



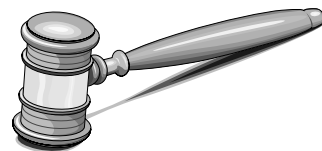
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The WLA President speaks

A Convergence of Thanks

by Carol Gill Schuyler



Past President Cindy Cunningham, thank you. Thank you from the Washington Library Association and from me. The commitment to the office of Vice President/President-Elect is a promise of four years of service and responsibility that continues regardless of changes in professional and personal lives. Each president brings forth a vision for the Association. We have been fortunate in our leadership: you brought to your presidency energy, enthusiasm, and a strong belief in WLA. The Association is fiscally sound and forward-thinking. It was an honor to work with you.

2001 Conference Committee, thank you. Thank you from the Association and from me. You conceived and delivered an outstanding conference. As I spoke to people at the conference and have talked to others in the past few weeks, every one had attended a special program that gave them a new depth of knowledge, insight, coping skill, or tool that can be used in the future. The planning logistics, housekeeping details, and emergencies were invisible because you were so well organized and creative. You did an outstanding job.

Members of the Association who presented at the conference, thank you. Thank you from the Association and from me. I know the amount of preparation time required to develop a program. And this is time in addition to your "day jobs." You all gave of yourselves and shared your expertise with us. Your skills range from public relations to Web design to cataloging to online searching to storytelling to workplace management to information literacy. We are working in a fast-paced world, and you are helping us to keep up. If you look at the conference program, you will see that you were the backbone of the program. Without you, the conference would not have been possible.

Members of the Association who attended the conference, thank you. You actively participated as audience members, asking probing questions, contributing experiences, and sharing information. Meaningful conversations occurred over meals, during session breaks, and in the lobbies and vendor spaces. So much can be learned from others in the profession, even in informal

settings.

Members of the Association who attended the annual business meetings, thank you. Last year's business meeting and the fire drill will probably go down in the Association's conference highlight annals. If the fire drill was triggered by a smoke detector, we know what room the smoke was in! What arose like a phoenix from that meeting was the Intellectual Freedom Task Force that developed the "Intellectual Freedom Statement" presented at the first session of the business meeting. The Association owes a tremendous debt of gratitude to the members of this task force. They came to consensus on the statement that they brought forth—an emotional as well as intellectual issue. And the Task Force was willing to bring the draft statement to the members without ownership. This is difficult to do.

It was impressive to watch the number of members who attended the second session of the business meeting with revisions to share. Amendments were proposed and voted on; some passed and some failed. When the "Intellectual Freedom Statement" was adopted as amended, it was an even stronger document than the one originally presented. Each member who attended the business meeting had the opportunity to participate in the process. Thank you all for that. You spoke from your hearts as well your minds. Your commitment and concern for libraries, the library profession, and for society were apparent.

Members of the Association who have agreed to be officers, committee members, and Interest Group chairs and board members, thank you. One of the first obligations of the WLA President is to meet with the out-going and newly elected WLA Treasurers to develop the Association's budget for the next fiscal year. We want to be a responsible, fiscally sound organization; and we will be.

Committee members need to be recruited and chairs appointed. Members have been not only receptive to the idea of serving, but enthusiastic. They clearly care deeply about the Association and their profession. The Information School at the University of Washington requires leadership from their students. As many of the committees as possible will have a student member. The WLA/iSchool relationship will be a symbiotic one: the Association will gain new ideas and energy, and the students have the opportunity for leadership and mentoring. At the Board retreat this summer, a two-year strategic plan will be developed based on ideas from the Association members, Committee and Interest Group chairs, and the Board. Together, we will create a plan for the Association's future.

I am looking forward to working with all of you for the next two years.



Banquet speaker Ray Suarez with WLA Past President Cindy Cunningham (l.) and WLA President Carol Gill Schuler (r.).
Photo by Deb Cutler.

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From the Editor

A Convergence of Communities

Carolynne Myall

A Convergence of Communities

In an era marked by globalization and digitization, convergence is occurring all around us, and in many contexts. Convergence of economies. Convergence of previously distant cultures, both around the world and in local communities. Convergence of private and public enterprises, and of previously separate institutions. Convergence of previously distinctive formats of media, and of literary and performance genres. Convergence of information and advertising, of telecommunications and library collections. What benefits and what losses arise from such convergence? How much is significant, how much is trivial, how much is mirage?

The 2001 Annual Conference of the Washington Library Association explored these changes in many strong programs on specific topics ranging from electronic collections and resources, to storytelling, to open information and privacy, to library friends groups and trustees. In this conference number, *Alki*'s authors reflect on the issues and carry the discussions forward. They identify many questions, and provide some answers too. Photos by conference photographer Deb Cutler help convey the mood of the event.

For me, the most interesting part of any WLA conference is the convergence of Washington library communities—groups of “library people” playing many different roles in many kinds of libraries, in all areas of our state. In this convergence of library communities, we have the opportunity to learn from each other as we bring our varied perspectives to bear on questions of interest relevant, in one way or another, to all of us. An example this year was the business meeting in which members discussed, modified, and accepted the proposed new Intellectual Freedom Statement. While most of us would no doubt make some changes in the document to reflect our own beliefs, the majority of

conference attendees accepted the new IF Statement as helpful and worthwhile. It was an important moment for our Association, and for all the library communities of Washington.

Cameron Johnson, Assistant Editor of *Alki*

The WLA Executive Board has appointed Cameron Johnson, *Alki* Committee member and one of *Alki*'s best and most prolific contributors, to serve as Assistant Editor. In this role, Cameron

will participate in the process of producing the next three *Alki* issues. Then, with the December 2002 issue, *Alki* should experience a smooth transition as Cameron assumes the editorship of our association's journal. The *Alki* Committee and I are delighted to have someone with Cameron's writing skills and experience in this position. Cameron will make the good work *Alki* authors submit for publication look even better!

Coming Issues

The theme of the December 2001 issue will be “The ‘Care and Feeding’ of the Library Community.” The *Alki* Committee and I are interested in articles on many topics around this theme: staff organizations and unions; employee assistance programs; nurture of Friends of the Library, as groups and individuals; professional development for all parts of the library community; ways to nurture a long career; articles on health, mental health, and ergonomic issues; safety; and celebrations. The deadline for the December 2001 issue is October 15.

The theme for the March 2002 issue will be related to diversity issues in libraries. We still don't have an issue name for this one. Members of the Washington State Library Diversity Initiative and

others interested in this topic, please send us your suggestions for topics, authors—and, of course, a snappy title!



The Alki Committee. L.-to-r. from top: David Hurley, Cameron Johnson, Nancy Huling, Eva Lusk, Sue Anderson, Carla McClean, Tami Echavarria, Carolynne Myall, and Louise Saylor. Photo by Deb Cutler.

Convergence Raises Challenging Issues

by Tami Echavarria



About a decade ago, I recall a scholar's description of his idealized research environment, a library without walls. He envisioned being able to sit at his computer, in his office or at home, accessing everything he needed full text on his screen. He envisioned a seamless environment where an artificially intelligent knowledge base of books, journal articles, reference assistance, chats with other colleagues, and data would all be available to him on his computer screen in a tiled arrangement that he could manipulate freely into the document he was writing. He envisioned artificial intelligence that would make it possible for his thinking to be integrated with his computer technology. A decade later this vision is not too different from the current expectations of today's undergraduate students and public library patrons.

