement unique in content or implementation?
- What is its contribution to the community, and do we have supporting data for that?
- What have we learned from this experience?
- Will our successes or experience add something to the profession or to other libraries’ toolboxes?

More and more, we see that award criteria are less about the library per se and more about leadership, community building, collaboration, and impact—making a difference, in addition to awareness of library resources and replicability. (We also review winners’ abstracts for best practices ideas.)

When we realize that we have a program, project, or partnership that few or no other libraries are doing and that it has strong results, we consider whether it meets our criteria for an award submission, especially a credible evaluation component, which is critical.

We often need to wait for a program to reach a certain maturity to obtain solid evaluation results but without it losing freshness. This was true for several of the 2005
winning programs: community issues forums, the literature for adults with learning disabilities program, Hispanic Heritage Fiesta, and Positive Aging Coalition. In fact, we waited until completion of their second or third cycles to determine their impact. All of these programs have an external orientation, and the partners’ and service recipients’ evaluations were key. Only a few award submissions have been for one-time events, and always when there was significant community involvement and impact.

Besides library professional awards, JCL competes frequently for awards in the National Association of Counties and the National Association of County Information Officers competitions. The county commissioners appear more favorably impressed with these awards from their own world than with library association awards.

Participating in non-library arenas provides us with a more global view of a library role in communities, a perspective that has proven useful as the library evolves. Just reading the award criteria is educational.

Locally, JCL competed for and won a Kansas City Diversity Best Practices award in 2005 for its diversity council, diversity staff development program, and annual Hispanic Heritage Fiesta. The awarding institution gave the library high marks for its proactive approach in addressing changing demographics both in its community and its organization. A huge spread in the metro newspaper accompanied the awards announcements.

News releases are our chief means of spreading news of an award to the community, and they are 100 percent successful in producing news articles, often on the front page. Subsequent, splashy feature articles, also on the front page, frequently emanate from the initial announcement articles. Learning of these awards perhaps underscores patrons’ positive experiences in the library. In 2005, surveyed residents ranked the library first among Johnson County government’s services, with a 90 percent approval rating.

Being a winner increases the library’s standing at home and in the field. Locally, it garners respect that translates into support at budget time. It also enhances the library’s reputation in the national library community and its ability to attract top candidates for employment. This information is also passed along and embraced by our support groups, such as the Friends and foundation, to bolster their fund-raising and community support requests.

Internally, there’s a huge boost to staff morale for recognition and validation of our work and our institution. In terms of capacity, we are perhaps more confident in taking risks and absorbing our failures as lessons for use in future endeavors.

A downside of awards might, ironically, be the spotlight on glitzy programs—the highly sympathetic work with adults with developmental disabilities; the technology-oriented Web sites and online programs; and the services for niche patrons, such as seniors and teens in the justice system. Library staff members who serve our patrons daily, face-to-face in traditional, routine transactions are not singled out for national awards, although they are at the core of the high level of patron satisfaction with this library. We do have internal awards that recognize their achievements, but even when their work is mentioned in award applications as basic to our library’s overall success, most of the descriptive text is about the newer, showier programs. It’s the nature of the awards process.

Excellence is what we all pursue in our stewardship of public service, and the changing nature of business as usual challenges us to acquire new competencies and set new goals while retaining and remembering what has always been valued in libraries. Awards are one avenue for sharing our growth experience.

It Takes a Community

JUDY HOFFMAN, MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST, NORTH SUBURBAN LIBRARY SYSTEM, WHEELING, ILL.; JHOFFMAN@NSLS.INFO

When you hear actors who come home without statues at the Academy Awards say it was “an honor just to be nominated,” do you join the silent chorus of “yeah, right?” Well, it turns out it’s true, or at least it is for the glamorous library staff, trustees, and advocates that are nominated for the annual North Suburban Library System (NSLS) Membership Awards in Illinois. We hear this repeated every year from both the nominees and winners. Taking the time to sit down and write words of praise for a colleague promises to be a meaningful experience for nominees and nominators.

NSLS launched the awards program in 1992, and they are presented at the annual membership banquet, which began a few years earlier. The reasons behind the creation of the awards are many, including that they hold libraries and the people that support them up for emulation, and the awards give a higher profile to best practices and success stories. They are also meant to be a
community-building tool, both among libraries and library staff. The awards criteria stress resource sharing with libraries in NSLS and throughout the state, leadership efforts, innovation, and overall good works. The number of award categories has grown throughout the years. It started with Library of the Year, and Library Staff Member of the Year from each of the four types of libraries we serve: academic, public, school, and special. As time passed, NSLS handed out awards for Trustee, Volunteer, and Legislator of the Year. Community Advocate was added to recognize people or organizations outside of the library that provided a variety of special support. The Innovation award was added to recognize groundbreaking new projects. The last award to be added was for Lifetime Achievement.

Eleven categories seems like a lot, yet not enough at the same time. The world should regularly be draping those associated with libraries with garlands, crowns, huge monetary awards, and positive prime-time television coverage. But until then, taking the time to honor our own is an important and rewarding effort.

The award winners have reported back many gratifying outcomes, both inside and outside the library walls. Wauconda Area (Ill.) Public Library director Tom Kern believes the 2005 Library of the Year award “greatly enhanced the library’s image in the community, not only by heightening everyone’s awareness of the library’s excellence in serving the community but by providing a perfect opportunity to thank all of the library’s partner organizations and all citizens for their support and cooperation.”

Kern observed that after receiving the award, “library patrons have frequently congratulated staff at services desks, further improving staff morale.”

We hear about this pleasing effect regularly from winners. According to Sonia Schoenfield and Arlene Lane, reference librarians for Cook Memorial Public Library District in Libertyville, Illinois, increased confidence to take on even bigger projects was one outcome when their library received the 2005 Innovation Award. It also caught the attention of the local press, providing a great opportunity for communities in the area to learn more about their winning work with Digital Past (www.digitalpast.org) and the library as a whole.

Schoenfield said receiving the innovation award validated the efforts of the library’s project partner, the Libertyville-Mundelein Historical Society, and added to their enthusiasm for more cooperative work.

Until this year, nominations were submitted privately, and a committee, primarily made up of past winners, reviewed the nominations and chose the winners. This year, the awards committee has been replaced with open voting by staff and trustees at all NSLS libraries. They do so by viewing nominations online, and then voting online. Staff from nominated libraries cannot vote for anyone in their library. This way, a large library does not have an advantage over a small library. The new format is still playing out as this article goes to press, so if you want to know how it turns out, send me a note after our banquet on March 17, 2006 (yes, we are having live Irish music).

We’re on the second year of another first for us: sponsorships. In 2005, we sought out and received event sponsors, which meant hors d’oeuvres and some other treats were added to the ceremony. For 2006, half of the awards will be sponsored, providing monetary awards of $500 and $1,000.

After being involved with the awards for eight years, I have to throw out one reminder for those that write any kind of award nomination. Rule of thumb, if you are going to write a nomination, make sure to take the time to write a good one! A number of times, worthy nominations fell by the wayside because the nomination submitted was too brief, lacking in good examples, or just poorly written. Remember, the review committee doesn’t necessarily know the person, library, or projects submitted.

The awards are a great public relations and toot-your-own-horn opportunity, and we encourage the winners to make the most of this occasion. NSLS provides the winners with a template press release and gobs of professional photos taken at the banquet. A number of Library of the Year winners have put banners out in front of their library. Winners also promote their success via library computer monitor screensavers, the library Web site, the opening of the main telephone system message, in the signature line of outgoing e-mails, and any number of creative ways.

If you are looking for a way to build a sense of community among members of your library organization, consider an awards program. Start small, with an easily managed program, and build it from there to be appropriate for your circumstances. If your experience matches ours, you will find that there are awards enough for all in the effort—your winners get the glory, all that are nominated feel validated, nominators become king- and queen-makers, best practices are held up.
for all to see, and the organization has engaged in a celebration that strengthens community.

On Behalf of the Entire Staff

WAYNE ONKST, KENTON COUNTY (KY.) PUBLIC LIBRARY; WAYNE.ONKST@KENTONLIBRARY.ORG

I didn’t even know I was nominated for ALA’s Sullivan Award for Public Library Administrators Support for Children’s Services until I got a call from the chair of the awards committee telling me that I had won!

My library’s children’s staff and my administrative assistant had coordinated the application without my knowledge. They wanted to surprise me and bypass any reservations I might have had. Once again, they proved that our children’s services staff (along with other services) are most effective when I get out of the way and let them get to work!

While winning the Sullivan Award brings considerable personal satisfaction, it also came with the realization that the award is possible only as a result of the work of the entire library staff. Regardless of my support or vision of children’s services, success happens only when everyone on the staff plays their role effectively. So the Sullivan Award was not my award, but rather an award for our library, our staff, and our community that has so strongly supported the library and used its services.

By having our library, its director, and its services held up for notice by the library community nationwide, the award validated once again for our staff the outstanding work they are doing each day in providing quality service for children. As they are providing this important programming, preparing materials and facilities, or doing any of myriad jobs that enable quality service, I believe they do it with a little more confidence, standing or sitting a little taller and straighter as a result of the acknowledgement provided with the Sullivan Award.

The library’s public relations department did a great job of telling the community about the award. As our community sees the recognition given to the library, I am confident that the additional respect will result in greater usage and stronger support. Not only will our staff enjoy the recognition, but our community can also take pride in their library, realizing that their usage and support has enabled this recognition of their library on a national level. In a state not normally recognized for educational reasons, yet with a vibrant and growing public library system, positive notice on a national level is much appreciated and well-deserved.

Receiving the Sullivan Award at the ALA Annual Conference was a personal highlight. My wife and I will always remember the kindness of Peggy Sullivan, the thrill of attending our first Caldecott/Newbery/Wilder dinner, and, of course, receiving the award at the Awards Reception. I don’t know of a field staffed with more dedicated individuals than librarianship. There are so many wonderful librarians who deserve this type of recognition during their careers. Thanks to my outstanding staff, I am one of those fortunate award recipients.

Conclusion

If you look in the back of the ALA Handbook, you’ll see that it takes two complete columns to list the awards and grants offered by ALA, its divisions, and its offices. The PLA Awards Committee oversees seven of them. Others are applicable to public libraries and librarians, such as the John Cotton Dana Award (administered by the Library Administration and Management Association), the Sullivan Award (ALA), and the ALSC/BWI Summer Reading Program Grant (Association for Library Service to Children). Closer to home, your state library association offers its own annual awards. In your own backyard, you’ll find that the regional library system, chamber of commerce, and community agencies also recognize outstanding employees and programs.

You can be proactive, as RCLS and JCL are, in matching the project you plan to do with a specific award. You can surprise your coworkers, as happened to several essayists. What is most important is that you apply. Your ideas and your contributions deserve to be recognized—and they may inspire others.

I hope to see you at the PLA Awards Ceremony in New Orleans!

References
3. Ibid.
AMY ALESSIO is the Teen Coordinator for the Schaumburg Township (Ill.) District Library and the fiscal officer for the Young Adults Library Services Association; aalessio@stdl.org. Konrath was interviewed via e-mail in January 2006.

Amy is currently reading The Diary of Pelly D by L. J. Adlington and The Silver Anniversary Murder by Lee Harris.

“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.

Enthusiasm Is a Must
An Interview with Joe Konrath

Author J. A. “Joe” Konrath works almost as hard as the workaholic heroine, Lt. Jacqueline “Jack” Daniels, of his popular, critically acclaimed mystery series. Konrath has a multiple-book contract for the Daniels series, sells dozens of short stories a year, judges writing contests, presents and teaches classes for new writers, and maintains the popular blog “A Newbie’s Guide to Getting Published” on his Web site (www.jakonrath.com), which garners approximately one thousand unique hits a day. In addition to that list of accomplishments, Konrath is poised to enter the Guinness Book of World Records by hosting five hundred book-signing events in stores across the country this summer after the release of his third Daniels series title, Rusty Nail. Supporting libraries is a theme in Konrath’s teachings, and he hosts library contests on his Web site in addition to dozens of personal appearances at libraries each year.

Public Libraries: Why do you write mysteries? What trends do you see in the mystery genre?

Joe Konrath: I write what I like to read. I grew up on McBain, MacDonald, Parker, Christie, Spillane, Sayers, and Marsh. The genre hasn’t really changed much since Miss Marple and Mike Hammer, which is a good thing. If something works, stick with it.

PL: Why follow a drink theme with Jacqueline Daniels—Bloody Mary, Whisky Sour, and Rusty Nail? What will Jack fans see in the future?

JK: I wanted a female cop with a male name, and I wanted a way to link the titles together. Grafton is doing the alphabet, Evanovich uses numbers, and I do drinks.
The next few Jack books are going to be a lot of fun. More action. More scares. More laughs. And a few continuing characters will take the big dirt nap. Jack's mother isn't on the hit list yet, but if the story calls for it . . .

PL: What are some other projects you are working on? What is different about writing mysteries from those projects?

JK: My heart belongs to mysteries, but I also enjoy horror, dark fiction, sci-fi, humor, and technothrillers. I've published stories in all of these genres.

PL: I know you are a big proponent of libraries. How have libraries and librarians helped you with your writing career? What do you tell authors they can do to work with and support libraries?

JK: Librarians are awesome! Mystery author Julia Spencer-Fleming and I just mailed out six thousand letters to libraries. The letters include an interview, information about our books, and even a signed coaster.

The library is often the cultural hub of the community. It's a meeting place, a learning place, and an entertainment place, all in one. I love the fact that librarians talk to patrons, give suggestions, and take requests. So many fans have discovered me through libraries. They are one of the best ways to garner word-of-mouth.

PL: You are planning on visiting five hundred sites for the Rusty Nail book release. Why five hundred? What do you enjoy about doing these visits?

JK: No one has ever done five hundred in a year before. It's an impressive number, but doable. I love meeting people, and this is my chance to meet thousands all across the United States.

PL: What should libraries do to encourage reading?

JK: Reading groups, writing groups, and author visits. I've visited dozens of libraries, and I've done many conference calls with them during reading groups.

PL: You mentor many people who want to write. Why is this important to you?

JK: When you attain any degree of success, you have to send the elevator back down. No one helped me. If they had, perhaps I would have gotten published sooner.

PL: Please describe some of the process of how you got published. What is one of the biggest mistakes you see among people who want to get published?

JK: I wrote nine novels, more than a million words, and landed four hundred fifty rejections before I landed a publishing contract. Writers need to understand that this is a business, not an art form. If you want to succeed, you need to understand how the business works.