So it seems our conference theme, "Convergence," couldn't have been more timely. In the Conference program, Merri Hartse, 2001 Conference Coordinator, welcomed attendees by saying that "we had no idea that 'convergence' would become the newest buzzword in a growing technology explosion, defined by media giant mergers and growing consumer demand for newer and faster access to information and communication. As librarians, we have yet to successfully define our role in this scenario" (Hartse). Getting a handle on the definition of convergence and grasping how it applies to libraries and information science is what WLA's 2001 conference hoped to address. The conference sessions revealed conflicts between the needs of disenfranchised populations, traditional values of our profession, and popular cultural forces as we increasingly become a more visually oriented, mediated society.

According to the *New Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought*, Western sociologists in the 1950s and 1960s developed a view that "all industrial societies will eventually converge on a common pattern of political, economic and cultural institutions." Furthermore, "a defining feature of modernity is the accelerated pace of globalization [which in] the media, communications and cultural industries ... has resulted in a ... convergence of ownership to the point where a handful of multinational companies own and control large branches of operation" (*New Fontana*).

In technology fields, "convergence" refers not only to hardware and software compatibility, interoperability, and the ability to retrieve files in various media, but also to changes in social life related to such compatibility. Personal computers now unite what had been discrete functions performed by devices such as televisions, radios, telephones and calculators. With the advent of the Internet and especially the World Wide Web, tools began to converge. Electronic media and text converged into a single computer-driven technology and PCs became today's workplace tool of choice. We moved from the information revolution into the digital age where we are now seeing portable digital devices permeate our society. And the future holds promise of integrating the digital information world with human factors (Abram).

Cam McIntosh demonstrated the Bureau of the Census contribution to "E-Government." Those accustomed to manipulating census data will find, with the American FactFinder on the Census Website, the convergence of visual and linear thinking patterns. Only 10% of the digital data will be published in print, McIntosh said, but although the presentation is higher tech, the various census reports will still be issued along the same timeline over this decade as in previous censuses. The new software really seems to be up to the task of delivering the data over the Web: a complicated, but user-friendly upgrade from the CD-ROMs of the 1990 Census.

Electronic government, in brief, is the continued performance of a wide variety of government responsibilities, such as communication, information access, and service delivery, through the use of IT with a view to improving the efficiency and economy of government operations. To facilitate this development, new authorities have been created to ensure the proper management of these technologies and the systems they serve, their protection from physical harm, and security and privacy of their information (Relyea, p.145).

In contrast to the Census Bureau's 90% stake in digital data, Patrick Charles stressed that in legal research there is no substitute for the value-added print-based research tools published by the major publishers of legal reference. In "What Are the Secret Laws," Charles, Law Librarian from Gonzaga University, clearly took the secrets out of the basics of effectively researching laws, codes, and regulations. His message was that law libraries are "print-centric" and are likely to remain that way because the Internet sources have only raw text, whereas the interpretative aids essential for legal research are found in the print sources (Charles).

In the conference keynote addresses, *Library Journal* editors John Berry and Evan St. Lifer questioned whether the survival of libraries required a headlong charge down the information superhighway, particularly in light of overwhelming evidence that libraries are thriving. St. Lifer sees the greatest role for libraries in teaching information literacy in order to develop library patrons' discernment of information sources.

Tami Echavarria is Coordinator of Instructional Services, Whitworth College Library.

(Continued on next page)

Berry challenged the notion, common in the digital age, that information is a commodity. He encouraged librarians to stand by the values of our profession and work to ensure free access to information through a public sector that preserves freedom of access to all people and ensures the public's right to know. Strong forces "say that libraries are obsolete not because they believe that but because libraries give away what they want to sell" (Berry). Librarians are fully aware that traditional sources are still more accurate and authoritative but we adopt teaching the web in response to media influenced beliefs and biases. "Technology is not the problem, nor is it the threat. Technology is only sometimes the solution" (Berry).

Michael Gorman, Dean of Library Services at California State University, Fresno, questions whether the library community's adopting digital technology is bent on improving library service, or rather are we "concentrating on areas of our work that attract funding and the interest of our masters" (Gorman). Are we replacing library services with technology that is new and captivating, trading in our stereotype as dowdy, bespectacled, spinster librarians, for the beguiling image of information scientists, newly empowered with "managing a vital and necessary resource" (Rochlin, p.38)?

Gorman calls for harmony and balance, for clear thinking in seeing the real needs of our patrons, rather than looking through "the lens of technology invariably dictating a technological solution to all problems and nonproblems alike" (Gorman). He reminds us that "Digital records are created in mind-boggling numbers and can be transferred to remote locations in nanoseconds, but they are evanescent and unstable ... We like to think of the history of human communication being one of progress, but the paradox is that, in terms of preserving the human record, we are regressing, not progressing" (Gorman).

One of our professional values has been ensuring the preservation of the human record for future generations, an enormous task that the profession has taken seriously since the early history of libraries. Collections have been the definer of libraries, but their very existence is being called into question by the technological rage that has seized the profession. Tacoma Public Library Director Susan Odencrantz addressed this issue in her presentation "Shimmer and Shine: The Mirage of Digital Collection Management." She pointed out

that collection managers of digital collections are not the same as collection developers since they do not manage collections that are actually owned. Odencrantz painted a scenario of libraries in the future that are totally digital, all having exactly the same collections controlled by commercial vendors in which information seekers could only obtain information to which commercial interests allow them access.

This issue has already provoked interest in academic libraries, whose periodicals collections are typically larger and more permanent than those of public libraries. Compiling



Conference attendees stay connected. Photo by Deb Cutler.

access guides to someone else's collection is more peripheral and less compelling than owning a collection. The technological migration of materials from one technology to another doesn't go smoothly, has prohibitive costs, and some material typically found in a paper periodical will not survive in electronic form.

Vendors and aggregators want exclusivity, something that has a huge impact on fair use, a concept corporate America does not understand. Commercial servers on which digital

materials reside are owned by companies that may not be committed to maintaining a permanent archival function. Financing permanent access in the digital age requires constant migration to new formats, a far cry from merely providing shelf space for bound periodicals.

Odencrantz ended the session by asking if we are ready to forsake local collections for a digital mirage. Laverna M. Saunders, Dean of the Library at Salem State College, Salem, Massachusetts, wrote the following, which bears on Odencrantz's rhetorical question:

Our values are not misplaced if we want to preserve the written word. As more scholarship migrates to electronic format, it becomes vulnerable to the whims of contract negotiations between publishers and distributors. Librarians are losing control over content as intermediaries make short-term decisions based on profit. Resources will not be available to future generations if libraries do not even get the opportunity to acquire and preserve them (Saunders).

Philip L. Bereano, Professor of Technical Communication in the College of Engineering at the University of Washington, outlined an even grimmer threat posed by the marriage of computers and telecommunications networks. In his presentation "Open Information and Privacy: Trying to Resolve the Conflict," Bereano said that networked computers are a class-based, hierarchical technology that is leading to surveillance of citizens. Corporations and other organizations help themselves to private information that inattentive citizens provide on the Internet. Later the citizens themselves are denied access to that same information.

Bereano succinctly put it this way: If you have power, information will help you exercise that power, but if you have no power, it doesn't give you power. So computers do not equally meet the interests of everyone, since having access only to what other people have determined is appropriate is neither democratic nor uniformly useful.

Bereano took the position that civil liberties and religious freedom should not be bought and sold because selling such values leads to market coercion of the poor. He promoted democracy rather than technocracy.

As the conference drew to a close, our distinguished guest, Ray Suarez, wove a masterful portrait of the United States as it is today. The canvas he painted was of an emerging pattern of multiracial ancestry and non-traditional immigrant populations living in areas of the country one might least suspect. "What the Census results, which followed the election results by only a few months told us, is that they are all the real America ... They are all us in the year 2000" (Suarez). When contrasted with the disturbing messages of the 2000 Presidential election, that only the traditional American voters were the real America, the friction and the confusion about our American identity in the face of multiracial convergence in our society was evident.

The conflict and confusion of convergence in our society and divergence in politics challenges us in the 21st Century. "The more elastic identity and self-definition become, the more they become an interesting cultural phenomenon and little more ... [Washington] could be one of the best places in America to sit and watch how your 281 million fellow Americans work it all out" (Suarez).

Information science doesn't seem to know where society is going, but it seems to want to make sure we get there as fast as possible. While some librarians say we must be on the leading edge to wherever society is headed, others still struggle to figure out where that is. We have to speak the language of the times to promote our message for all time, but we have to do so without losing ourselves. Easier said than done, perhaps.

Digitized information and electronic resources dominate our working lives, but traditional values of the library profession charge us with the mission of creating, preserving and imparting knowledge that is vital to a civilized society. That includes providing equity of access to all our services for everyone, and giving service to individual patrons of libraries and to society as a whole. While the convergence of text and media-on-demand form a more integrated information environment and stretch our minds beyond the confines of compartmentalized thinking, true information satisfaction becomes more elusive. Information anxiety and information overload threaten the ability to deal with the overstimulation of our society. That tension between technology and the art of librarianship poses more questions than it answers.

Perhaps our task at hand is to work through our confusion, conflict, and friction. Few of us believe we are moving into a postmodern, visually dominated, post-literate, digital dystopia. Most of us are still willing to fight the good fight to ensure that

libraries use technology to foster learning and literacy, to deepen shallow interactions with recorded knowledge and information in the digital realm of the Web. Convergence may have been the topic that we needed to move our thinking along. Media beliefs and biases will be hard to shake, but by holding onto our time-tested professional values, we can maintain our integrity as a profession and not lose ourselves as we head toward the future.

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Election of Library Trustees: Good, Bad, Coming Soon?

by **Cameron A. Johnson**

The "What's So Bad about Electing Trustees?" panel session at this year's WLA conference in Spokane revealed much anxiety about legislative bills proposing to change the way library trustees are selected. WLA opposes election of library trustees and has lobbied successfully in recent years against state legislation that would implement such a change.

Bill Ptacek, co-chair of WLA's Legislative Planning Committee and leader of the panel discussion, said in an interview before the meeting that WLA opposes trustee elections for three main reasons:

- concern that elected boards might not represent all parts of the district;
- election costs; and
- concern that elected trustees would be more likely to yield to public pressure and "thus alter or soften some libraries' position on intellectual freedom."

In addition, some county councils do not like "turning over taxing authority to a non-elected entity" (Ptacek). "The current system has resulted in terrific libraries across the state. Why change?" Ptacek said.

State legislators primarily from areas with large, rural library districts have introduced bills in the past several years that require elections for library trustees in all jurisdictions. Not coincidentally, these legislators come from areas with the most active opposition to libraries offering open Internet access. In lobbying for the change, supporters of trustee elections told the House Local Government and Housing Committee that "the switch [to elected trustees] would bring accountability to a shameful, hidden empire" (Buck).

HB 1712, introduced this year, stipulated that trustees be elected by districts drawn to ensure approximately equal population representation. Trustees were to be elected directly, and could not be removed except by displacement in office by an elected successor. The bill died in committee.

The session at the WLA Annual Conference was designed to discuss the issue and provide insight on what Washington libraries might expect to see unfold, were the legislature to require trustee elections.

Amory Peck, chair of the Whatcom County Library Board of Trustees, said during the session that forcing trustees to run for election is "burdensome and uncomfortable." She cited, in particular, public disclosure requirements for political candidates in Washington: anyone

spending more than \$2,000 on their campaigns must file public disclosure forms. With a single mailing in her district costing about \$1,500, this level would be easily reached. From an informal survey she conducted recently, Peck reported that 45 trustees said they would not run for their positions, six said they would, and six said they might.

Peck disputed the notion that appointed trustees are unaccountable to the public. She noted that all board meetings are public and that contact information for board members is readily available on the Web and elsewhere. Peck said that running for election forces board candidates to take stands on issues, causing divisions in the board.

The two Idahoans on the session panel seemed perplexed by these comments. In Idaho, library trustees can be either elected or appointed, depending on their jurisdiction. Dian Hoffpauir, director of Ada Community Library in Boise, Idaho, has an elected board. She reported that she has had extremist members on her board from the Idaho Citizens Coalition and from the Idaho Family Forum. Hoffpauir commented that she actually had *recruited* these individuals as board candidates, not as representatives of the far right but as community leaders. She has had good relations with them, and said their presence on the board has caused much debate, but little policy change.

Hoffpauir said she feels more comfortable with elected trustees because they do not answer to the county commission and are the final authority in library matters. "I've never been so glad to have had an elected board as when a member of the Idaho Family Forum approached me with complaints and I could say 'We have one of your members on our board.'"

Hoffpauir observed that there are ways of assuring regional representations—for example, by establishing zones or districts within the library's service area. (In fact, this is what HB 1712 called for.)

Benning Jenness, elected trustee of the Latah County Library District in Moscow, Idaho, said "Campaigning is just talking to your friends."

Library Literature Lacuna

Nowhere in all library literature could I find a direct analytical comparison of appointed and elected boards, most likely because boards vary so much nationwide. A scan of library board characteristics for the 50 states shows six selection methods and four types of authority, with some states in themselves having jurisdictions that encompass up to five selection methods (Swan, p. 27).

For such comparisons I have gone where I could, namely, to other governmental units offering a public service, such as school boards and transit boards.

Dennis Ladwig, president of Lakeshore Technical College in Cleveland, Wisconsin, did doctoral research in the early 1980s on the comparative effectiveness of elected and appointed school boards. His conclusion? It is the quality of people that counts most, not how they assumed office (Ladwig).

In comparing appointed and elected city transit boards, Alan C. Wulkan says that elected boards have higher community profiles than their appointed counterparts (p. 33), with appointed boards "more insulated from the traditional

Cameron A. Johnson is a reference librarian at Everett Public Library, and Assistant Editor of Alki.

political process" (p. 35). He sees this as a weakness in some cases, particularly in cities, where the library must compete with other city units for funds and support. Appointed members can have so low a profile that they carry no weight in city hall, he wrote.

Wulkan found that most board appointments are based on personal contacts within the local power structure, a method that usually provides competent people for the board although "the perception persists that appointed board members can become out of touch with the community because they do not run for office and cannot be removed by the public." This perception persists although there is little evidence that suggests appointed boards are less accountable than their elected counterparts (Wulkan, p. 35).

An Illinois Perspective

Jim Casey, director of Oak Lawn Library in Illinois, has had one-issue candidates elected to board positions. He said that "book burners" elected to his board in the 1980s and early 1990s took a vote on keeping kids out of adult areas of the library. "It was voted down, but people got their names in the newspaper. This created counter moves—people in favor of intellectual freedom became candidates and defeated the book burners." He added that single-issue board members can develop into excellent board members in other areas of policymaking.

Casey, who has worked under both board types, said that both types of boards are subject to political pressure, but also said he prefers elected boards because they feel empowered to act independently when political conflicts arise. "They [appointive board members] can be used as chess pieces in a larger political game. Elected boards are directly answerable to the sovereign [the voters]. Being closer to the power, elected boards can say 'we're in charge.'"