PL: Marketing is a big part of writing today. What are some things that have helped you promote the Jack Daniels books?

JK: I've signed books in hundreds of stores, spoken at dozens of libraries, regularly attend writing conventions, and spend a great deal of time on the Internet, both on my Web site, jakonrath.com, and on my blog. It's called A Newbie's Guide to Publishing (www.jakonrath.blogspot.com). I also hold writing contests and currently have a special library contest on my homepage.

PL: You advise authors to learn how to speak publicly. What are some tips for a successful presentation and conference experience?

JK: Circulate through the audience before you begin, introducing yourself and shaking hands. When you're on the microphone, be clear, be funny, and be brief. Enthusiasm is a must; if you're having fun, so is the audience.

PL: If one of your three children wanted to become an author, what advice would you give them? Does your family currently help with your writing career?

JK: My wife is my first reader, my biggest critic, and my staunchest supporter. The kids think dad has it easy because he plays on the computer all day. If one of them wanted to be a writer, I'd tell them, "You can be whatever you want to be, after you finish medical school."

PL: What are you currently reading?

JK: The new Barry Eisler book. He's a friend, so I get to read it before it's released. Man, that guy can write!
Recently I’ve been recommending authors, rather than specific books, to friends and colleagues: “Have you read any T. C. Boyle? If you like William T. Vollmann, you’ll love David Foster Wallace. Give Oates a try.” The next question they invariably ask me is, “What books by these authors do you recommend?” If a collection of works is available, I always suggest a reader or anthology of works. Most of the time, this is due to not being able to consciously recommend my favorite works from particular authors, but also because a collection of works displays the author in all his magnitude and reach. Is early Stephen King different from his work during the past two to three years? Yes, but an anthology of all of his work in one or two volumes will enable new readers to foster their own opinions and also expose them to a wide variety of content.

By recommending anthologies, I provide the reader with a wide variety of content. This technique doesn’t need to be limited to book recommendations. What about news from the past week? There are monitoring services available in many professions that cull news stories from a seven-day period and then provide a synopsis for their clients. Many professionals are too busy to read everything that is published in their line of work, and a professionally gathered summary is useful—especially if it is customized for their needs. When I was a law librarian, I would provide a weekly recap of cases, news articles, columns, and blog posts for specific lawyers who were involved in specific litigation.

If you’re looking for a similar service in the library world, check out the Carnival of the Infosciences. This idea was introduced to the library field by Greg Schwartz, librarian and proprietor of the Open Stacks Blog (www.openstacks.net). In a blog post on July 16, 2005, Greg wrote:

My first encounter with a Blog Carnival was the Carnival of Personal Finance, which was most recently hosted at Smart Money Daily (www.smartmoneydaily.com/PersonalFinance/Carnival-of-Personal-Finance-
... the carnival benefits bloggers who haven't attracted the level of readership that they want; by submitting their posts to the host for the week, they can be assured that their content will be read by more than just their regulars.

Week-4.aspx) and will be moving to I Will Teach You to Be Rich (www.iwillteachyoutoberich.com) on Monday. On further research, I discovered what appears to be the “Original Carnival” (or at least longest-running): Carnival of the Vanities, the most recent of which can be found at Wallo World (http://walloworld.com/?p=797). There is even an entire site (http://carnival.blogcarnival.com) devoted to helping readers find the various manifestations of the Blog Carnival.1

Here’s how the Carnival of the Infosciences works. Every week, a volunteer from the library and information science (LIS) blogging community acts as the host. Throughout the prior week, contributions are sent into the host by LIS bloggers. The contributions can be their own posts or posts they found interesting on other LIS blogs. The submissions should be related to the library and information science field; however, the role of the host is not to weed out contributions, but to collect, read, and distribute them in one post on their own blog. It’s a very simple concept with tremendous consequences and effects.

One basic benefit of carnival work, as mentioned previously, is that it is the only place that I know of that rounds up blog discussions and puts them in one place. In essence, this brings out the collective work of the blogging community. For those too busy to read blogs (or who feel that they are waste of time to keep track of everyday), a weekly reminder of the discussion happening in the LIS blogging community can be helpful.

In addition to the time saved, the carnival benefits bloggers who haven’t attracted the level of readership that they want; by submitting their posts to the host for the week, they can be assured that their content will be read by more than just their regulars. The carnival also gives them a larger pulpit on which to stand, and a larger audience to whom they can shout out their thoughts, ideas, and (sometimes) heckles. The carnival allows those bloggers who may have just started a blog to get their content to the masses. Once they have grabbed the readers’ attention, however, they need to continuously write content worth reading. I have always been convinced that content is king, and that the only way to continuously attract attention as a writer (let alone a blogger) is to produce work that gets readers interested and talking. Boring writing, however grammatically correct, is just that—boring.

Hosting a blog carnival has other advantages. The blogging community thrives on “link love,” or the amount of links that one gets to their own blog. The carnival allows those bloggers who may have just started a blog to get their content to the masses. Once they have grabbed the readers’ attention, however, they need to continuously write content worth reading. I have always been convinced that content is king, and that the only way to continuously attract attention as a writer (let alone a blogger) is to produce work that gets readers interested and talking. Boring writing, however grammatically correct, is just that—boring.

The carnival also provides an avenue to locating new and exciting library-related bloggers. One week, when I hosted the carnival on Library Stuff (www.librarystuff.net/2006/03/la-carnival.html), I received submissions from two bloggers whose blogs I didn’t know. I have since enjoyed the work published by these bloggers.

Feedback from the library community has been minimal, according to Schwartz, but those that participate give the carnival high marks:

I have not received much feedback from the library community outside of the blogosphere. Among library bloggers, the reaction has been supportive, but participation is uneven. I think that librarians as a whole are terrible at self-promotion and so the idea of submitting your own work is counterintuitive. They are far more likely to recommend someone else's work, which is not the norm for most carnivals, but seems to suit our community well. I’m optimistic that, as the carnival gets some much-needed exposure outside of the library blog world, the level of interest will grow, along with the number of submissions and diversity of hosts. To some degree, this is already happening as more widely read sites link to the carnival.2

Schwartz, unlike many who have brought technology to the forefront of the library profession, would also like to take a diminished role
in being the leader of the carnival, which fits in with the initiative’s philosophy. He adds, “To this point, I have handled all administrative elements (wiki maintenance and scheduling of hosts primarily), but ideally, the carnival should exist as a truly collaborative entity where the whole process of submitting and hosting self-regulates. I don’t know if this is entirely possible, but it is something I’d like to see happen.”

Ideally, the carnival will be fully integrated into the daily life of the library community before he leaves his post as carnival arbiter. The format offers many options for enhancement, and it will need a leader to guide it through changes. As for what those changes might entail, I, for one, would love to see topical carnivals emerge. For example, university librarians may be more inclined to include their content in an academic carnival. A New York carnival that details blog posts and commentary from librarians from the Empire State would be particularly interesting to me. Before we can start developing enhancements and specialized carnivals, however, critical mass will need to be reached on the main initiative.

Another aspect I would like to see in the carnival is the inclusion of content from those outside the library blogging community. Understandably, the carnival has started with blogs because it is a blogging initiative, but this doesn’t mean that the concept can’t reach other avenues. Libraries with similar interests, or those who are part of a network or consortia, can host carnivals. Librarians active in newsgroups or electronic mailing lists can host carnivals on their personal Web sites or even on the mailing lists themselves. While not a true blog carnival, the concept is similar.

Ideas and initiatives come and go—whether they survive is based on reach, participation, and outreach, among many other factors. Will the Carnival of the Infosciences survive? “The carnival is an opportunity to celebrate and promote the current body of excellent writing in the library blogosphere, while encouraging new voices to join the chorus,” Schwartz says. “My dream is that, some day, a successful, published librarian will look back and credit the Carnival of the Infosciences with giving him or her the confidence to write for a global audience.”

To see a list of past Carnivals and future host blogs, please visit http://infosciences.pbwiki.com.

References
2. E-mail correspondence with Greg Schwartz, Mar. 13, 2006.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.

Resources
Open Stacks Blog—www.openstacks.net
Carnival hosted on Library Stuff—www.librarystuff.net/2006/03/la-carvinal.html
I Will Teach You to Be Rich—www.iwillteachyoutoberich.com
Blog Carnival—http://carnival.blogcarnival.com
Carnival of the Infosciences Wiki—http://infosciences.pbwiki.com

Free FETCH! With Ruff Ruffman Resource Kit

FETCH! With Ruff Ruffman, a new show that premiered on PBS May 29, 2006, focuses on kids ages six to ten. It is modeled on the reality television craze: Six teenage contestants on the unscripted show go on challenge assignments to test their determination, daring, and intellect. Libraries can request a free FETCH! resource kit to create parallel programming at the library, including an activity guide, challenge sheet pack (available in English and Spanish), and poster; they also can subscribe to an e-mail newsletter filled with news, activity tips, and Web feature pointers. E-mail fetchnews@wgbh.org to order your resource pack and for more information. This new item was originally posted on the PLA Blog. Check out more exciting news tidbits at www.plablog.org.
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AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
Grant Matchmaking

Applying for a grant can be an intimidating process, but finding the right grant for your library is important. Because librarians are great at research, this part of grant work is a cinch for us! First of all, remember that you should never start the grant process with a specific grant in mind. Your grant work should always begin with your library’s mission, strategic plan, and a community needs assessment. Once you review this information, validate a real need your library can help with, and brainstorm solutions, you are then ready to start planning a grant project. By having this project in mind before you begin researching funding sources and selecting specific funders and grants, writing the grant proposal will be so much easier.

Types of Funding Sources
All funding can be categorized into one of two funding sources: government or private. Being familiar with the different types of sources can help ensure that your grant proposal reaches the right audience (see figure 1). To excel at grant matchmaking, you must match the library’s mission and grant projects to the funder’s goals.

Government Funding Sources
Government grant-funding sources include any grants from federal, state, or local government agencies. These grants are used to carry out the purposes established by their lawmaking authorities. There are hundreds of federal grant programs, with grants totaling $400 billion. Though this sounds promising, federal grants frequently involve a very complicated application process and are often very competitive. Examples of federal government sources for library related grants are the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the U.S. Department of Education, the National Library of...
BRINGING IN THE MONEY

Medicine, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

State and local governments are often given funding by federal sources that they are responsible for distributing locally. A prime example of library funding disbursed this way is the federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds distributed through state libraries. State libraries may use the appropriation to support statewide initiatives and services through competitive sub-grant competitions or cooperative agreements to public, academic, research, school, and special libraries in their state. Because state libraries determine distribution of these funds based on their individual state’s areas of need and priorities, you should check with your state library about the availability of LSTA subgrants or other uses of this funding. Many state libraries will have LSTA subgrant announcements and applications guidelines on their Web sites, and some even have online applications and free grant workshops. LSTA funding has increased during the last several years, and continues to be a primary source of library grant funding. Another added benefit to this distribution of funding is that it is much easier to develop a relationship with state library personnel than federal funders, and the competition may not be as fierce.

Investigate grant opportunities in other agencies in your state, county, or city that may fund your project, such as education, humanities, arts, and cultural service agencies. You can find a list of state humanities councils at www.neh.gov/whoweare/statecouncils.html.

Private Funding Sources

Foundations may be private or public, they may be small, with only a few staff, or they may be large, multimillion dollar–driven enterprises with many professional staff. Some private foundations are created by families or individuals, often through an endowment fund. One example of public foundations is a community foundation. These are publicly supported charitable institutions governed by volunteer boards of community leaders and administered by full-time professional staff with expertise in knowing their community’s needs. They are often cited as one of the fastest growing sectors of philanthropy in the United States. There are about seven hundred community foundations nationwide, with assets of approximately $35 billion, awarding grants of more than $2.6 billion.

Corporations and businesses sometimes create foundations or giving programs with funds generated from their profits. Local businesses give back to their communities, and corporations fulfill objectives of civic responsibility.

Clubs and organizations may have a service, civic, or skill-based focus. They usually have local chapters; examples include the Lions Club, Rotary, Junior League, and Kiwanis. These organizations often have giving programs that involve smaller gifts focused on supporting their individual community. It is best to find out about these opportunities through local Web sites or by contacting the associations directly.

Professional associations may have grant funding that is available for members. Luckily, librarians have many professional associations to choose from. Grants, awards, and scholarships are available from the American Library Association (ALA), the Public Library Association, the Special Library Association, Regional Library Associations, and even more. See the Awards tab on the ALA Web site (wwwALA.org) or your regional association Web site (for example, Mountain Plains, New England, Pacific Northwest, Southeastern, Guam, or Virgin Islands).

Web sites to Locate Private Funders

Researching private funders has become easier thanks to the availability of information on the Internet, however, it can be overwhelming as there are many sources. The following are a few authoritative sources for finding private funders.

- Community Foundations (http://fdncenter.org/funders/grantmaker/gws_comm/comm.html). To find community foundations in your area, visit the Foundation Center Web site.
- Top 40 Foundations That Give Grants (www.tgci.com/funding/states.asp). This Grantsmanship Center site includes a list of top foundations searchable by state.
Grantmaker Index (www.fdncenter.org/funders/grantmaker/index.html) The Foundation Center maintains and regularly updates links to more than 4,800 grantmaker Web sites. This is a great resource for private funding sources, including foundations and corporate grantmakers.

The Foundation Center’s State and Local Funding Directories: A Bibliography (http://fdncenter.org/learn/topical/sl_dir.html). A compilation of local funding directories, these invaluable resources will help you locate foundations and corporations that limit their giving to your geographic area.

Research Resources—Where to Find Grant Announcements
There are quite a few sources that list grant announcements and requests for proposals (RFPs). It is helpful to know the major grant categories so you can determine what kind of grant will be a good match for your specific grant project. See figure 2 for clarification on categories of grants. (Adapted from Grants for Libraries). When looking for specific grants, there are online and print resources available.

Online Resources
Weblogs, Web sites, databases, and bulletins can be helpful for locating grant announcements. Many grant announcements have short deadlines, so it is best to develop your grant project first and outline your goals, grant summary, and budget before looking for specific grants. This way, when you do find a great grant announcement that has an impending deadline, you will have a head start in pulling together the requested information.