Election Costs Examined

Based on my description of HB 1712, Snohomish County Auditor Bob Terwilliger estimated that the cost of library board elections in a city the size of Everett would be roughly \$15,000 every other year, but warned this figure could vary somewhat depending on the number of ballot issues put forward. Election administration costs include printing, mailing, and staff costs, he said. The last primary election cost \$13 million statewide. For a large, multi-county system like Sno-Isle, the bill just from Snohomish County would be roughly \$50,000. Island County would also bill Sno-Isle for costs of administering the election. Election costs are calculated using a formula that includes such factors as number of voters and number of jurisdictions offering ballot items. Any number of jurisdictions may offer ballot propositions up to 45 days before elections, Terwilliger said, making costs unpredictable. Under HB 1712, libraries—even municipal libraries like Tacoma and Spokane—would be considered separate districts for the purpose of defraying election costs.

I asked Terwilliger if there were any ways libraries could save on election costs, were trustee elections to be mandated. He had two suggestions: make the legislative body of the jurisdiction (the city or county council) also function as the library board. There would be no additional election costs because voters already pay to elect council members. Another possibility would be to pattern legislation after that of some conservation districts and drainage districts. Under this model, if only one person files to fill a trustee post, then that person automatically assumes the post, with no election required; if two or more people file for the post and if one of them tallies 50% +

1 of the vote in the primary, then that person assumes the post with no requirement for a general election.

Oak Lawn Library director Jim Casey said the biggest challenge facing libraries with elected trustees is finding "good, library-loving people" to run. "Board service pays nothing and a term of six years involves a lot of work and stressful evenings. Many people are hesitant and/or frightened of running for public office. It is often up to librarians to provide information to demystify the entire election process for any brave souls who express an interest in running."

Many of our trustees in Washington State say they will not stand for election and believe it will be a challenge to find people willing to take their place. Public disclosure forms for candidates are intrusive, requiring candidates who spend more than \$2,000 on their campaign to submit regular reports detailing financial transactions, names of insurance companies and creditors, even in some cases the names of immediate family members.

The Politics of "Porn"

The public hysteria surrounding the "Internet porn" issue has brought libraries under public scrutiny and criticism. We are pressed from all sides and at all levels: Congress threatens to cut off e-rate money unless we filter, citizens call for fiscal and policy accountability, and state legislators respond by proposing that library boards be elected.

This new, more contentious political environment can require a more public and uncomfortable commitment from our library trustees. That appointive boards may be properly accountable carries little weight where many people believe otherwise.

Electing trustees would bring uncertainty to a governance structure that has served us for as long as there have been libraries in this state. But our colleagues from Idaho and Illinois remind us that trustee elections—while seemingly risky—have wrought no catastrophic changes in intellectual freedom policy and have provoked healthy public debate.

Our legislature could force us to seize this nettle. WLA should be ready with a well-thought-out lobbying strategy to help craft a bill that imposes the least fiscal impact and ensures fairly drawn voting districts. Otherwise the anxious thoughts heard in the conference session could be prophetic.

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e-Books: Still in a Niche?

by Steward Robbins

The most striking thing about the WLA e-book program was how different it was from the Public Library Association program on e-books in May, 2000. At PLA, Theresa Murphy was excited about the Baltimore County Rocketbook collection. E-books reviews had begun to appear in *Publisher's Weekly* and *Library Journal*. *Riding the Bullet* by Stephen King had just appeared on the Internet. Linda Mielke stated that 90% of all in-print titles would be available in digital formats by 2020. The speakers agreed that libraries should be in the forefront of developing and implementing e-book technology, so they won't be left behind. After the PLA program, the people I talked with wondered when e-books would be the largest line in their book budgets, or whether libraries would be needed at all in a few years.

After soaring at PLA, enthusiasm about e-books was restrained just one year later at WLA. Amazon began selling e-books in November; but sales have been disappointing, according to Cindy Cunningham. There are too many competing e-book reader formats for customers and publishers to sort out. Pricing and rights issues remain unresolved. Even college student e-book use is lower than had been predicted. For all these reasons, and because the cost of an e-book reader remains high (\$300 for the RCA REB 1100, successor to the Rocketbook), most libraries don't plan to circulate readers with e-books loaded on them. And most libraries don't want to buy e-books in formats (Microsoft Reader, Librius, Peanut and Adobe Acrobat Ebook Reader) that can only be used by patrons with computers or personal digital assistants, even if they could create a way to circulate the e-books to their patrons.


NetLibrary offers a different approach to e-books. They sell "collections" of e-books to libraries only, for use in the library or for access at home by library patrons with cards and PIN codes. Home patrons must set up an account with NetLibrary and can then "borrow" the books for a library-specified "circulation" period, after which the book is available to other customers again. However, NetLibrary does not discount their titles;

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and selection is difficult because the NetLibrary collection is limited and sometimes dated. Sybil Hannon reported that Seattle Public Library found it difficult to select a representative collection of 500 NetLibrary e-books. She noted that few standard publishers are represented in the NetLibrary collection, and many subjects and titles are not yet available. On the plus side, the NetLibrary books are easy to use and search; there is no shelving cost; and the e-books have been pretty well used. Seattle Public's overall experience has resulted in lowered expectations.

Bookstores too have experienced lowered expectations. Only "early adopter" customers, who are willing to put up with bugs and flaws, have embraced the e-book concept; the mainstream does not consider e-books as an alternative to paper. Competing standards, unresolved author rights issues, and a general reluctance to read books on a screen have led to disappointing retail sales. Potential customers are also disappointed that e-books cost the same as paper editions, even though the e-book version is usually available sooner.


My own experience with e-book readers follows the pattern. I borrowed two Rocketbooks, a Softbook, and a Canon pocket pc from the State Library for two weeks. I liked some things about each machine, but I wouldn't buy any of them. The pocket pc had a bright color display and was versatile; I could read a book, set up appointments, keep track of finances, or play music. Although the tiny screen was fine for looking up an appointment, it was far too small to read a book comfortably. The Softbook had a large, clear, black and white display (the new version has color); but it lacked brightness and contrast; and it was too heavy to carry around, though it was certainly lighter than three big hardbacks. The Rocketbook was my favorite, but its display also needs to be brighter. The Rocketbook had the best combination of display, ease of use, and practical size; but I still wouldn't pay \$300 for it. If a [Rocketbook] REB 1100 were free with the purchase of five e-books, I might consider it for myself and for the library. If I traveled with a laptop, I would consider buying e-books; but I wouldn't carry both a reader and the laptop.

My opinion is that, as of 2001 WLA Annual Conference, e-books remain a niche product. They will leave their niche when they are featured in magazines, when sales increase dramatically, when Costco and Barnes & Noble stores stock e-book readers, and when the largest publishers make their new titles available to NetLibrary or other library e-book vendors. I don't know when or if this will happen. Perhaps a different technology, such as electronic ink, electronic paper, or low-cost, high-speed printing and binding equipment to produce instant books will become the primary digital information technology for libraries and individuals in the next few years. 

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Telling India with Cathy Spagnoli

by Cindy Benson



Until WLA 2001, I'd never had the pleasure of seeing Cathy Spagnoli perform. I'd heard of her, I was familiar with a few of her collections of Asian stories, and I'd even used her "Nine-in-One, Grr! Grr!" in a storytime. But I'd never seen her in action and wasn't sure what to expect from her "Stories to Learn" session. The conference program promised a story and a craft, both standard fare for storytelling workshops. On a more intriguing note, it also promised that Cathy would talk about her travels as she "worked her storytelling magic."

And talk about her travels she did. A Seattle-area storyteller, Cathy has traveled extensively throughout Asia. Though she was headed to Japan that very afternoon by way of the Spokane International Airport, Cathy was actually at WLA to share storytelling techniques from South India, some of which are collected in her recent book, *Jasmine and Coconuts*. She posed riddles that baffled our brains. ("A red snake amidst white stones.") She tripped up our tongues with tongue twisters. ("The bird eats ripe papaya" may not seem all that challenging in English, but in Bengali it's a real bear. "Pakhi paka pepe khaye." Go on. Try it. Now say it faster. Faster. Faster. See what I mean?) She contorted our fingers into a variety of mudras, or hand signs, that left me wishing I'd stuck with my yoga class. (I'm still practicing the mudras but haven't successfully managed any but the "goldfish.") She made us laugh with a Trickster tale or two. Cathy talked of festivals and holidays, demonstrated a few kolam patterns that might be used to decorate doorsteps during times of celebration, and even passed out souvenir posters that commemorate such occasions. Cathy didn't just tell stories—she told the stories behind the stories and how she'd come to acquire them. She told of the difficulties she'd encountered on her travels; she told of the adventures she'd enjoyed. She spoke of the wonderful people who'd shared not only their stories but also their homes. And she shared how various audiences had received some of her stories, admitting that some things had worked and others hadn't due to cultural differences. All of that combined to provide her audience with a fascinating introduction to South Indian storytelling.

Place is very important in storytelling. Stories from around the world share common themes and motifs. What makes them special is their sense of place and the language, images, and metaphors that are used to invoke that sense of place. While the ideas in a story may be the same, the images used to convey those ideas will change from one place to another. One of

Cathy's examples that has stayed with me was this image: "as rare as a monkey that hates bananas." The idea is immediately understood but the image has a very definite regional, or cultural, flavor. I'd love to try this as an exercise with students, asking

them to illustrate the same concept with images from their hometowns. I'm also intrigued by the idea of incorporating Indian and Asian riddles into some of my programs. Riddles are always popular. The "What am I?" is implied in Indian riddling and gives the riddles a distinct feel, very evocative of place. Where Cathy totally immersed us in Indian culture and stories, I'd like to try a program using stories from a variety of cultures and geographic areas.

What impressed me most, however, wasn't the way Cathy interwove art, history, culture, language, and personal anecdotes around her stories to give her audience a tantalizing glimpse of the riches of South Indian storytelling traditions. What really rocked my little storytelling world was the way she used sign and gesture throughout her program. Faced with a sleepy post-lunch crowd, Cathy energized the audience by making us recite our ABCs...using the manual

alphabet. I hadn't tried fingerspelling in years; but my fingers, if not my brain, remembered the movements.

I'm excited by the idea of using sign in my programs. I'm always stumped as to what to use as filler. What do you do when your program presenter is running late and you've booktalked the last book you brought into your meeting room? Fingerplays are out of the question. There's a point in time when you outgrow "The Itsy Bitsy Spider" and other fingerplay favorites. And I swore that after this spring I'd never play another game of "Simon Says." What thrills toddlers and preschoolers bores a group of second and third graders to tears, or more likely, jeers. Signing the alphabet seems like a wonderful way to settle a crowd. And if the alphabet is too tame, you could always try saying/signing it backwards.

Following the success of our triumph over the alphabet, Cathy went on to challenge our ears, eyes, and fingers by telling the story of "The Turtle Who



Cathy Spagnoli in action. Photo by Deb Cutler.

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Wanted to Fly” using a combination of spoken English and American Sign Language. Talk about cross-cultural storytelling! First she walked us through the signs for the characters, places, and actions. She’d demonstrate and we’d repeat the sign. Then she told the story, stopping the spoken narration to sign and encouraging the audience to fill in the pauses with the spoken words. Audience and storyteller worked together to tell the story. I loved the level of audience participation in this and I can’t wait to try something similar with an elementary school audience.

Signed stories offer a wonderful opportunity to involve the whole child in the storytelling process. I love stories. You might say it’s an occupational hazard. I love reading stories. I love listening to stories. Recently I’ve even come to love telling stories. But storytelling wasn’t always an enjoyable experience for me. Long, long ago in a classroom far, far away I was taught that while others were speaking, especially visiting storytellers, my ears should be open, my mouth should be shut, and above all else, my body should be completely still, as still as the grave. (The implied threat being, of course, that if it wasn’t, the grave or at the very least the principal’s office would be where I would soon find myself.) For me, storytelling was uncomfortable. You see, I fidget. I twirl pens, drum my fingers, fold paper, and tap my feet. If I’m the one doing the talking, I pace and wave my arms in the air. I’ve even been known to juggle. Parts of my body are always on the move and keeping deathly still amounted to torture. If you look around, you’ll see that I’m not alone. There are a lot of us fidgeters out there. You know the ones—the kids with a serious case of the wiggles, the kids who want to

listen and take part in the stories but who just can’t keep still, no matter how much their teachers and parents might wish them to. The audience participation stories I’ve heard and told have largely involved chanted refrains and tell and response. Signed stories allow the teller to involve the entire child—mind, ears, mouth and body. Thanks to an afternoon spent with Cathy, I now have some ideas as to how to challenge those fidgets and wiggles and harness all of that extra energy. I’m going to encourage kids to talk with their hands.

I left Cathy’s program on a high of enthusiasm (such a high that I agreed on the spot to do a write-up for *Alki*). It was all I could do not to run back to my library that very minute and check out a few of her books and a few titles on American Sign Language. I’m looking forward to introducing a few Indian tales into my programs. And a few signs and gestures from a variety of cultures. Look for me at our summer reading programs—I’ll be the one trying to twist her fingers from a goldfish into a turtle.

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More information about Cathy Spagnoli and a sampling of stories and storytelling tips can be found at her Webpage:
<http://www.nwlink.com/~spagnoli>.

And don’t forget to look for these collections, among others, at your local library:

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IL Is Not ILL or ESL, or IL, The Newest and Greatest, or Info Lit 101, or What is Information Literacy?



by **Carla McLean**

Information literacy—maybe you've heard the term already, or you think you may have heard of it, but you're confused about what it means. The definition varies. Here is a short one from the Wisconsin Educational Media Association: "the skill of information problem solving." From the State University of New York (SUNY) Council of Library Directors comes this definition: "the abilities to recognize when information is needed and to locate, evaluate, effectively use, and communicate information in its various formats." And this quote from the Washington State Library: "Information literacy is about helping citizens develop critical thinking skills in locating, using and evaluating information." One of the clearest explanations I have found is "information literacy means knowing a book may be more helpful than a computer" (ALA, Library Advocacy Now! Action Pack 2001). American Library Association's Presidential Commission on Information Literacy report from 1989 states, "To be information literate, a person must be able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information." According to Richard Adler, the term is often confused with computer literacy, but it requires a different set of skills.¹ It requires judgment to be able to determine when information is needed and which of the many resources available would be best.

The 2001 WLA conference included a four-hour preconference workshop on information literacy and a workshop of a little over an hour scheduled during the regular conference. I attended the latter, entitled "Information Literacy and Public Libraries: How Do We Raise the Awareness of the Masses, That Librarians Are the Key to Finding Information?" The workshop featured the wisdom and antics of Michael Eisenberg, Dean of the University of Washington Information School (playing Nerf™ ball with the nervous audience, Eisenberg uttered the memorable phrase, "Who's got balls, who has something to say?"), and a calmer speech by Rhona Klein, Project Coordinator of the Information Literacy Project of the Washington State Library.