- Grants.gov (www.grants.gov). Grants.gov is the single free access point for more than one thousand grant programs offered by the twenty-six federal grant-making agencies. Here you can electronically find and apply for more than $400 billion in competitive grants from all federal grant making agencies. All federal grant opportunities are searchable. If you are searching this site for the first time, a couple of hints are to try the basic search, with keyword “library” or to browse by category under “Arts.” You can also browse by Agency; frequently library-related grants are given by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and the Department of Education. You can also sign up for an e-mail service that will notify you of new grant opportunities.

- Library Grants Blog (http://librarygrants.blogspot.com). No surprise, my top pick for online library-related grant announcements is the Library Grants Blog, which I cowrite with Pam MacKeller. It’s a free Web site

Block grant
A grant that the state or federal government allocates to fund a specific need. For example, the federal government allocates $2 million in a block grant to schools that provide after-school care for children in low-income neighborhoods.

Challenge grant
A grant awarded to grantseekers if they reach a specific fund-raising goal.

Capital grant
These grants include funding for endowment purposes, construction, or equipment.

General operating support
Funding for the general purpose or work of an organization. For example, personnel, administration, and other expenses for an existing program.

Matching grant
A grant that requires the grantseeker to provide a certain amount to fund the project and the funder will provide an equal amount. For example, a 1:1 match would mean that the grantseeker provides half the cost of the project and the funder matches the same amount.

Project/Program grant
Funding for a specific initiative or new endeavor, not for general purposes.

Seed grant
Funding designed to help start a new project or charitable activity, or to help a new organization in its start-up phase.

Technology grant
A grant that provides funding for a technology-related project.

Figure 2. Categories of Grants
with regularly posted new grant opportunities for libraries.
- The Foundation Directory Online (http://fconline.fdncenter.org). This online database provides subscription-based pricing for accessing grantmaker information and grant announcements. The basic level can be assessed for $19.95 a month or $195 annually.
- The Foundation Center’s RFP Bulletin (http://fdncenter.org/pnd/rfp). This online bulletin provides listings of RFPs. Each listing provides a brief overview of a current funding opportunity offered by a foundation or other grant making organization, along with the date the RFP was posted and the deadline. You can sign up to receive the RFP Bulletin as a free weekly e-mail newsletter.

Print Resources
- The Foundation Center Publications
  The Foundation Center is the largest producer of directories and databases of grant-giving foundations. The center publishes print directories by subject, foundation name, geographic region, and grants previously funded. Their subject directories cover such topics as arts and culture, children and youth services, education, environment and animal welfare, health, international, libraries and information services, religion, and social services. A few choice picks, published annually, include:
  - The Foundation Directory. Multiple volume. Part I has the 10,000 biggest foundations. The entries list the funder’s contact information, trustee names, statements of purpose, grant guidelines, and even descriptions of previous grants awarded. (Also available on CD-ROM.)
  - Foundation Grants Index. Provides descriptions of more than 100,000 grants of $10,000 or more that were actually given. This is useful because it shows you what projects the funder has already supported. (Also available on CD-ROM.)
  - National Guide to Funding for Libraries and Information Services. Provides essential facts on approximately 1,500 foundations and corporate direct giving programs with a history of awarding grant dollars to libraries and other information centers. Includes grantmaker contact information, financial data, giving priorities statement, application procedures, and key officials, sample grants (more than eleven hundred), and a range of indexes to make searching easier.
  - Grants for Libraries and Information Services. An annual publication, one of twelve subject-specific grant guides published by the Foundation Center. It includes the scope of current foundation giving in the field. You’ll find descriptions of 2,780 recent grants of $10,000 or more—totaling more than $442 million.

Other Publications
- Grants for Libraries: A How-To-Do-It Manual and CD-ROM for Librarians (Neal-Schuman, 2006) by Stephanie K. Gerding and Pamela H. MacKellar is a practical guide that presents an easy-to-follow grant process cycle—planning for success, discovering and designing projects, organizing the team, researching and selecting the right funder, creating and submitting the proposal, securing funds and implementing the project, and reviewing and continuing the process. The important and sometimes challenging components of grant applications are covered. Managing the project, building partnerships, conducting meetings, and following up on the application are covered in detail. A unique Grants for Libraries Toolkit includes full-size reproductions of the charts, worksheets, and checklists featured throughout the book. The CD-ROM reproduces the entire toolkit (in Word format for easy printing and customization), sample grant applications, and nine complete example grant proposals. Sixteen success stories share experience and advice from successful libraries and provide inspiration and models for projects and success stories. Experienced and novice librarians, students, administrators and anyone who seeks or uses grant funding will find invaluable and practical guidance.
- The Taft Group’s Big Book of Library Grant Money: Profiles of Private and Corporate Foundations and Direct Corporate Givers Receptive to Library Grant Proposals (ALA, 2006) profiles foundations and corporate grant makers that have made grants to libraries or listed libraries as typical recipients. According to the ALA Web site:
  This forward-looking edition includes nearly 2,400 private and corporate foundations and givers that have either indicated an interest in giving money to libraries or have already done so. Potential donors in The Big Book are profiled with contact and portfolio information, past contributions summary and analysis, and application information. With historical data, you can track contributions and assets and predict future giving patterns. Offering you the most “hooks” for connecting with actual people, The Big Book also provides contact information for nearly 16,000 foundation officers and directors. As an added
feature, ALA’s own development office experts have included tips on winning grants for libraries.”

Local guides may be published by a community foundation or United Way. There is a government office that regulates charities in each state. This may be called the charities registrar, under the secretary of state’s office or the department of justice. Call them or access their Web site to see if they have publications and guides on your state funders.

General Resource
Foundation Center Libraries have Cooperating Collections in 220 libraries in all 50 states and Puerto Rico. Each collection consists of a core collection of Foundation Center publications, including FC Search CD-ROMs and a variety of supplementary materials and services in areas useful to grant seekers. Go to www.fdncenter.org/collections to find the Foundation Center Cooperating Collection nearest you.

Getting to Know Your Funder
Research your prospective funder’s past giving. Has the funder made any grants in the past related to your grant project, to grantees in your geographic location, in the amount you need, and for the type of support you want? Discovering this information can help you determine whether your project would be appealing to this funder. This may be available on their Web site or through annual reports, or you can access their recent federal tax returns. Almost every private foundation’s IRS Form 990-PF tax return can be accessed online for no charge at www.guidestar.org or www.grantsmart.org. All past grant funding will be included, usually as an attachment toward the end of the return. You can find out how large the grants were, if certain types of programs were funded, in which geographic areas, specific names of grantees, details on finances, giving interests, and application procedures.

Keep track of all likely matches and then start contacting the funders directly. Be sure you read any published grant guidelines before contacting them with questions. Don’t waste time by asking questions that are answered on their Web site or in their application, such as deadlines and past funding. Making a list of any clarifying questions and planning how you will introduce your grant project to the funder will be helpful. Developing relationships with funders and realizing that they should be your partners will bring you greater success in not only obtaining grants but in implementing your grant projects. Good luck with your grants!

References
Does Your Space Appeal to Teens?

I’m going to suggest a radical notion in this column. It’s a suggestion that many librarians have heard before, but it can still fire up a good argument in our profession. If I could duck before suggesting the following I would, because I know that no small amount of stones will be cast in my direction. Metaphorical stones. At least I hope they’re metaphorical.

Libraries need to be more appealing to teens than Borders, Starbucks, and Barnes and Noble to attract young adults. We also need to do them one better. There, that wasn’t so bad now was it? We’ve all seen the bright and shiny new libraries adding cafes and sleek amenities that have more in common with those retail juggernauts. But I’m not talking about design here, but rather getting at the notion of what libraries can do to make themselves more appealing than these very popular spaces.

What is it that makes a place appealing? I’ll venture an example. Besides being a librarian, I’m also a comic book snob—I’ve been reading indie comics since high school. I don’t go in for the spandex and super-powered stuff at all. It’s been a struggle for years to find a comic shop that doesn’t feel like the stereotype of a comic shop. One store that I frequented briefly was so cluttered with boxes, action figures, and cheap Babylon 5 merchandise I could barely turn around in the place.

Another comic store was run by a man who sat in a high wooden booth and yelled “This is not a damn library!” at anyone who spent more than five seconds looking at the interior of a book. Many stores had dim lighting and dank smells and evoked the feeling that if you ventured into the back room, you’d be likely to find Hannibal Lecter standing on tip-toe awaiting Agent Starling. In short, they were creepy. For a time I stopped reading comics
Highlighting high interest books in high traffic areas, crafting more visually appealing displays and doubling down on community outreach targeted at young adults are all part of making the library more appealing than our corporate rivals.

because the places to purchase them made me feel like a cretin or a criminal. Then I found Comix Revolution. Located in Evanston, Illinois, just a jump on the El train north of Chicago, Comix Revolution is a bright, clean, well-appointed comic shop. Books are well-organized, the staff is friendly and helpful, and the place feels more like a high-end boutique than The Android's Dungeon, the infamous home of Comic Book Guy on The Simpsons.

It was when I found myself bringing friends I wanted to get into comics to Comix Revolution that I realized the true power of appealing space. I was trying to overcome one mental hurdle—that comics were child's play, the stuff of overheated adolescent fantasy—and the fact I did not have to face the additional hurdle of an unwelcoming space made my job that much easier.

Homework, parental nudging, and appealing programming can get young adults into the library, but making them stay and engage in that most teen of activities—hanging out—is the brass ring. How can libraries become that hang out space and still be libraries?

What makes bookstores and coffee places comfortable and appealing to young adults? It's not just the sleek décors. They offer teens a place to be and be relatively undisturbed. They can't run wild and start screaming or making messes, but they can chat, giggle, laugh, play, text each other, flirt, and gawk. They can be in a place and yet not of it; to put a classical spin on it, they're not there just to load up on books and lattes.

In essence, these stores are the elusive third space. The first space being home, the second work (or for teens, school), and the third is somewhere outside the strictures of the first two where teens can socialize and relax.

Adults have many third spaces open to them. I often think that once we pass the age of twenty-one we begin to suffer from a wondrous form of amnesia about the days before we could enter a bar. The crude fake IDs, the scams to convince bartenders and doormen of our maturity, and the all-too-frequent feeling of utter rejection when older friends would pass beyond the veil and into the mists of Avalon that we knew were just so much fun. Being underage means being denied access to many possible third-space places. Libraries can do a great deal to fill that void.

Again, this is not a call to redesign library spaces, spend millions of dollars on architects and elaborate furniture. You don't have to spend a dime to hold an after-hours teen night. Show movies, have board and video games, and give teens free reign on what they want to do. If you ease up on the structure, you allow young adults to create their own equilibrium.

Easing up on restrictive rules enforcement (putting the “shush” library model in the dustbin of history), crafting young adult-centered programming, and allowing teenagers to hang out even if they don't have anything to read or homework to finish all open up the library and give it more shine than the glossiest Borders advert. Highlighting high-interest books in high-traffic areas, crafting more visually appealing displays, and doubling down on community outreach targeted at young adults are all part of making the library more appealing than our corporate rivals.

But how can we do them one better? That's the simple part. Libraries offer books, music, movies, engaging programs, creative spaces, and an open appealing place to be yourself, make new friends, and hang out with old ones. But you don't have to buy overpriced coffee to enjoy it.
Given the high cost of legal action and the growing litigiousness in American society, libraries of all types must be concerned about the possibility of a lawsuit. The American Library Association has published books on the subject, and library journal articles have discussed potential library liability at length. Often, these discussions are related to professional malpractice, copyright and other intellectual property, and employment. For public libraries, access to information and access to the library have become vital issues.

For the last ten years, the case of Kreimer v. Bureau of Police for the Town of Morristown stood as a landmark case in the area of library access. Richard Kreimer, now fifty-five years old, is suing the New Jersey transit system for ejecting him and other homeless people from train stations. Kreimer, many librarians will recall, sued the Morristown public library and police department in 1992 for ejecting him from the library on at least five occasions. In federal district court, Kreimer prevailed.

The Kreimer case was overturned on appeal, but the issue of public libraries ejecting patrons on the basis of their appearance or hygiene remains, largely because of the use of these public facilities by the homeless. The San Luis Obispo County (Calif.) Library, for instance, has recently enacted a rule allowing library employees to ask malodorous patrons to leave. Watchdog groups contend that these people largely have nowhere else to go and should be dealt with more compassionately. The library, however, says that people will only be asked to leave if they ruin the experience for others.

This article analyzes three significant cases to examine the question of public library liability for alleged constitutional violations against patrons evicted due to their appearance or hygiene rather than for disruptive behavior. The analysis focuses on how policies should be constructed and enforced. Further, in cases where individual administrators and managers have been sued along with their libraries, the notion of qualified immunity is examined. Conclusions are reached regarding the significance of these cases and ways public libraries may be able to avoid liability and the cost of litigation entirely.

Kreimer v. Bureau of Police for Town of Morristown
While it has been discussed at length in the literature, the Kreimer case and its initial impact on the library profession warrant continued analysis. In 1989, the Morristown library board of trustees adopted a written policy
that said that patrons not “reading, studying, or using library materials” may be asked to leave.7 Further, the policy provided that patrons must respect the rights of, and not annoy, other patrons.8 With regard to appearance, “patron dress and personal hygiene shall conform to the standard of community public places. This shall include the repair or cleanliness of garments.”9 Following discussion with an attorney from the American Civil Liberties Union, these policies were amended. Included in the amendments was a new provision that barred patrons from interfering with the use of the library by other patrons or the performance of library employees’ duties.10 Kreimer did not dispute the constitutionality of that provision.11

The revised language of the policy regarding appearance is significant:

Patrons shall not be permitted to enter the building without a shirt or other covering of their upper bodies or without shoes or other footwear. Patrons whose bodily hygiene is so offensive as to constitute a nuisance to other persons shall be required to leave the building.12

Richard Kreimer, a homeless man, sued the public library in Morristown, New Jersey, for evicting him due to his appearance and body odor. District Judge Sarokin began his opinion with broad statements about fear and discrimination that can arise in exclusion: “The danger in excluding anyone from a public building because their appearance or hygiene is obnoxious to others is self-evident. The danger becomes insidious if the conditions complained of are borne of poverty.”13

Sarokin goes on to idealize the public library: “The public library is one of our great symbols of democracy. It is a living embodiment of the First Amendment because it includes voices of dissent. It tolerates that which is offensive.”14 He cuts to the heart of the matter close to issues librarians have embraced: “Society has survived not banning books which it finds offensive from its libraries; it will survive not banning persons whom it likewise finds offensive from its libraries. The greatness of our country lies in tolerating speech with which we do not agree; that same toleration must extend to people, particularly where the cause of revulsion may be of our own making.”15

Sarokin’s prejudices come through before he renders any legal justification in the case. “If we wish to shield our eyes and noses from the homeless,” he says, “We should revoke their condition, not their library cards.”16 He clearly sympathized with Kreimer, and found the library’s policy, enacted specifically to evict Kreimer, abhorrent. His description of Kreimer as “a resident of Morristown” and “a homeless individual whose access to showers and laundry services is severely curtailed by his homeless status” implies that Kreimer is a victim of the library and society at large.17

The district court held that the policy violated Kreimer’s constitutional rights, specifically his rights to freedom of speech, due process, and equal protection under the law.18 First, it analyzed the First Amendment claim. The First Amendment applies because the freedom of speech and of the press includes the right to receive information. Thus, a policy “which conditions access to public reading materials” falls under the First Amendment.19

For First Amendment purposes, a public library is a designated public forum. Again, Sarokin seizes on this issue, which the library had already conceded, to proclaim that “a public library is not only a designated public forum, but also a ‘quintessential,’ ‘traditional’ public forum whose accessibility affects the bedrock of our democratic system.”20 The problem with the restriction here, according to the court, is that it does not serve the stated purpose and is overly broad. The stated purpose of the policy, according to its preamble, is to allow all patrons use of the library facilities to the greatest extent possible.21 Citing U.S. Supreme Court precedent, the district court held restrictions of a public forum must only prohibit activity that “actually and materially interferes with the peaceful and orderly management of the public space.”22 The policy here, the court said, does not limit itself to actual disturbance.23 Further, no alternative channels are left open for Kreimer under the policy.24

The district court’s ruling stunned the library community. The Kreimer case seemed to disallow (or at least severely limit) public libraries from barring patrons who had not exhibited disturbing or disruptive behavior, but whose appearance or hygiene may have been disturbing to other patrons or library staff. Further, it seemed to indicate that, absent disturbing or disruptive behavior, the library could not eject someone even if the person was obviously not in the library to use library materials.

Sarokin’s opinion, however, reflects some interesting ideas and distinctions. First, Sarokin portrayed the public library as more than just a traditional public forum. Thus, the standard he applied is different from that subsequently applied by the circuit court in the appeal and in other courts. Second, and perhaps more notably, is Sarokin’s attributing to the library such a central role in democracy. Often the law is thought of as the application of disinterested logic and reason to societal problems. Here, it seems,
Sarokin applied some personal beliefs to the opinion. Kreimer, a homeless man whose appearance and hygiene disturbed the library staff, garnered Sarokin’s sympathy. The library admitted enacting this policy specifically with the aim of keeping Kreimer out. Sarokin also seemed to feel the policy was a pretense: “the library patron policy at issue in this case does not limit itself to prohibitions of actual library disturbance.”

Following the ruling, the library appealed. Before the appeal was decided, however, the library settled with Kreimer for $230,000. The appellate court decided the policy was a reasonable restriction that served a legitimate government interest. The appellate court’s opinion notes that, while Kreimer said he would read or sit quietly, the library claimed Kreimer would stare at patrons and talk loudly to himself and others. No mention of Kreimer’s alleged disruptive behavior was discussed in Sarokin’s opinion. The Third Circuit found the rule regarding bodily hygiene valid; it served the government interest of having other patrons not interfered with and maintaining the library in a clean and attractive condition.

Further, patrons who are ejected are not barred from reentry if they comply with the rules. None of the rules were held to be overbroad.

The appellate court’s decision in favor of the library eased some concerns. In fact, the Third Circuit’s decision in Kreimer has oft been cited for the notion that the First Amendment entails the right to receive information as well as speak it. However, the case being settled out of court left a lot of questions unanswered. Also, the discrepancy regarding whether Kreimer’s behavior or his appearance and hygiene were the cause of his ouster left the matter open.

There is no doubt that a library can eject a patron for disruptive behavior. Library policies must be able to serve their purpose, and that purpose is central to the ideals of democracy and free speech. While confirming this central purpose and the First Amendment implications of library policy, Kreimer seemed to raise more questions than it answered. Most importantly, can a library eject a patron solely on the basis of his appearance or body odor?

Armstrong v. District of Columbia Public Library
In 2001, the question appeared to be answered “yes,” when another homeless patron sued a public library following his ejection due to his appearance and hygiene. The district court in the District of Columbia relied heavily on the decision of the Third Circuit in Kreimer. However, it reached the opposite conclusion. The district court found that Kreimer applied two distinct standards for regulations concerning conduct and for those concerning hygiene. A standard of “reasonableness” is applied when reviewing a regulation concerning conduct. However, the hygiene regulation requires a “stricter, narrowly tailored” standard; otherwise, the First Amendment might be infringed on a whim or some other personal standard.

The District of Columbia Public Library’s policy allowed for warnings and, ultimately, eviction for “objectionable appearance.” In parentheses following this phrase, the policy listed examples, including “barefooted, bare-chested, body odor, filthy clothing, etc.” The district court held that, despite these examples, the policy was vague and overbroad. The term “objectionable appearance” was not objective or specific enough. The policy in Kreimer included the term “nuisance,” a clear legal standard under New Jersey law. The court rejected the library’s argument that “objectionable appearance” incorporated a commonsense standard. “Because the regulation at issue is wholly dependent on the individual staff member’s interpretation . . . its enforcement is unavoidably arbitrary.”

In a statement to the press after the opinion was issued, counsel for the library said the guidelines were being reviewed even before the judge had reached his decision. The library policy in question in Armstrong had been enacted in 1979, with some revisions in 1982 and 1984. The director of the library had submitted the guidelines for review by the D.C. Office of Corporation Counsel, but the office never responded.

This submission to counsel, however, did help in the judge’s conclusion that the individuals named in the suit could claim qualified immunity. Qualified immunity is “immunity from civil liability for a public official who is performing a discretionary function, as long as the conduct does not violate clearly established constitutional or statutory rights.” In other words, this doctrine protects public officials who are performing their jobs as long as they do not clearly infringe on a person’s rights. The standard for qualified immunity is not the individual person’s motives, but “whether a reasonable person would have known that the . . . regulation violated a clearly established constitutional right.” Submission to counsel in this case demonstrated well-intentioned motives of the library officials. The library officials clearly intended to act within the law. “[T]he fact that the Director submitted the guideline at issue for review by the Office of Corporation Counsel rebuts plaintiff’s claim of uncon-
Armstrong confirmed what many librarians already believed. Libraries could eject patrons solely on the basis of objectionable appearance or hygiene. However, the criteria for ejection must be specific.

Armstrong confirmed what many librarians already believed. Libraries could eject patrons solely on the basis of objectionable appearance or hygiene. However, the criteria for ejection must be specific. In particular, the criteria should fit within a legal standard, not the subjective opinions of library staff. Submitting the policy to legal counsel in advance of implementation serves two purposes. First, it helps to ensure the policy is objective. Second, it helps establish that the library’s motives are not driven by unconstitutional objectives. The standard for qualified immunity is whether a reasonable person would have believed they were violating a person's rights. Submitting the proposed policy to counsel demonstrated positive motives on the part of the library officials. While this is not the standard by which qualified immunity is gauged, it can help a judge determine that the defense is appropriate.

**Neinast v. Board of Trustees of Columbus Metropolitan Library**

While he is not homeless, Robert Neinast likes to walk around barefoot. Married and a father of three, Neinast is a member of the Dirty Sole Society, an organization that promotes going barefoot. According to its Web site, the Dirty Sole Society currently has about one thousand members. The *Columbus Dispatch* interviewed him regarding his hobby of hiking barefoot. He visits businesses without shoes, and he wears flip-flops to work only because of his employer's policies.

On several occasions from 1997 to 2001, Neinast visited the Columbus Metropolitan Library barefoot. On these occasions, he was asked to leave under a library regulation requiring the wearing of shoes while on the library premises. In 2001, he sued the library’s board of trustees; Larry D. Black, the director of the library; and Vonzell Johnson, the assistant manager of security for the library, in federal court, alleging violations of his rights under the First, Ninth, and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution.

Neither federal law nor the laws of the state of Ohio prohibit going barefoot in public. Neinast admitted to going in many public places without wearing shoes. The Columbus library’s patron regulations do not prohibit using the library without shoes. However, the library’s eviction procedure does allow for eviction of patrons not wearing shoes.

Neinast sued the library and the two individuals under 42 U.S.C. § 1983. The Constitution, while enumerating rights of individuals against their government, does not provide any remedy for a constitutional violation. Section 1983, in essence, provides that individuals, when acting under color of law, may be sued for violating the constitutional rights of another. Simply put, to succeed under § 1983, a claimant must show that (1) a person (2) acting under color of law (3) deprived the claimant of his or her rights secured by the U.S. Constitution or its laws.

**First Amendment**

In his suit, Neinast made three claims. His first claim was that the library is a public forum, and he has the right of access as well as his right of expression under the First Amendment. This claim embraces two distinct ideas—the right of access to information from the public library as a First Amendment issue and Neinast’s refusal to wear shoes as a form of speech that is constitutionally protected.

Regarding the right of access to information from the public library, the Sixth Circuit recognized, as the Third Circuit did in *Kreimer*, that “the First Amendment protects the right to receive information.” However, this does not mean that the library must provide unlimited access. “The Library is obligated to permit the public to exercise rights that are consistent with the nature of the library and consistent with the government’s intent. . . . Other activities need not be tolerated.” Reasonable restrictions on the time, place, and manner of speech, but not of the content, are allowed if they are narrowly tailored to serve a significant government interest, and leave open ample alternative channels of information.

The regulation in this case is not content-based. The regulation requiring shoes on the premises does
not impact the content of any speech within the library. Further, the reason for the regulation serves a significant government interest—the government does have an interest in patron safety and in not getting sued for injuries from barefoot patrons. To persuade the court of this potential safety issue, the library submitted incident reports to the court of hazards that barefoot patrons might encounter. These included feces; vomit; broken ceiling tiles; splintered chair pieces; and drops of blood and urine on the floor of various areas, including the restrooms, elevators, children’s area, and reading areas. Further reports documented a patron who had scraped an arm on a staple in the carpet, and a patron whose toe was caught in a door. To require shoes on library premises, the court held, is a narrow restriction designed to serve this interest.

Neinast also claimed his barefootedness served as symbolic speech. As a member of the Dirty Sole Society, Neinast believes his barefootedness conveys a message that it is not illegal under state or federal law nor is it disruptive to the library but is protected under the Constitution. For conduct to be speech protected by the First Amendment, (1) there must be “an intent to convey a particularized message”; and (2) “in the surrounding circumstances the likelihood was great that the message would be understood by those who viewed it.” For example, the wearing of black arm bands by students to protest the Vietnam War is protected symbolic speech.

Neinast’s claim fails under both prongs of this analysis. First, Neinast’s going barefoot does not convey a particularized message of a political, ideological, or religious nature. Second, no one in the library is likely to ask him about his barefootedness, and there is not much likelihood that people will understand the message he intends to convey. In the library, people are unlikely to ask him about his agenda or to see the letters he carries with him from state and federal agencies stating that there are no regulations against going barefoot. The library is “a nonpolitical environment,” and Neinast’s arguments do not touch on matters of public concern—matters “relating to any matter of political, social, or other concern to the community.”

This first argument of Neinast’s holds many important legal considerations for libraries. First, for constitutional purposes, the public library is a limited or designated public forum. As such, libraries may enforce reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions on library access as long as they are narrowly tailored to serve a significant government interest. One would expect the library could restrict patrons if their conduct or behavior is disruptive. Such conduct, it seems, may extend beyond the physically or verbally abusive and may entail appearance or hygiene that others may find distracting.

By implication, the court’s logic indicates the library would have a difficult time removing a patron for wearing (or not wearing) an article of clothing that conveyed a legitimate message about a matter of public concern, whether or not it was disturbing to other patrons. While safety and being protected against lawsuits are legitimate concerns of the library, restricting someone based on their appearance is usually unlikely to meet those or other government objectives without running afoul of the First Amendment, as the case ultimately held.

**Due Process under the Fourteenth Amendment (Discrimination)**

Neinast’s second cause of action alleged that he has a right of personal appearance, a liberty interest protected under the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Under due process precedent, if the infringement is on a fundamental or protected right, such as the right to marry or raise a family, the court applies strict scrutiny, a rigid test that only the most narrowly tailored rule will withstand, and then only if it serves a compelling government interest. On the other hand, if the infringement does not involve a fundamental or protected right, the court applies a rational basis test. The rational basis test is a much more lenient standard. It only
The defense of qualified immunity is very important for librarians to consider in enacting and enforcing policy. Librarians are unlikely to act unlawfully or to deliberately violate a patron's constitutional rights. Thus, the defense will likely apply to their actions.

requires that the rules be narrowly tailored to serve a legitimate government interest.

The district court in Neinast found that a right of personal appearance is a liberty interest protected by the Constitution. However, the right of personal appearance is not a fundamental right. Therefore, the rational basis test applies. "Under such scrutiny, the court will not overturn the Library's regulation unless it is so unrelated to the achievement of any combination of legitimate purposes that the court can only conclude that the Library's policy was irrational."58

Because the library is a limited public forum, it "need not allow all modes of speech simply because it promotes some modes of speech."59 Further, it did not matter that Neinast had been admitted to other public places, including government buildings, without footwear; "he is not guaranteed the same access at the Library if he chooses to ignore its shoe requirement."60

Procedural Due Process

Neinast's third cause of action alleged that the library's policies were not properly administered by the named individual defendants and thus he was denied procedural due process. In other words, the board of trustees did not have the authority to institute such a regulation because state law did not require shoes, and the trustees are not experts on health and safety. He also argued that Black and Johnson improperly used the regulation in evicting Neinast for one full day. The court found that no procedural due process rights exist in the general rule-making of political subdivisions or agencies. Thus, Neinast's procedural due process rights have not been violated by this rule.

In this third allegation, Neinast also claimed he was denied equal protection because the shoe regulation discriminates against one group of people—those who choose to go barefoot—over another. Discrimination claims are analyzed in a manner similar to that of the due process described above. If the discrimination is based on a suspect class (for example, a class for which discrimination is unlikely to ever serve a valid purpose) such as race or alienage, the court applies strict scrutiny. On the other hand, if the discrimination does not involve a suspect class, the court again applies a rational basis test.

The regulation here does discriminate against those not wearing shoes, but they are not a suspect class. Therefore, the rational basis test applies. Again, this regulation is narrowly tailored to serve the legitimate interest of the health and safety of library patrons. It also serves to protect the library from liability.