The concept of information literacy has been around for a good while—since 1989, at least. As a librarian involved in ESL (English as a Second Language) and adult literacy issues and resources, I questioned the use of the already overworked term "literacy," used recently in the phrases "emotional literacy," and "cultural literacy." In *Information Literacy*², Richard Adler reports a "certain level of discomfort" with the phrase at the beginning of the Aspen Institute's Forum on Communications and Society (FOCAS) meeting, "largely because it takes a familiar term and adds a modifier that is both vague and complex," which led to a search for a more manageable definition. The Washington State Library organized focus groups of librarians who found no clear consensus about the term. Some library personnel saw it as jargon and some thought the term "probably problematic" for the general public, but most were comfortable with the term (WSL Draft Summary

Report, September 2000, from three focus groups, one in Spokane and two in Seattle). Other terms mentioned in information literacy articles include information smart, information empowered, information fluent, and information competent. The Washington State Library saw a clear value in employing a generally accepted term used by other library initiatives and in the ALA program. According to a statewide survey of librarians, more academic and school librarians than public librarians saw information literacy as an important part of their library's mission.

Why the focus on "information literacy"? The subtitle of the workshop (the awkward, "How do we raise the awareness of the masses, that librarians are the key to finding information?") would suggest promotion of librarians rather than training users to be independent of librarians' assistance. ALA's "Library Advocate's Guide to Building Information Literate Communities" promotes librarians as the ultimate search engines. "In a world that's information rich, librarians are information smart." Is it a case of librarian insecurity or simple self-promotion? Eisenberg said that as a profession we are too concerned with "our own salvation." He said that if ready reference dies because of the Internet, "that's okay." We need to "find another way to their hearts."

You might think information literacy is more library jargon and isn't anything new. Librarians have always done user education—so, what's new? The change, according to Eisenberg, is that the Internet is more accessible than the library (at least for the lucky half of all American households who now use the Internet, with more than 700 new households being connected every hour, according to the White House, Office of the Press Secretary, January 21, 2000). Consequently, *we* have to become more accessible. "Easy outweighs better," Eisenberg pointed out. He also stressed the need for a campaign to make information literacy "sexy." How? By renaming it, something like "information power," or by offering the community classes such as, "Want to be a better searcher? Take this twenty minute class." Rather than telling customers about wonderful sources of information, tell them what we can do for them. It's the quality of information, he said, not the quantity, that matters. But "aren't most customers satisfied with the quality of information they receive about subjects like losing weight, shopping sites, or travel information?" asked one audience member. Maybe we need to teach them how to find information faster, was one of Eisenberg's answers.

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“Libraries Build Sustainable Communities”: A Program at the 2001 WLA Annual Conference

By Jonathan Betz-Zall

This program followed the curriculum of the “Libraries Build Sustainable Communities” preconference at last summer’s American Library Association Annual Conference. Thirty-eight people attended. Almost all were from public libraries, evenly divided among urban, suburban, and rural (self-defined as “small town”) libraries.

In the first half of the program, participants played a game called “Postcards from Home.” Each person identified himself or herself with one of six environments: suburban sprawl, ocean beach, inner-city neighborhood, city waterfront, small town, hiking in the mountains, bicycling in a park, and hiking on a bridge. Forming small groups around these environments, participants discussed the desirable and undesirable qualities of each place, any changes they would like to see, the forces threatening the quality of life in this community, and actions that could be taken to preserve or improve it. Each small group reported to the entire audience on one change they would like to see occur. Participants then read the handout “Building Sustainable Communities,” which describes successful community-building in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and discussed programs and projects in their own communities that are improving the quality of life and creating more sustainable communities.

Participants brainstormed ideas in response to the question, “What actions are libraries already taking, or what actions might they take, to promote sustainable communities?” Generally, the ideas provoking the most discussion were the ones designated “controversial.” These included the following:

- provide public meeting space;
- provide access to information;
- provide book lists;
- provide “neutral ground”;
- provide public information: distribution and posting;
- provide active education of community;
- partner with other organizations;
- create access to solitude; and
- co-sponsor other events or services (e.g. commuter board).

The basis of concern about all of these was the degree to which libraries can advocate for positions on particular issues, as opposed to making information available about all positions on those issues. Participants worried about turning away users through strong stances on such issues as land use planning. Some doubted libraries’ ability

to act to maintain the quality of life in our communities. Even such traditional services as providing book lists and places of solitude generated discussion on this basis. The group could not reach consensus on a list of suggestions in the time available.

But participants appeared to have a well-honed grasp of the nuances of local library politics that would set the parameters for their actions. Most remarkable and heartening to me was the strong grasp of the connection between environmental concerns and social equity, as evidenced in the expression of support for services to immigrants and ethnic groups.

Last, participants practiced in pairs about how they would report on this program to their library directors. Unfortunately, there was no time to allow the pairs to report to the group, so I don’t know how well the discussions prepared the participants for their actual returns home. All the participants completed evaluation forms. Results, along with a list of ideas from the brainstorming session, are available from the author.

I hope to present a follow-up program next year, at the joint conference of the Washington and Oregon library associations.

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Now What?

by Thom Barthelmess



There's nothing like a conference to grab one by the collar and do a little shaking. "Convergence," the 2001 WLA conference held in Spokane this past April, was no exception, at least where this collar is concerned. Given the topics addressed by the conference programs, a little nose-to-the-grindstone enthusiasm is to be expected. We're going to save the world, one library at a time!

And then the conference is over. We return to our library facilities, begin digging out from under the piles of business that deepened in our absence, and try not to lose our spark. As a member of the Conference Committee, at the end of this year's conference, I was tired. Okay, I was *really* tired. But I hereby commit myself to putting to good use those nuggets of inspiration that I collected. When you see me next year, waxing energetically about this plan and that idea, ask me what I did with my Convergence plans. I hope I'll be able to furnish a satisfactory report.

My Conference Committee responsibilities didn't allow me lots of discretionary time, but I was able to attend one complete session. I chose a program originally developed and coordinated by the American Library Association, in partnership with Global Learning, Inc., called "Decide Tomorrow Today: Libraries Build Sustainable Communities." An initiative of ALA Past President Sarah Ann Long, this is an interactive workshop, presented at Convergence by Jonathan Betz-Zall, chair of the WLA Social Responsibilities Round Table. I went to the program not knowing just what to expect. Would I be taught to weave shredded auto-repair manuals into a T-1 line? Would I be exposed to new technologies that use gray water as book-binding glue? How could environmental stewardship play a role in my day-to-day library work? I confess that I thought of sustainability as an exclusively ecological proposition. I learned better.

As defined by CONCERN, Inc., "a sustainable community uses its resources to meet current needs while ensuring that adequate resources are available for future generations." This is a sentiment so simple that it shouldn't need even to be articulated, never mind repeated. And yet ALA has gathered folks from every state and trained them in the presentation of this program because our current communities cannot be sustained. We are using up the earth. And libraries can have an impact in reversing the trend. The session began with the participants identifying ourselves with one of several different types of communities pictured about the room. As a group, we looked more closely at each community and at a way in which a library has affected positive change therein. Jonathan Betz-Zall then helped us develop a working definition of sustainable communities, and shared with us the concept of the three dynamics: Economy, Ecology, and Equity. Next we did some brainstorming. We offered actions and activities that libraries might do and are already doing to support these three legs of the sustainable community table. Throughout the session the group engaged in some fervent debate. Yet despite some dissent

and the occasional bout of pontification, the tone of the program remained positive and hopeful. I left feeling that I had an opportunity to encourage the dialogue in my own community and thereby affect some change.