Qualified Immunity

After dispensing with Neinast's three causes of action, the district court examined the individual defendants' claims that they were shielded from liability under the principle of qualified immunity. In the words of the court, "[t]he affirmative defense of qualified, or good faith, immunity shields 'government officials performing discretionary functions . . . from liability for civil damages insofar as their conduct does not violate clearly established statutory or constitutional rights of which a reasonable person would have known.'"62 Claims of immunity are examined on a case-by-case basis; the standard is whether a reasonable official in a similar position could have believed his conduct was lawful. Here the defendants did not violate a "clearly established" right of Neinast. The defendants also submitted a statement from the county prosecutor's office stating their actions were lawful. The court thus held that Black and Johnson were entitled to defense of qualified immunity.

The defense of qualified immunity is very important for librarians to consider in enacting and enforcing policy. Librarians are unlikely to act unlawfully or to deliberately violate a patron's constitutional rights. Thus, the defense will likely apply to their actions. As the library here did, by consulting the county prosecutor's office, libraries should consult with counsel when creating or enforcing rules that could result in patron ejection. Unfortunately, this will not prevent the initial filing of a lawsuit and having to defend against
it. However, it is available for summary judgment; a judge will decide whether the doctrine applies and, if a motion for summary judgment is successful, the case will not go through the time and expense of trial.

Neinast appealed the district court’s decision, but the Sixth Circuit affirmed summary judgment in favor of the defendants. The Sixth Circuit has jurisdiction over Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee. The holdings of this decision thus are binding law over those states and are at least persuasive authority in other circuits. Neinast also tried to appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court, but was denied. Despite its initial seemingly frivolous and silly premise, the Neinast case thus serves to reinforce and recognize several important legal ideas for libraries.

The first of these is that the library is a limited or designated public forum, resulting in First Amendment implications. It has been clearly established that the First Amendment embodies the right to receive information as well as transmit messages. While a public library would run into serious constitutional problems attempting to restrict the content of messages patrons wish to express, it does have authority to restrict the time, place, and manner of dispensing those messages.

The second important legal idea to be drawn from the Neinast case is the qualified immunity for the director and manager of security. Again, this would not protect the library from being forced to defend itself against a suit, but it would prevent the time and expense of trial. In this case, the library was insured, and the insurance covered the majority of the litigation costs; however, the library was forced to expend at least $35,000 to defend itself.

Conclusions

Public libraries today confront the problem of homeless people coming in and using the library as a daytime refuge from the elements and the streets rather than for its intended means. This can bring the homeless into direct conflict with library directors, staff, and other patrons. All libraries must put regulations into place that serve the library’s function and ensure that all patrons are handled fairly and legally.

The cases discussed reach certain common conclusions regarding such rules. The library is a designated public forum, and the First Amendment does apply to library access as the right to receive information is as much a part of the freedom of speech as the right to convey messages. To bar someone on the basis of a political message or other matter of social concern will run afoul of the First Amendment. However, someone who wishes to speak out about matters of merely personal concern may be restricted if the restrictions are reasonable with regard to time, place, and manner; serve a significant government interest, such as health and safety; and leave open alternative channels.

Clearly, disruptive behavior may be barred. Barring someone based on personal appearance or hygiene is possible and constitutional, provided that the standards, such as those in Kreimer and Neinast, and unlike those in Armstrong, are clear, reasonable, and objective. Consultation with counsel regarding enacting and enforcing rules for ejection is always advisable and recommended.

Library counsel and staff must be aware of these rules when enacting and enforcing policies regarding access to patrons who, based on their appearance or hygiene, may be disturbing to other patrons or staff. While Kreimer was settled more than a decade ago, Neinast and Armstrong are more recent, and show that this issue is still relevant and timely. These cases reflect the litigious nature of our society, but also the growing concern over the homeless using public libraries and other public facilities. Because of the increasing cost of litigation and shrinking budgets, libraries and their staff must be aware of how to defend themselves from liability. The doctrine of qualified immunity protects against liability for individuals acting reasonably, but, unfortunately, will not protect against lawsuits from being brought in the first place.

References and Notes


“In order to allow all patrons of the Joint Free Public Library of Morristown and Morris Township to use its facilities to the maximum extent possible during its regularly scheduled hours, the Library Board of Trustees has adopted the following rules and regulations.”


An interesting case in this regard is Gay Guardian Newspaper v. Ohoopee Regional Library System, 235 F. Supp. 2d 1362 (S.D.Ga. 2002). There, the court held that a public library could entirely discontinue its free literature table (except for government publications) when a gay rights organization wanted to place its publication there. The court held that discontinuing the table entirely was a content-neutral restriction, even if the rule was brought about by the library’s discomfort with the gay paper.
In these days of reduced funds and staff cutbacks, it’s not unusual for people to be moved sideways into supervisory positions or to have a number of library pages suddenly added to their list of responsibilities. It is often the case that these reluctant draftee managers have no previous experience of hiring and training other people. Who can blame them for feeling anxious about how they will handle their new charges?

My own journey to the joys of supervising others was more gradual. I began as a page in the adult section of my local library and became the part-time supervisor of six pages after two years. Eventually all the pages in the library went into a common pool, and I became their full-time supervisor for the next two years. My staffing level never dropped below twenty employees and was sometimes as high as twenty-five. All the advice I am about to provide comes directly from my own experience, mistakes and all.

**Hiring**

The people you supervise will probably fall into two distinct groups as far as length of service goes. Established libraries typically have a core of mature pages who have worked there since time immemorial and who know the collections backwards and forwards. The rest of the shelvers will likely stay for fewer than two years; every couple of months, you may be looking for new employees. Your advertising budget is likely nil, so here are some suggestions for spreading the word. Existing pages may have friends or siblings who are looking for work, and it’s a good idea to ask them first. Posting the job opening on your library’s Web site may land you some applicants. There always seem to be a few patrons interested in making the transition to employee, so putting notices up around the building can be productive. If you contact the careers counselor at your local high school, they will probably be happy to publicize job openings. Senior centers often have programs that help their more active members find jobs and are definitely worth contacting.

Consider partnering with a local social services agency. Eight years ago, I began a working relationship with a nearby mental health center. They were looking for jobs in a nurturing environment for clients who were recovering from depression and other illnesses. They provided a job coach for each candidate they
sent us. The coach would sit in on the interview, mostly offering silent support. When I employed an applicant from the center, the job coach would stay with the person for their first half-dozen shifts and help them settle into the routine of working again. This arrangement worked very well for all concerned. I did not lower my hiring standards at all, and the library gained some first-class pages, one of whom has been with us for more than seven years.

**Interviewing**
The interview is your chance to make sure you pick people who you can quickly train to be efficient shelvers. Use a list of questions prepared ahead of time and take notes as you go along. Paying attention to details at this stage will save you time and trouble later. I listed some questions I found useful in appendix A.

You will notice that some of the questions are slanted toward younger applicants and would not be appropriate for everyone. Give all candidates a written test on alphabetization and arranging Dewey numbers correctly. You'll be surprised how many people who seem bright and capable will lack these essential skills. I have given the test in appendix B to page applicants at our library for as long as anyone can remember, and I have found it to be a very reliable indicator of a candidate's future shelving prowess.

Keep a copy for yourself with the answers circled. It will save a lot of time when marking. Follow the paper quiz with a practical test using a cart of fiction and nonfiction materials. Another very useful interviewing tool is a candidate evaluation sheet (appendix C). If you award points out of five in each category, and then use the multipliers, the highest possible score will be seventy-five. To make good use of this assessment tool you need to decide on the lowest score that is acceptable to you, and then stick to your guns by not hiring anyone who falls below it. I chose sixty-five as my standard.

The score for accuracy will be based on how well the applicant performs the written and practical shelving tests. I suggest taking one point off for every two errors. Communication skills will become apparent as soon as you contact the applicant. Did they make sense on the phone? Was their application form filled out clearly? Did they listen to and understand your questions during the interview and were their answers appropriate?

It's not easy to find out if an applicant is reliable when you have only just met, but there are indicators. Was he or she on time for the interview, and...
could he or she give you an example of how they had behaved responsibly in the past?

When it comes to personal appearance, it’s important not to be too judgmental. Look for neatness and cleanliness, as these are reasonable standards to expect of any employee. Hairstyle and fashion are poor indicators of someone’s ability to shelve and are really none of your concern, except when they violate any established dress code that your library may have.

**Basic Requirements**

During the interview, it’s vital to give your potential employees as much information as possible about the basic requirements of the job. Be crystal clear about the following requirements.

**Time—Hours and More**

State the number of hours per week that the job requires and specify how many of those will be evenings or weekends. If you do not intend to hire people on a seasonal basis, emphasize that the position is a year-round responsibility. This can become an issue if you employ retired people. Imagine the disruption if two or three of your staff members suddenly announce in December that they will be spending the next three months in Florida!

I advise against interviewing high school students at the beginning of the summer vacation. A high proportion of them are likely to want summer work only. If you ask them outright if they intend to continue working once school starts again, many will say yes but will leave in the fall anyway, often due to parental pressure. Wait until August, when you will need to replace your departing high school seniors.

Be wary of overcommitted high school students. Ask candidates in this age group if they will definitely be available to work for the specific number of hours per week that you need. If they tell you that they have soccer, debate, band, and choir all lined up for the next semester but are sure that they can fit work in somewhere, cross them off your list of potential employees.

**Physical Requirements**

Applicants often don’t realize that shelving and other page duties involve a lot of bending and lifting—or that carts laden with books are heavy. Be sure to ask potential pages if they can handle the physical effort required. In spite of asking what I thought were all the right questions and providing information about the physicality of the job, I still had someone quit halfway through the first day because they found the work too strenuous.

**Commitment**

Many people who apply for part-time jobs in libraries imagine that they are in for a nice, relaxing position. Destroy this illusion from the outset! Tell them plainly that shelving is a neverending occupation, and that the flood of returning materials just does not stop. They need to realize that it is vital for shelvers to turn up for their appointed shifts. Explain that if they fail to arrive, lives could be lost in the resulting avalanche of books and audiovisual materials.

**Training**

Time spent training your employees is never wasted. Begin by taking your newly appointed pages on a tour of the whole library. This gives them a chance to see how their efforts are going to fit into the larger scheme of the library and gives other staff the chance to make the new pages feel welcome. New library employees have to absorb huge amounts of trivia; it’s important to let them know that you don’t mind when they repeatedly ask where the books with the blue dots or the green triangles go. I always used to tell my new recruits that I would be worried if they didn’t keep asking me questions.

**Shelving**

You need to be sure that new pages can shelve accurately, but don’t make them uncomfortable by constantly looking over their shoulders. The answer is to use training slips. These are simply bookmark-sized pieces of paper with the library logo and the words training slip printed on them. Ask your new employees to put one of these slips inside each book on their carts. They should also leave the books sticking out a couple of inches so you can spot them easily on the shelves. After half an hour or so, you can go back and check on the pages’ progress. It’s not unusual to find about a half-dozen errors. New pages often don’t realize just how careful they have to be with Dewey numbers or don’t know that a group of fiction books by the same author should be further alphabetized by title. Explain each incorrect placement carefully but be sure to offer praise for those books that have been sorted into the right slots. You can expect the next cart to have one or two errors, but the third cart will usually have none. Then the training slips can be put away.

Occasionally you will employ someone who does not reach the standard of accuracy you expect. I once hired a young man who made six to eight errors on...
Pages are usually the lowest-paid workers in the building. There isn’t much you can do about that, but you can let them know how essential their work is and that you appreciate their efforts.

Each of his first three carts. The next time he came to work, I used the training slips again, and his error rate remained steady. I took him to one side and asked him how he thought he was doing.

He was under the impression that his work was splendid, and I had to explain that as I could not spare the time to check every book that he shelved, I would have to let him go. If you ever find yourself in a similar position, be polite and kind but ruthless. You can’t afford to employ someone who makes chronic errors. And yes, he did pass the tests at interview!

Each time you give your trainees a new duty, make sure that you explain and demonstrate exactly what is required of them. You should also be available to answer their questions. The new employees need to know that you are interested in their progress. I recommend keeping an individual training log for each person. This can be a simple sheet of paper listing the various duties and collections with which your pages need to be familiar. It’s a good idea to sit down with each trainee periodically. Together, you can assess the areas in which he or she has become proficient.

Performance Assessment
I was required to complete performance evaluations for my pages after they finished their first six months of employment and then had to repeat the process on each anniversary of their starting date. You may have similar obligations. The only way to do this without losing your sanity is to keep daily records. Work logs are essential tools for anyone trying to keep track of their employees’ activities. Tell the pages to write a brief account of their duties at the end of every shift. Entries should include the number of carts and types of materials shelved, as well as anything else the pages worked on that day. Read these logs on a regular basis and write in any comments or suggestions you may have. You should also write in any favorable remarks made by other staff members about individuals. Critical remarks should not be passed on and must never be repeated in front of other pages. You must deal with legitimate complaints about a page’s work as you see fit, but it is better to keep such instances noted in a separate log that remains private. When assessment time comes around, the page logs and your own notes should give you enough material to make useful evaluations. Once the evaluations are complete, destroy the old log sheets and daily records or hand them to human resources to be placed in the pages’ individual files.

Getting the Best Out of Your Pages
Pages are usually the lowest-paid workers in the building. There isn’t much you can do about that, but you can let them know how essential their work is and that you appreciate their efforts. Take an interest in what they do. Take a walk into the stacks, ask them how they are getting on, and compliment them if their section is in good order. If you give someone a special task, such as tidying up new books, be sure to check out what they have accomplished and thank them for a job well done.

But hold them to high standards. To cope with the constant flow of returned materials you need your employees to turn up on time, get busy, and stay busy. It’s best to be very specific about your expectations right from the beginning. If breaks are meant to be only fifteen minutes long, then you need to make that clear on the first day and follow up with reminders if you notice anyone taking more time. It goes without saying that you will get far more cooperation if you are back from your own breaks on time. Let pages know that it will not be possible for them to stop working and have long conversations with any friends who happen to come into the library. Explain from day one that you understand that books are fascinating, but pages cannot read books on the library’s time.

I am a great believer in page meetings. I used to hold them every month, with a day session and an evening session so that as many people as possible could attend. You can use them to let your staff know about upcoming collection changes and anything else happening within the library that will affect them. Take the opportunity to ask them for any ideas they may have about improving the way things are done. Be sure
to pass on any compliments you have received about their work. Provide refreshments or encourage people to bring snacks and drinks. If your meetings are enjoyable—as well as informative—everyone will benefit.

**Getting the Best Out of Yourself**

Many of us find the idea of supervising other people daunting and are not sure if we have the appropriate skills. My advice is to start looking for help immediately. The business section of your library is sure to have several titles that deal with making the transition to being in charge of other employees. Read a few and pick out the ideas and strategies that you think will work in your situation. Companies that specialize in training often hold regional, one-day courses that deal with supervisory skills. I attended a couple and found them very useful. The most effective thing you can do is to get together with other page supervisors and pick their brains. Shortly after I became a supervisor, a neighboring library hosted a meeting exclusively for people in charge of pages. The host library asked attendees to bring and share any forms, training aids, and assessment tools that we used. We discussed recruitment and rates of pay at one session. More than forty people attended, and it was an unqualified success. The local libraries decided to institute these meetings quarterly, rotating between sites. If you do not have a group such as this in your area, then I suggest that you start one. There is no substitute for getting together with people who understand the challenges you face and who can offer you the benefit of their experience.

When it comes to sorting returned materials and getting them back on the shelf, there are never enough hours in the day. You cannot be everywhere at once, and you must learn to delegate if you are to stay sane. Give your pages their own sections to look after and make them responsible for the shelf reading and general upkeep in those areas. Some of your pages will know as much about the collections as you do—and possibly even more. Enlist their help to train new employees. They will appreciate the fact that you value their experience and will be pleased that you are placing your trust in them.

**Getting the Best Out of Your Library**

To borrow a phrase from Jane Austen, it is a truth universally acknowledged that as soon as you...
are put in charge of the pages, you will be held directly responsible for the state of every bookshelf. Furthermore, a large number of people will feel it is their duty to bring any and all instances of disarray to your immediate attention. You must get used to this and develop constructive ways to respond to criticism and learn not to take it personally. If someone complains to you about the untidy state of the picture books, resist the temptation to lay the blame at the feet of the toddlers who come in and trash them every day. Instead arrange to have a page go into that area several times a day to make running repairs. I used to go into the last twenty minutes of adult and youth services department meetings so that any concerns those groups had about the pages could be aired in a controlled way. People were more inclined to keep their criticism constructive when speaking in front of a department head, with minutes being taken. Not all the remarks were negative, and it was gratifying to have compliments about the pages recorded as well. I strongly recommend that when you are at these meetings, you ask each department for a list of shelving priorities. A consensus on where the pages should direct their efforts will help foster an atmosphere of cooperation. Be sure to let everyone know when your own page meetings are being held, and encourage people to let you know of any concerns that they would like you to mention to your staff.

Conclusion
Supervising library pages is often hard work, but it does have its rewards, although a large salary is not one of them! Libraries usually prefer to promote from within, and pages, with their hands-on knowledge of how things are organized, make excellent candidates for nonprofessional openings in other departments. Pages that I hired went on to work in technical services, circulation, and interlibrary loan. Two of them became full-time page supervisors. It’s always deeply satisfying to see one of your hires progress from a part-time job to a full-time career. So is giving a high school student his or her first-ever job, and then watching he or she develop into a confident and useful employee.

Being in charge of others is a challenge but it’s also an opportunity to acquire organizational skills and to develop good working relationships throughout your library. That can only benefit you in whatever you decide to do next.

Appendix A. Interview Questions

1. Due to child labor laws, individuals younger than sixteen years of age cannot work past 7 P.M. during the school year. Are you sixteen? If not, when will you be?

2. Why did you leave your last job?

3. Tell me about the most challenging aspect of your last job/school life. How did you meet this challenge?

4. How would you rate yourself on attendance and punctuality?

5. The hours for this job are evenings and weekends during the school year. What days and hours within this time frame are most convenient for you?

6. Will you be able to work those hours during the entire school year?

7. Are you willing to work evenings and weekends during the summer?

8. You would be required to work twenty-four hours within a two-week pay period and to schedule yourself so that there are no four-day gaps between workdays. Could you commit to this arrangement?

9. Employees in this job are required to push heavy carts and maneuver them in tight spaces. You may be asked to rearrange furniture for library program set-ups. You must be able to stretch and bend to reach high and low shelves. Are there any physical limitations that would prevent you from meeting any of these requirements?

10. How would you handle a situation in which a patron made a mess of some books that you had just put away and shelf read?

11. What would you do if a patron complained to you about library services or materials?

12. Why did you decide to apply for a job with this library?

13. What interest you most about this job?

14. One of the most important qualifications needed for this job is reliability. Tell me about a time in your past when you showed how reliable you can be.

15. Do you have any questions about the job or the library?
Appendix B. Page Skills Test

Part One
Name:
Date:

Circle the correct answer for each of the following questions.

When the following names are put in alphabetical order, which one will come second?
1. Marshall, Charles
2. Marshall, John
3. Marshall, Thomas Riley
4. Marshall, George Catlett
5. Marshall, James Wilson

When the following names are put in alphabetical order, which one will come fourth?
1. McCormick, Cyrus Hall
2. McCosh, James
3. McConnell, Francis J
4. McCormack, John
5. McCormick, Joseph Medill

When the following names are put in alphabetical order, which one will come third?
1. Harris, Chandler Joel
2. Henry, O
3. Harte, Bret
4. Hearn, Lafcadio
5. Hayne, Paul Hamilton

When the following titles are put in alphabetical order, which one will come first?
1. The Raven
2. Bells
3. The Adventures of Robin Hood
4. The Sea Gypsy
5. The Pasture

When the following names are put in alphabetical order, which one will come first?
1. Dickey, Herbert Spencer
2. Dickinson, John
3. Dickinson, Emily
4. Dickens, Charles
5. Dickenson, G. Lowes

Put the following list of words in alphabetical order; Number them from one to five.
manse
manservant
mansard
mansion
manslaughter
Part Two
Circle your answers.

If you arrange these two groups of numbers in order (starting with the lowest), which numbers will come third?

1. 870.5421 1. 896.0501
2. 870.5521 2. 896.0506
3. 860.5924 3. 896.0560
4. 870.5923 4. 896.0500
5. 870.5663 5. 897.0569

If you arrange these two groups of numbers in order (starting with the lowest), which numbers will come second?

1. 786.5301 1. 678.432
2. 786.5306 2. 658.432
3. 768.5304 3. 658.434
4. 786.5314 4. 658.424
5. 786.5214 5. 658.422

If you arrange these two groups of numbers in order (starting with the lowest), which ones will come fourth?

1. 352.548 1. 428.7654
2. 325.458 2. 428.6574
3. 355.584 3. 428.7465
4. 325.564 4. 428.7645
5. 325.546 5. 428.7653

Put the following two groups in order. Number them from one to five, beginning with the lowest.

599.744 398.378909
599.7442 398.379808
599.743465 398.3789065
599.7446 389.378909
599.744193 398.3789

Appendix C. Applicant Evaluation Sheet

Name: ______________________________
Date: ______________________________
Position Applied For: ______________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rating (1–5)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accurate</td>
<td>x5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicates well</td>
<td>x4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliable</td>
<td>x3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible</td>
<td>x2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>x1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand total</strong></td>
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</tr>
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</table>
Lives can change in an instant. This is a phrase that people hope never applies to them, especially when it involves devastating change. With hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the lives of countless people were changed forever. Little did anyone suspect the impact these two natural disasters would have on businesses and government, including public libraries, which, in Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi, were directly impacted by the storms.

Hurricane Katrina intensified in the Gulf of Mexico to a Category 5 monster. On August 29, 2005, it made landfall in Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana, as a Category 4 hurricane, with winds at 140 miles per hour. Later in the same day, with winds nearing 125 miles per hour, Katrina struck the Louisiana-Mississippi border as a Category 3 storm. One hundred miles inland, near Laurel, Mississippi, the storm was still a hurricane. Katrina will likely be recorded as one of the worst natural disasters in United States history.

Less than one month later, Hurricane Rita wreaked havoc on Louisiana. Upon entering the Gulf of Mexico, it increased from a Category 2 to a Category 5 within twenty-four hours. Weakening to a Category 3, it then struck the Texas-Louisiana border at Port Arthur, Texas, and Johnsons Bayou, Louisiana. Rita's devastating storm surge caused flooding in seven Louisiana parishes along the Gulf of Mexico and the New Orleans area.

Impact on Libraries
The two hurricanes pounded public libraries with ruinous effect, destroying buildings and collections, and rendering impossible such operations as mobile technology labs, bookmobiles, and outreach services. Entire library systems ceased to exist in some counties (called parishes in Louisiana). As of this writing, many counties are only able to provide library services at a very minimal level, and many libraries have been relocated to other governmental or commercial buildings because of the devastation. Six weeks after Katrina, some library systems still did not have adequate staff and resorted to opening minimal library branches at reduced hours.

Hurricane Katrina Louisiana
Before Katrina wreaked havoc on southern Mississippi and Alabama, it devastated six parishes in Louisiana, destroying 65 percent of Plaquemines Parish, where it made landfall. The library system's Port Sulphur Branch
is a complete wreck; the Buras Branch is still standing, but layers of slime and muck cover the floor, allowing only limited entry. Janet Cantwell, Buras Branch library director, recalled Hurricane Betsy, the previous Category 5 storm to strike the area, in an interview. “My mother, Cecilia L. Yundt, was the library director in 1965 when Hurricane Betsy struck. She had the books wash out of the Branch; for Hurricane Katrina I have the books still in the branch but under numerous feet of sludge.”

To illustrate the water level, Cantwell said, “packages of sausage from a [nearby] grocery store were on the Buras Branch roof, with a sofa lodged in a tree, and a table wedged in another tree. We had the makings for a barbeque.”

In Saint Bernard Parish, which also suffered massive storm damage, the main library and the small Ducros Museum Branch are totally ruined. “I have no staff because everyone lived in Saint Bernard and they cannot return because they have nothing to come home to,” said Ethel Llamas, library director. The Jefferson Parish Library System, located in a suburb of New Orleans, lost four branches to Katrina (six more were later ravaged by Rita), and twenty-eight employees were left homeless. The Orleans Parish Library, consisting of thirteen branches and the main library, saw eight branches closed indefinitely.

Saint Tammany Parish and Washington Parish, located north of Orleans Parish, endured great ruin, including the destruction of library branches. Saint Tammany lost the Ponchartrain Branch, and the Madisonville Branch was decimated. According to Donald Westmoreland, assistant director of the Saint Tammany Parish Library, only ten out of its ninety-two employees have homes that are inhabitable. In Washington Parish, the main library was demolished when a huge pine tree sliced the library in two.

**Mississippi**

In Mississippi, public library systems in three coastal counties suffered severe damage. The Waveland and Pearlington Branches of the Hancock County Library System were total losses. The Bay St. Louis Branch, which is the system’s headquarters, had heavy interior damage. The Kiln Branch remained operational and opened to the public on September 24, 2005, with service seven days a week. The main library and three branches of the eight-branch library system of Harrison County were destroyed—Pass Christian, Division Street, and Issac Frederick Study Center; the main library in Gulfport, structurally unsound, will probably have to be demolished. According to Sharman Bridges Smith, executive director of the Mississippi Library Commission, a substantial portion of the historic photo and rare original materials were saved from the Biloxi Library—giving Gulf Coast libraries a rare bit of good news.

The Jackson George Regional Library System had serious damage to the main library in Pascagoula, but the remaining seven libraries suffered only minor injuries. The Moss Point Public Library is now serving as headquarters for the system. Long Beach Public Library, an independent municipal library, was completely wrecked—all equipment, collections, and furniture were destroyed, and the building was condemned.

**Alabama**

Katrina also dealt a blow to Alabama public libraries. “Last year Hurricane Ivan was much meaner to Alabama public libraries,” said Rebecca Mitchell, director of the Alabama Public Library Service. “We are just now getting those libraries repaired, and Hurricane Katrina hits.” The independent Mose Hudson Tapia Public Library in Bayou La Batre was inundated by a storm surge. The library moved to a temporary site and opened with limited services in December 2005 with help from LSTA funds, the Bill and Melinda Gates Library Foundation, and donations from across the country.

Mobile was not spared devastation; the roof was ripped off of the six-thousand-square-foot Dauphine Island Branch, causing the ceiling to collapse. At the time of the hurricane, the Mobile Public Main Library building, the roof of which was also demolished, was under renovation and expansion; because of this, the library was housed in a temporary location. “The only consolation was that the building [was] leased and not owned by the library system,” said Spencer Watts, director of the Mobile Public Library.
Fortunately, the water streamed down the walls, not through doors and windows, in the temporary location, which allowed 170,000 items to be removed. According to Watts, “the library has a hurricane preparation program that allowed items to be removed at both locations. A mini-main library with a dozen computers has been installed downtown to provide services. A cruise ship housing fourteen hundred evacuees, mostly from Mississippi, is using the mini-main. We are seeing six hundred to seven hundred visitors per day.”

**Hurricane Rita**

On September 24, 2005, Rita struck the Louisiana-Texas border, affecting public libraries that were providing services to Katrina evacuees. Cameron Parish experienced the brunt of the hurricane’s wrath. The Cameron Parish Library lost the main library and three library branches, three ravaged by wind and one irreparable because it was infested with mold. With widespread destruction in the parish, it will take at least nineteen months from the time the hurricane struck before progress can begin for rebuilding. Neighboring Vermilion Parish lost the Pecan Island and Cow Island Branches, and the Erath Branch had one foot of water and sludge in the building.

Rita caused structural damage to four other parish library systems. The Calcasieu Parish Library, the parish north of Cameron, lost a branch in East Sulphur. A branch of the Jefferson Davis Library in Jennings, Louisiana, and two branches of the Vermilion Parish Library in Abbeville, Louisiana, were obliterated.

In the Terrebonne Parish Library System, 235 miles from where the hurricane made landfall, two rural branches were flooded by storm surge. One branch with a collection of approximately ten thousand items was completely wiped out. The building housing the second library branch is missing the interior walls and furnishings; fortunately, the library staff was able to reenter the building three days after the storm, saving 80 percent of the collection and the computers.

**Finances**

How do the library systems that lost virtually everything rebuild library services? In a situation where there is minimal tax base for generating revenue, from where does the funding come? Most public libraries in these three states are funded by property taxes, and many libraries are not sure what to expect. “We don’t know what will happen next year,” said Charlotte Trosclair, director of the Cameron Parish Library. “We assume there will be layoffs.” Local government officials have no answers yet regarding funding for 2006. Tax assessors are having difficulty assessing property in counties where there is massive destruction. “The parish is so broke, there is no tax base, and the library is not on Maslow’s first rung. It’s a wait-and-see game,” said Ducros Museum Branch director Llamas.