Attendees included library board members and trustees, administrators, and librarians, academic and public. We each came from a different sort of community and brought a different professional perspective. As a Youth Services Librarian, I considered ways to involve teens, with their free-thinking and idealism, in the sustainability discussion. Programs for teens can be a risky proposition. Competing with a fast-food parking lot teeming with pheromones is never easy. But teen programs can be terrific, and one of the keys to their success lies in teen involvement. These are kids whose feelings of independence sit in the center of their self worth. If, instead of planning a program that offers something to them, we plan a program where they can do something for us, teens respond. And where sustainability is concerned, the possibilities are staggering. Teens could design and distribute informational bookmarks highlighting the issues and suggesting library titles on topic. They could calculate their ecological footprints and discuss ways to improve them. They could do all kinds of things.

I imagine most other participants churned similar implementation ideas around in their heads. All that remains is to do something about them. All that remains is to keep the conference spark burning. I congratulate all those involved in this workshop for making me want to do just that.

For more information about sustainable communities, check out these Websites:

Center of Excellence for Sustainable Development.
<http://www.sustainable.doe.gov>.

Communities by Choice.
<http://www.communitiesbychoice.org>.

Community-Based Environmental Protection, U.S.
Environmental Protection Agency:
<http://www.epa.gov/ecocommunity>.

Redefining Progress.
<http://www.rprogress.org>.

Sustainable Communities Network.
<http://www.sustainable.org>.

Washington State Department of Ecology.
<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/sustainability>.



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Statewide Database Licensing: Past Life and Future Focus

by Sue Anderson

Background

In 1997, the Statewide Database Licensing Project (SDL) began with a vision. Patrons in Washington libraries would be able to use electronic databases for education and information. Large and small public and academic libraries, special, tribal, and K-12 libraries would band together as a group, rather than work individually, to obtain access to electronic databases at an affordable price for everyone.

Initially, federal grant money from the Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) funded the project. An SDL committee was formed to direct the project and evaluate database products. In the first year, during a three-month period, Web-based commercial databases were available for libraries to test. The SDL committee decided to license one or more common databases considered useful for many people, regardless of library type. Two databases met the criteria: a full-text general periodical database and a full-text Washington newspaper database.

At the end of the test period, the SDL committee looked at vendor bids and librarians' reviews of the products. The committee selected UMI's newspaper database and, the periodical database, UMI's Proquest. Since many libraries chose to purchase these products and prices were based on the number of participating libraries, money was available to license both products. Federal grant money paid half the licensing costs (\$500,000) for the two full-text databases. Local funds from participating libraries paid the remainder.

Optional Use Products

In addition to the two UMI full-text databases, optional use products from IAC (now part of The Gale Group), Gale, Reference USA, and OCLC FirstSearch were also available. In 1999, four encyclopedias (Britannica, Grolier, World Book, and Encarta) were offered to libraries, with one or more of these products purchased by a number of libraries. Libraries selecting optional use databases paid the costs themselves.

Spring and Fall Trials

Because the first spring trial was such a popular feature of the project, the committee decided to conduct spring and fall trials each year. Libraries could plan ahead for future funding options, and could coordinate plans with fiscal year budget cycles beginning on January 1 or July 1. Libraries had an opportunity twice a year to look at a variety of new products, and make comparisons

and decisions. Vendors had a chance to show libraries various products on a regular, ongoing basis. SDL staff contacted vendors to add products for the trials and then notified libraries about products and passwords. Library staff examined databases, contributed feedback, and made decisions to purchase products.

Customer Expectations

In the spring of 1999, SDL conducted a UMI satisfaction survey. Two hundred people replied to questions related to Proquest. Survey results allowed SDL to assess progress and to plan changes for the next year. Results were also sent to UMI's research and development department. SDL is designing another survey for spring 2001. Watch for it on the Web, via e-mail or in print. Be sure to participate, to make your library's opinions concerns known.

Comments from Libraries

I sent questions via e-mail to several people in a cross-section of libraries, in order to ascertain opinions about databases and satisfaction with products and prices.

Janet Lyon from Pend Oreille County Library District sent a lengthy response. Her library is located in a rural section of northeastern Washington. Initially POCLD purchased the UMI products, followed by the GaleNet package, and then BigChalk. "We feel that [providing] online databases is one way we can meet the needs of our county residents, especially some who never come into the physical library space" (Lyon). Although most county residents are within a 10-mile radius of a branch, people in one area of the county are 18 miles away from their nearest branch. Databases are vital to patrons, and the library has placed a high priority on funding these databases with its limited budget. The library constantly advertises its Website so people are aware of the online products.

Mary Rickerd is the media coordinator for ESD (Educational School District) 101, which, she says, "serves all of northern and eastern Washington, including Adams, Ferry, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, and Whitman counties. This area consists of 59 public school districts and 54 state-approved private schools in approximately 14,000 square miles. It is the largest geographical service area in the state and the third largest student-population wise" (Rickerd).

Two years ago, Mary became aware of the SDL project. Pricing levels were established for all nine ESDs, based on their percentage of the state's K-12 population. Each district pays one fee for the "package," which allows them unlimited use of the Proquest databases as well as ELibrary Elementary with home access privileges. Mary said, "Products have been and continue to be very, very beneficial for our districts. The best part of this is the availability of an outstanding product at an affordable price. Many school library media specialists have low budgets, and find that many of these electronic subscriptions, while great products, are just too expensive for their operations" (Rickerd).

Legislative Funding

As early as 1999, SDL personnel met with the WLA legislative liaison and the WLA Legislative Committee to discuss ways to obtain funding from the state legislature for future database purchases. They also discussed how to continue cooperative efforts among Washington libraries. This year SDL

Sue Anderson is Coordinator of Support Services, Spokane Falls Community College Library, and a member of the Alki Committee.

personnel requested \$3.7 million annually from the legislature, plus additional money for educational tools. SDL will return to the legislature next year to ask again for funding to continue the project.

Options for the Future

In September 2002, federal funding for the SDL project will end. In April 2001 at the WLA conference, Jeanne Crisp and a panel of SDL committee members presented a program outlining possible scenarios for SDL's future. The question they presented to the workshop participants was this: "If no money is available to subsidize database content, what option for the future of the Statewide Database Licensing Project is the most viable for Washington libraries?"

Panel members presented six options:

- (a) Statewide coordination at the current level of activities, using money from local libraries to support administrative costs;
- (b) Statewide coordination for a statewide periodical/newspaper database, with administrative costs funded by local libraries;
- (c) Local libraries work together to negotiate deals with vendors on an as-needed basis;
- (d) Rely on commercial brokers such as BCR (Bibliographic Center for Research) or OCLC to coordinate Washington libraries;
- (e) Off-load portions of the SDL project that relate to trials and acquiring databases and rely on commercial brokers for those services, and ask a consultant at the State Library to focus on multi-type library cooperative efforts; or
- (f) Do nothing.

Comments from the audience indicated that option (f)—do nothing—was not an option: we want SDL to continue in some fashion. In January 2001, WSL entered into a three-year pilot project with BCR on behalf of all libraries in the state. BCR acquires discounted services for training, supplies and databases for its members, and offers discounts on subscription rates to certain reference databases. Many people at this workshop thought option (e) was a possibility with BCR handling trials and acquiring databases, with a consultant from the state library focusing on cooperative efforts on behalf of libraries.

At this workshop, Patty Ayala indicated that SDL was preparing price comparisons among SDL, BCR, and OCLC. She asked what libraries want WSL/SDL to do in the future. People in the audience asked many questions: What will be the future cost of the databases? Will cost be close to, more than, or less than what we now pay? If we had a statewide contract through BCR for Proquest, would it be similar to what we now have with SDL? Who will handle the support function?