The affected counties may receive community disaster loans from the federal and state governments to help bring neighborhoods back to life, but infrastructures must be rebuilt first. It is going to take considerable financing for the reemergence of basic needs. Families cannot come back to a community that does not have schools, hospitals, grocery stores, or employment opportunities. Taxes cannot be levied on properties and goods that are not there. These issues affect the rebuilding of public library service in coastal Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi counties. Government officials still do not have answers about when or how rebirth is going to take place.

Sharman Bridges Smith said most Mississippi libraries carried insurance on building contents, with the buildings insured through the county or city governments. The Mississippi Library Commission estimates that the damage to library facilities is $24 million, with $15 million in damages for library materials, furniture, and equipment. Library directors are working with local governments and the Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) in trying to rebuild and replenish. It is the same scenario in Louisiana. What and how much will the insurance companies disburse, plus how will FEMA help?

**FEMA**

FEMA is dispatched to areas that are declared a disaster by the United States President. The purpose of FEMA is to prepare for, respond to, plan for, recover from, and mitigate against disasters. FEMA is still unsure of the role, if any, that it will perform in helping public libraries in Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi. Many frustrated library directors are not receiving information or are receiving conflicting information on how FEMA will help.

The magnitude of destruction from Katrina and Rita has caused FEMA to hire many inexperienced people. A new FEMA employee told one Louisiana library director that the books on the top row of the seven-foot shelves could be saved, as the books appeared to be in good shape. There had been approximately four feet of water in the library for...
Through ALA, one hundred fifty libraries of all types have volunteered to adopt hurricane-stricken libraries, sending them monetary donations, books, magazine subscriptions, and computers, as well as moral support.

The indefinite closings of some library systems and the relocation of employees have had an impact on library employment. The Orleans Parish Library had to lay off 197 employees, leaving only 19 to carry the load. According to Geraldine Harris, assistant city librarian, “nineteen people were identified as essential. People will gradually be brought back according to need.” State libraries and library associations posted job vacancy notices, and the Alabama Library Association established the Alabama Katrina Job Relief to help displaced librarians. Many were hired for temporary jobs at libraries. Some librarians viewed their loss of a job as an opportunity to begin in a new location or with a new career. The effect the storms had on employee retention will most likely remain unknown until the demolished libraries are reestablished. It is frightening to think of the public library knowledge that was forced out of service, possibly into other careers.

Continuation of Library Services
With two hurricanes striking within a month of each other, many communities were destroyed or debilitated. Countless numbers of people fled to safer ground within their state or to other states. With limited access to hurricane information, Internet capability, and copying services, they inundated public libraries from California to New York. The public libraries in Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas account for many of the evacuees because people wanted to stay close to home.

The days following each storm placed a burden on many public libraries lacking staff and computers to meet service needs. However, library employees are service-oriented people; many volunteered to work extended hours at their libraries and at hurricane evacuee shelters. In this time of crisis, librarians were not just librarians—more importantly, they were also social workers. Almost every hurricane evacuee wanted to share his or her experience. The stories were heartbreaking, especially from the many people...
who lost families, friends, and homes. Formal library education does not prepare librarians for the sympathy, empathy, and understanding that are necessary during a natural disaster. “Sometimes all we did was listen—that was harder than anything else,” said Brenda Doran, director of the Richland Public Library in Louisiana.

Public libraries opened their doors with concern as to the type of needs evacuees would have. Soon it was very apparent that, other than someone to talk to, people first wanted to locate missing family and friends. This proved to be a very emotional undertaking for library staff. One missing-persons Web site listed whether the person was alive or deceased. Library employees seemed to hold their breaths when this site was utilized. Employees of the Terrebonne Parish Library System decided that if “deceased” was checked, an employee would take the library customer into a private area to read the information. This luckily never happened, and it may not have been the correct process in handling the situation, but without formal training in counseling and no counselors available during a time of crisis, moving the customer to a private area was the solution arrived at by the library staff.

After location of family members, filing FEMA forms for assistance was the evacuees’ biggest demand. Most libraries did not have enough public computers, so reservation systems and numbered waiting lists were used to meet the requests. Louisiana state librarian Rebecca Hamilton made a plea to chief officers of other state library agencies for urgently needed computer equipment. Libraries from across the country offered computers, monitors, and printers, most of which were shipped directly to the libraries to meet the demand.

Many evacuees needed considerable help both filling out and filing their FEMA forms. This placed a burden on understaffed libraries and resulted in intensive waits for help even in libraries with more staff. Some libraries assigned specific staff for the sole purpose of helping to complete the forms, while other libraries recruited volunteers to help.

With the hurricanes destroying communities, library staff proved to be ambassadors for their counties. Whether temporarily or permanently, many evacuees chose to make new homes in the communities that had given them refuge. Links with hurricane information were adapted for posting on many libraries’ Web sites. People requested local housing and school information; they inquired about public transportation and community infrastructure, restaurants and shopping. Some libraries reported that they were helping evacuees with data and information to start new businesses.

In the process of assisting adults, public libraries did not forget to help children and teenagers. Disasters of this magnitude will frighten children, and the destruction of normal routines and personal belongings only add to their fears. Youth services staff and children’s librarians, with their warmth and generosity, shone brightly for public libraries as they leaped into action to comfort and entertain young evacuees. Many libraries performed numerous story times, craft workshops, and showed movies to children and teens in shelters. Summer reading program t-shirts were distributed along with books, stuffed animals, coloring books, and board games. Teenage evacuees volunteered at libraries and were encouraged to join book discussions and attend workshops, making them feel like part of the community.

The children’s staff also provided services to children visiting the library, issuing temporary cards, performing story times, and conducting craft workshops. Many libraries created displays of books and audiovisual tapes that would help children deal with their situation. Some libraries held special family read-aloud times and book discussions and also brought in counselors to talk with the families. In addition, libraries worked with the public and private school systems to offer homework help for the new students.

There were countless other services that public libraries provided to hurricane evacuees. Many libraries altered their policies and dispensed temporary cards to evacuees. Most libraries placed limits on the number of items that could be circulated; for unreturned items, it was regarded as a small price to pay if the items comforted the person. A large number of libraries dispensed with fees for copying, computer printing, and faxing when the material was storm-related. Televisions were installed in meeting rooms and areas of the library so evacuees could obtain information, especially local hurricane coverage of their communities. At Terrebonne Parish Main Library, the staff would occasionally hear people crying when their destroyed neighborhoods were shown on the screen.

Public libraries and librarians were able to help hurricane evacuees in some very unique ways. An employee of the Catahoula Parish Library in Louisiana found housing for a hurricane survivor’s horses. The Vernon Parish Library collected three hundred pounds of pet food for rescued pets. One library director used her personal credit card to purchase a laptop for a couple who only had cash but no credit card or address to buy the computer. Many
Public libraries—sometimes considered the forgotten division of government—proved their worth by providing services and standards every day to citizens in a time of crisis.

Librarians fed people by having snacks and food available in the libraries or by volunteering at shelters and churches to cook for the evacuees. In very generous gestures, many public libraries opened on Labor Day or remained open for extended hours and days of the week to meet the demand for services.

Public libraries also made their meeting rooms and conference facilities available to FEMA, the Red Cross, and other rescue and humanitarian organizations. The Vermilion Parish Library in Abbeville, Louisiana, allowed the Red Cross to use its meeting room as a service center. Eighteen Red Cross volunteers served five hundred people—along with FEMA volunteers bunking in the room—every day for two weeks. The Kiln Library in Mississippi served as a FEMA center, and the Pine Forest Regional Library Branches offered space to the Red Cross. The Belle Chase Branch Library is the temporary seat of government for Plaquemines Parish. Businesses in the areas affected by the storm also sought Internet and computer services at public libraries. Many business personnel were searching for employees, trying to complete payroll, and hunting for temporary locations.

The mission of public libraries is to provide free, unlimited access to informational, educational, recreational, and technological resources. At a time of natural disaster, people overwhelmingly took advantage of the services provided by public libraries. There are no complicated rules and regulations regarding services, no bureaucratic red tape of jurisdiction in public libraries. Librarians and library employees excelled in serving hurricane survivors by doing what they do best: helping find the right information and services for people in need.

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita have had both negative and positive effects on public library service in Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi. It will take years for the library systems destroyed by the storms to reestablish the services that were provided to the communities. More than likely, there will be a battle to obtain sufficient funding to rebuild the library systems. Not only were libraries destroyed, but in many cases, they also lost the wisdom, experience, and knowledge of librarians who were displaced.

But on a very positive level, these natural disasters also showcased the value of public libraries, which opened their doors indiscriminately to hurricane survivors seeking vital information for recovery and survival. Public libraries—sometimes considered the forgotten division of government—proved their worth by providing services and standards every day to citizens in a time of crisis. The only difference from normal library services was that after the hurricanes dissipated, public librarians served a much larger mass of people with intensified compassion and empathy.

References
“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.

One-Person Puppetry Streamlined and Simplified: With 38 Folk tale Scripts


The appeal of puppet shows is a constant in children’s services. Yvonne Frey takes many recognizable folk-tales and fables and adapts them for one-person puppet shows in this useful manual.

The first few chapters take readers through the basics of puppetry to building a portable stage. Frey takes the fear out of finding the right puppets with easy surgeries on stuffed animals and simple patterns. Elaborate methods with paper-mâché are discussed, but readers at all craft ability levels should be able to come up with puppets and props to do the skits in this book.

While the adaptations of folktales are very nice, including “Simplyella” from Cinderella and an unembellished version of Aladdin’s story, it also is refreshing to have some shows featuring diversity. The book suggests shows covering a wide variety of holidays as well as Jewish, Japanese, and Native American stories. A strength of this work is that Frey provides short stories, song ideas, jokes, and other teasers to extend a show or to fill-in between stories. Indexes of further sources for puppetry and stories are useful.

The one-person aspect of this book alone makes it a good choice for libraries along with the works of Judy Sierra for more elaborate shows. This work is recommended for elementary schools and public libraries.—Amy Alessio, Teen Coordinator, Schaumburg Township (Ill.) District Library

A Guide to Licensing and Acquiring Electronic Information


Library employees and savvy patrons know that their twenty-first-century libraries are not simply warehouses or bricks-and-mortar entities. Furthermore, they are aware that libraries are not limited to one medium. Instead of only offering books (a misperception and stereotype), libraries actually provide information in myriad formats—videos, DVDs, CD-ROMs, compact discs, Web sites, electronic journals, electronic books, subscription or fee-based databases, and
more. The omnipresence of information technology (namely, the Web) has transformed the visions and purposes of libraries.

Digital content now accounts for a substantial line item in the library’s overall budget, and this expenditure will continue to grow. “The traditional process of ordering and receiving information in various formats is being replaced with the process of negotiating remote access to information in electronic format and then monitoring that the information is available to the purchaser’s IP range” (2) write the authors, who have previously published material on collection development in A Guide to Licensing and Acquiring Electronic Information. In short, digital resources are an essential component of libraries’ collection development plans, helping fulfill libraries’ missions to provide content to patrons in the Information Age.

This primer fulfills its objective: to provide a framework and an overview of the complex and intricate process of licensing digital content. While not meant to be comprehensive or exhaustive, the authors nonetheless point readers to a plethora of resources in the bibliography and webliography. Bottom line: this book provides a succinct walkthrough of the complex process of selection, acquisition, and licensing (including consortial licensing) of electronic information.

Especially helpful are the book’s appendices. Appendix A features sample licensing agreements. Appendix B outlines the decision-making process for licensing electronic information resources (including questions to ask and answer). Appendix C aims to help librarians review purchase proposals and contracts, and appendix D defines terms commonly used in licensing agreements (for example, authorized users).

This book includes a glossary that defines information technology and library-related terms (for example, federated searching). It is essential to master the lingo; doing so facilitates communication with database vendors and digital information providers.

Overall, A Guide to Licensing and Acquiring Electronic Information is
a helpful and practical resource for professional development; it will be especially valuable for reference librarians, reference department managers, and electronic subscription managers as well as anyone involved in the process of licensing digital content. This book will serve as an excellent text in library science coursework and curriculums. In fact, it should be required reading for reference in addition to collection development classes. Those who read Guide to Licensing and Acquiring Electronic Information along with Roger Fisher and William Ury’s Getting to Yes (Penguin, 1991) will have a solid foundation in the science, art, psychology, and process of vendor negotiations.—C. Brian Smith, Reference and Electronic Resources Librarian, Arlington Heights (Ill.) Memorial Library

I Found It on the Internet: Coming of Age Online


Harris’ book aims to share with parents, teachers, and librarians information about how teens use the Internet and how they make use of the technology for personal and social development. Teenagers have become expert multitaskers of Internet Service Technologies (IST), and they use these technologies as part of their social and emotional development. A wide range of IST, such as weblogs, online diaries, and personal Web pages, are discussed in great detail.

This book is a valuable guide for learning about online issues facing teens, such as cheating, privacy, and online bullying. Harris is a widely published librarian and author who addresses issues that concern librarians and parents. I Found It on the Internet will give readers a greater understanding of the technologies and information-viewing behavior of many tech-savvy teens. This book is a valuable resource for every library that deals with teens, and is a fascinating read.—Susan McClellan, Director, Avalon Public Library, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Digital versus Non-Digital Reference: Ask a Librarian Online and Offline


Digital versus Non-Digital Reference describes how reference services have changed throughout the years. It is divided into three sections: “The Old Versus the New,” “How We Do it Here,” and “A Few Things to Think About.” This work was copublished in 2004 as no. 85 of the Reference Librarian. The work is a collection of essays written by librarians covering different types of libraries—special, public, and academic. Digital reference has become a recent technological phenomenon in libraries. Is it worth it? How does it affect our in-person reference? How do the different reference services compare? The first section compares traditional reference services to digital reference.

The essays in the first section form a timeline of reference services, discussing the history of reference service from telephone reference to e-mail reference projects. The second section talks about how the contributors perform reference service at their libraries. This section would be a good read for librarians who are thinking about implementing a digital reference service. Some of the essays discussed predicting the success of commercial digital reference services in the United States and beyond, and state services such as the one in New Jersey. Section 3 briefly discusses questions that come up with the implementation of virtual reference, such as visibility, working along with the patron, geographical limits, working virtual reference alone at the desk, and privacy.

Each essay is well-organized with a summary, keywords for searching purposes, information about the authors (including contact information), text with headings, and a bibliography at the end of each essay.

This book will come in handy to those libraries that are contemplating providing a virtual reference service or considering merging virtual reference services with other libraries. There are similar works on this topic, including Virtual Reference Librarian’s Handbook by Anne Lipow (Neal-Schuman, 2003), Going Live: Starting and Running a Virtual Reference Service by Steve Coffman (ALA, 2003), Starting and Operating Live Virtual Reference Service by Marc Meola (Neal-Schuman, 2002), and Virtual Reference Training: the Complete Guide to Providing Anytime, Anywhere Answers by Buff Hirko (ALA, 2004).—Jennifer Dawson, Electronic Resources Librarian, Kanawha County (W.Va.) Public Library

Introduction to Serials Work for Library Technicians


Millard’s brief, yet appropriately detailed, introduction to the complex world of serials covers all aspects of serials work, including
Reinventing the search experience.

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

Reinvent the search experience for your patrons.

AquaBrowser Library can be used with any integrated automation system.

www.TLCdelivers.com/aquabrowser

2006 ALA Annual Conference: booth #3030
CHILDREN'S SERVICES TODAY AND TOMORROW
Take advantage of this youth services focused continuing education opportunity to recharge and network with other library professionals!

Special Events
Included in registration fee.

Susan Campbell Bartoletti
A Newbery Honor and Sibert Award–winning author will open the Institute at the Thursday Dinner and Opening General Session.

David Wiesner
Two-time Caldecott Medalist and Caldecott honoree will keynote the Friday luncheon.

Friday Night Reception
at the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh. Includes a vendor fair to explore new technology products for youth in public libraries.

Advance Registration Fees
$310 ALSC Members (through 6/30/06) • $350 ALSC Members (7/1/06 - 8/23/06)
$365 ALA Members • $395 Non-members • $260 Students
*An Early Bird Rate is available to ALSC Members through June 30, 2006. Only registrations postmarked by June 30, 2006, will be eligible for the early bird rate. Advance registration closes 8/23/06.

Onsite Registration Fees
$365 ALSC Members • $395 ALA Members • $420 Non-members • $275 Students

SPECIAL HOTEL RATES!
The Institute tracks and half-day workshops will take place at the Hilton Pittsburgh. A block of rooms has been reserved until August 23, 2006. Mention the "Association for Library Service to Children 2006 Institute" to receive the special conference rate of $129 s/d occupancy. To make your reservation, please call 1-800-HILTONS (445-8667) or by visiting www.ala.org/ala/alsc/alscevents/eventsconferences.htm

Optional Free Preconference
Legal Issues Affecting Policies in Children’s Services
Thursday, September 14
Space is limited. Registration required. Must also register for Institute to attend.

All-Day Program Tracks
Friday, September 15
Track One - Authors and Illustrators
Artists and Writers Are Real People- Host Them @ your library®!

Track Two - ALSC National Initiatives
Morning Session: Engaging Your Community in Día Partnerships
Afternoon Session: Introducing the Kids! @ your library® Campaign

Track Three - Emerging Technology
Go, Go Gadget!? Technology Trends and Children’s Services- What You Need to Know

Half-Day Workshops
Saturday, September 16
Designing Dynamic School-Age Programs
Storytime Programs Transformed! How To Incorporate Early Literacy Skills from the "Every Child Ready to Read" Project

Welcoming Special Needs Children @ your library®

Saturday Afternoon Optional Tours
Additional cost: $35.00
Price includes boxed lunch and transportation.
Children’s Museum of Pittsburgh or Greater Pittsburgh Libraries Bus Tour

For registration information and to access full program descriptions visit ALSC’s Web site at www.ala.org/ala/alsc/alscevents/06Institute.htm or call (800) 545-2433, ext. 2163 for information.
acquisition and ordering, receipt and check-in, cataloging, claims, and renewals. Each chapter begins with a specific learning objective, giving the reader an idea of exactly what the chapter will cover. The chapters are highly readable and contain numerous examples to further clarify the information. Examples include both automated and nonautomated processes—particularly in such areas as serials receipt and claiming, where practices often vary depending on the institution’s size and budget. The overview of AARC and MARC format in the cataloging chapter serves as a good introduction and quick reference, but staff involved with original cataloging of serials may require more detailed information.

Though the acquisition and cataloging chapters are informative, the real treasures are the chapters about processes that are not frequently discussed in library literature, such as binding and check-in. Because these are usually local processes, there are no hard-and-fast rules for how to do them, and the directions Millard provides give an outstanding overview of common practices. A glossary serves as a handy reference to deciphering basic serials terminology and is helpful for translating serials speak to plain English for non-serials staff.

The sole disappointment is a skimpy final chapter on new technologies in serials and serials management, which mentions such outdated technologies as diskettes, videotapes, and modems. Given the pace of change in the field, it may have been better to omit this chapter rather than prematurely dating the book. Clear objectives, a broad overview, and a solid grounding in serials practice make this a good choice for training staff with little or no background in serials work. Though the title includes the term “library technicians,” this book is appropriate for serials staff at all levels. Recommended.—Nanette Donohue, Technical Services Manager, Champaign (Ill.) Public Library

Library Service to Children: A Guide to the History, Planning, Policy, and Research Literature

This book is a timely update of the 1992 publication Library Services to Children. Like the previous work, the book is a list of annotated bibliographies, including 428 works published between 1876 and 2003. It is intended to facilitate locating print and electronic resources about public library services and programs for children according to history, planning, policy, research, standards, librarianship, and educational roles. A number of Web sites that were accessible in 2004 are also included.

The book features comprehensive coverage of the types of literature included in the entries. Other than books, biographies, journal articles, and research studies, the book also contains resources not readily identified, such as standards, annual reports, policy documents, and position papers. In addition to a brief note of content, bibliographic information, ISBN, and LCCN, entries for research studies indicate research methods used. This information is particularly valuable to library scholars when they plan their own studies. There is no doubt that the book will be useful for librarians, researchers, library educators, and funding agencies. For those who are interested in studying early pioneers and great personalities of public library services to children, this book offers rich material.

Four appendixes are very useful, particularly appendix A: Research Methods Used, and appendix C: Type of Literature. The former groups entries under specific research methods and the latter by types of literature. The remaining two appendixes, on funding sources and other graduate papers, also are helpful to practitioners and researchers for funding opportunities or further research studies.

The entries are numbered and arranged by authors. Numbering is a convenient device for users to identify a specific entry, however, arrangement by authors may present problems for some users. Users who are well read can easily locate the entries when they are familiar with authors’ names, but if they are not, then it could take them a great deal of time. Thus, it may be more practical to categorize the entries under broad subject areas to simplify searching.

Coauthor Van Orden is well qualified and respected in the area of school library collections. The book should be a part of public library collections. For the libraries that plan to expand children services and programs, the book is a must-purchase.—Shu-Hsien Chen, Retired Professor, Queens College, Flushing, N.Y.
NEW PRODUCT NEWS

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.

SirsIDynix Creates Public Library Demographic Market Analysis Tool

www.sirsidynix.com

A new market analysis module for SirsiDynix Director’s Station is now available. The module allows library managers to make more informed decisions related to collection development by analyzing U.S. Census demographic information for the communities and neighborhoods they serve.

“Commercial, for-profit companies use this kind of custom market map to determine far in advance what type of store to build and where, and what products to stock,” Greg Hathorn, SirsiDynix vice president of library products said. “By adopting such best practices, librarians can analyze the demographic variables that make each library unique, such as age of population, education and income levels and languages spoken—or not spoken—to ensure libraries continue to play a vital role in community development and enrichment.”

The Director’s Station statistical server offers easy drag-and-drop access to data collected by a library’s management system. The new geographic information system (GIS) module adds another analysis tool to Director’s Station. Leveraging its work on the Normative Data Project (NDP) for Libraries, SirsiDynix—partnering with the GeoLib Program at Florida State University—has compiled U.S. Census demographics on all 17,000-plus United States public libraries. By integrating census information with a sophisticated GIS, a library manager can view the compiled household demographics for individual libraries.

Coming Soon: A New Way to Look at EBSCOhost Search Results

www.epnet.com/visualsearch
www.grokker.com

Visual Search is now seamlessly available as part of EBSCOhost. The EBSCOhost Visual Search option is designed to be as intuitive as possible.

With Visual Search, EBSCOhost delivers search results in topically organized visual maps that make it easy to explore large sets of data and to gain an overall understanding of the depth and breadth of a result set. Visual Search groups information by key headings, presenting results contextually, rather than in a ranked list. The outcome is that users quickly understand the relationships among returned articles, and discover valuable information that might have been difficult to locate in listed results.

EBSCO has partnered with Groxis, the provider of the Grokker Visual Search application, to develop the...
EBSCOhost Visual Search feature. Groxis has been a leader in visual search technology for more than four years.

SirsiDynix Launches OneStop Self-Service Station


SirsiDynix has launched its OneStop self-service station. The company partnered with EnvisionWare to develop this full-service solution. A first for the library industry, OneStop combines self-checkout, fine payment, and print management in a single station.

With OneStop, library users are able to check out materials themselves, pay any fines or fees using credit cards or cash, and release print jobs. While previous self-checkout solutions could only accommodate library users in good standing, OneStop opens up service to all library users—even those with outstanding balances.

Moreover, OneStop’s modular, upgradeable design lets libraries add features over time as needed or as technology improves. Compatible with either barcoded or RFID-tagged collections, OneStop allows upgrades from barcodes to RFID.

Mapping and Locator Service for Public Libraries

www.Libraries411.com

Following several months of beta testing, Counting Opinions has just released Libraries411.com, a free, Web-based mapping and locator system for public libraries. It consists of proven mapping technologies combined with a number of innovations, including a database containing more than 20,000 public library locations for the United States and Canada.

Unlike other map solutions, there is no advertising on the searchable maps created for and displayed via the library’s Web site.

From a public perspective, one of Libraries411.com’s unique features is that the default map that a visitor sees is generally based on their present physical location. For instance, an Orlando visitor to Libraries411.com, automatically sees a map of Orlando (and related public library locations), but simultaneous site visitors in Kansas City, Oakland, or Edmonton, will see the map and library locations specific to their locations.

New Service Enables Audiobook and Music Downloads Inside the Library

www.dlrinc.com

Digital media vendor OverDrive announced the availability of OverDrive Media Kiosk software, a new application that enables Internet-connected PCs to become self-service download stations for audiobooks and music. This Windows-based software permits patrons in the library to download copy-protected audiobook and music titles directly to supported MP3 and WMA players.

With OverDrive Media Kiosk software installed at a library’s public Internet station, patrons can search the library catalog, locate a title, and then connect a player to the terminal using a USB port or cable. The self-service software enables patrons to take advantage of the library’s broadband connection to download and transfer audiobooks, educational materials, or music directly to portable devices.

Polaris Library Systems to Offer Facilities and Media Booking


Polaris Library Systems has entered into a partnership with onShore Development, Inc. (OSD) to offer OSD’s WebCheckout Resource Management and Scheduling Software as part of the Polaris Integrated Library System (ILS).

WebCheckout is the de facto standard in higher education for equipment, facility, and media scheduling. WebCheckout integrates with a library’s ILS to maintain MARC records that provide librarians with robust, browser-based scheduling capabilities that are typically not provided for in an ILS offering. As records for media resources (such as videos, audio tapes, DVDs, and albums) are cataloged in Polaris, they can be exported into WebCheckout to search, schedule and maintain media and resource reservations.

OSD has focused primarily on the academic library market. The agreement with Polaris Library Systems will allow the company to extend its reach to public libraries. “Public libraries have active programs that involve room reservations, equipment scheduling and media booking,” commented Bill Schickling, Polaris Library Systems’ president and CEO. “WebCheckout allows us to serve our Polaris ILS customers with a robust booking program that has been fully tested and used at institutions such as University of Michigan, UCLA, University of Chicago, and more.”
ProQuest Releases Online Database of Freedman’s Bank Records

www.il.proquest.com

ProQuest announced the availability of Freedman’s Bank Records, a leading resource for African American genealogical research, now available to the library market for the first time online through HeritageQuest Online.

Freedman’s Bank was an outgrowth of a plan to provide banking services to African Americans drafted during the Civil War. It was formally known as the Freedman’s Savings and Trust Company. In an effort to establish bank patrons’ identities, Freedman’s Bank collected a substantial amount of information about each applicant and his or her family. At the close of the Civil War, the Freedman’s Savings & Trust Company was the primary bank for America’s freed slaves and others from 1865 to 1874. This HeritageQuest collection documents more than 105,000 applicants and more than 480,000 of their relatives.

WebJunction to Extend Spanish Language Outreach Program

www.Webjunction.org

WebJunction has received a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation that will extend a Spanish Language Outreach Program designed to provide public library staff with skills and resources to reach out to Spanish speakers in their local communities and increase the number of Spanish speakers using public access computers in libraries across the United States.

Bowker Releases New Readers’ Advisory Tool

www.Bowker.com

Bowker has released Fiction Connection, a new readers’ advisory tool for BooksInPrint.com customers. Fiction and biography books published in the United States now can be easily identified through Fiction Connection, and patrons or librarians can search for similar titles by entering the title of a book they already know they enjoy, or browsing by location, topic, character, genre, timeframe, or setting. The user will then be provided with a comprehensive list of suggested reading that has characteristics matching their original search criteria. With the new Fiction Connection tool, readers can also identify popular character types and retrieve a list of books based on their selections.

The technology powering Fiction Connection was developed by the Netherlands-based technology company Medialab, using their Aqua Browser software and featuring their signature word cloud. The data displayed within Fiction Connection is pulled from fiction and biography profiles developed by Syndetic Solutions, which identify key traits and characteristics that define a particular title.

Fiction Connection is available as a complimentary resource to all BooksInPrint.com library and book-seller customers.

Computers By Design Releases PageMGR Software for Staff Scheduling

www.PageMGR.com

Computers By Design announced the release of PageMGR software for managing full- and part-time employee schedules. PageMGR software helps manage staff availability, print individual and group employee schedules, create a Web page, manage vacation and sick time, identify overstaffing and understaffing, reduce overtime, manage employee records, and so on.

“As a software company we created a way that will meet the needs of maintaining your staff scheduling,” said Bob Jones. “The easy-to-use program, PageMGR, will reduce paperwork, give timely flags for scheduling conflicts, and help budget staffing costs accurately.”
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