Conclusion

Janet Lyon stated, "If these vendors decided to raise their prices because we were no longer affiliated with Washington State Library's statewide licensing agreement, we could not afford to keep the databases we have, and would have to decide, based on our budget, actually what we could afford to keep. Funding from the legislature is vital. If the legislature decides not to fund this program, then developing some kind of consortia with libraries around the state would be a great idea" (Lyon).

Mary Rickerd responded to my question about the future with the following statement. "The future? K-12 users are now excited about the SDL and are asking me what will happen after June 30, 2002. I've been encouraging them to heavily use the product to show their administrators that such a product is important for their classrooms. I would like to see the ESDs

continue to work with the Washington State libraries so that we can provide such a product at an affordable price. It would be ideal to pool resources as well as energies to continue to offer such a product for ALL Washington state residents. It is a basic premise that information is power. Acquiring and using information are basic life skills" (Rickerd).

More opportunities to purchase online databases are becoming available to libraries. In addition to SDL and BCR, OCLC Western is starting to offer online databases, and they will continue to increase their services in database licensing. Libraries will have the opportunity to take advantage of savings through each service. However, without a statewide consortia working for all Washington libraries to obtain these databases at an affordable price, will all libraries in this state be able to individually afford these products?

In an e-mail invitation to attend her WLA presentation, Jeanne Crisp stated that SDL had "ushered in a new era of multi-type library cooperation" (Crisp, Apr. 3, 2001). This was one of the goals SDL accomplished, along with the ability to obtain databases at reduced prices. How will libraries continue to foster cooperation achieved under SDL, as well as to purchase online databases at an affordable price for their patrons?

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La Biblioteca del Destino: A Library Opera

by Angelynn King



Act I

Scene 1: The Courtyard of Melvilo's Castle

King Melvilo (baritone) sits alone, bemoaning the deterioration of his once-proud family home. He has spent all his gold on the upkeep of the castle and has nothing left to sell.

A messenger enters with an ultimatum from the Cult of Outsourcers: the king must relinquish his daughter, Catalogina, or they will take her by force. The King sinks to his knees in despair, his responsibility to his public at war (as it so often is) with his personal preferences (*"Che Tragedia Preservare"*). Finally he relents, begging the messenger only that he be allowed to bid his daughter goodbye.

Scene 2: The Palace Kitchen

The King's jester, Cutter (countertenor), enters with the crafty serving wench Computadora (mezzo-soprano). They have overheard the King's conversation with the messenger, and Cutter has a plan. He proposes that Computadora disguise herself as Catalogina to gain entry into the Outsourcers' treasure (*"Scuola de Informazioni"*). She can then use her hypnotic song to put the bandits to sleep, whereupon Cutter will rescue her, and they will share the booty. Computadora agrees enthusiastically.

Scene 3: The Grotto of the Outsourcers

The Outsourcers (Welsh Chorus) sing lustily about their imminent acquisition of Catalogina, while flinging scraps to the Totic binder (not a singing part), which belches fire from the mouth of the cave. A fanfare announces the arrival of their mysterious leader, Niccolo. Niccolo (bass), wearing a hood, gloats about the overthrow of Melvilo's dynasty (*"Foglio Doppio"*). Niccolo has no intention of paying Catalogina's bride price, but rather plans to use her as a hostage to take Melvilo for everything he has—budget, buildings, and collections.

Act II

Scene 1: Catalogina's Chamber

Catalogina (soprano), in a skimpy nightdress, sings of a dream in which she romped in the paper forest with a beautiful young man, far from the cares and worries of the decrepit castle (*"Il Sabbatico"*). Computadora enters and informs the princess that the Outsourcers' deadline has arrived—but that she, Computadora, will go

instead. She confesses that her childhood sweetheart, Filofax, has joined the cult; and she hopes to persuade him to return home. Catalogina reluctantly agrees.

Scene 2: The Paper Forest

The gentle rustling of the leaves awakens Folio (tenor), who sings a pure, sweet aria about his dream of a beautiful princess (*"Pagina Bianca"*). Enter the Outsourcers, after a night of carousing. They brag of the havoc they will wreak on the kingdom. Folio, sensing opportunities for heroism, allows himself to be persuaded to join the Outsourcers. Away they march, dropping food and spilling drinks.

Scene 3: The Courtyard of Melvilo's Castle

From the window of her chamber, Catalogina spies the young man from her dream among the Outsourcers. She forges a note to Computadora, asking her to meet Filofax in the bindery. She then dons the veil meant to disguise Computadora and gives herself to the cult in Computadora's place (*"A la Ghigliottina! Andiamo!"*). A distraught Melvilo bids her a tearful goodbye, while Cutter rubs his hands together in avaricious glee.

Act III

Scene 1: The Paper Forest

The Outsourcers stop to make camp on the way back to their hideout. As they settle in, a strange night bird (actually Computadora, disguised as a tree) sings a dreamlike song; and one by one the guards rise and sleepwalk into the woods. Folio lifts Catalogina's veil and sees none other than the girl of his dreams. Alone now, the amorous pair sings a duet about their joint destiny (*"Recto e Verso"*).

Scene 2: The Grotto of the Outsourcers

Terrible screeches and groans emerge from the mouth of the cave: the Totic is hungry. Niccolo threatens to feed Catalogina to the Totic if Melvilo does not relinquish his throne. Cutter whispers to Niccolo that the veiled woman is only Computadora, who has betrayed him, Cutter, with Filofax, and that she can be sacrificed. But Melvilo, in a stirring aria about the honor of his tribe (*"Codice Etico"*) offers himself in the maiden's place. Folio stands up and offers himself in Melvilo's place. Catalogina throws herself in front of Folio, offering herself in *his* place. Niccolo, cackling madly, binds them all and declares that the Totic shall have a three-course meal.

Scene 3: The Grotto of the Outsourcers

The renegade Outsourcers return, all dressed as trees; and a wild melee ensues. Catalogina is unmasked and reunited with Folio. Computadora is unmasked and reunited with Filofax. Niccolo is unmasked and revealed to be none other than the lowly village baker. He hides his face in shame. In the confusion, Cutter is seized and devoured by the Totic. The two pairs of lovers make plans for a double wedding, and Melvilo happily offers to foot the bill from the treasure chests of the Outsourcers. Niccolo, humbled by the patent virtue of the heroes, offers to bake the cake. All join in the finale (*"Torte per Tutti"*), with the Totic emitting the final burp.

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The 2001 Elections, Census, and Their Aftermath

by Ray Suarez



... The question for all of us in the coming years, whoever is President, is going to be about how we come to common wisdom on the contentious issues in American life when we are deeply divided on the particulars. There are deep divisions between generations, between regions, between urban and suburban populations right in the same county. Sure the country looks united when you take pictures of it from outer space, but it looks less and less so the closer you get to earth, to the neighborhoods, and farms, and factories and school buildings.

... America changed a lot in the 1990s, in ways that appear to set the course for the new century, and in ways we won't understand fully for decades to come. What does it mean that in Arkansas, a state with an historically tiny Latino population, a state that grew only slightly in the '90s, the number of Latinos quadrupled? What does it mean that 7 million people took advantage of the first-ever opportunity to declare themselves mixed-race people on a census? What does it mean that for the first time since 1960, New York City grew instead of shrinking, the number of Latinos pulled even with the number of Blacks living in the country's biggest city? But when you get down to census tracts, neighborhoods, blocks, New Yorkers are still not very likely to live in integrated neighborhoods. These are questions we can't know the answers to yet, because the numbers are just snapshots—signifiers—the portrait of an army on the march, but to where?

... I recently was the graduation speaker at my high school. When I graduated with the class of 1974, the class was a post-war New York mix: Blacks, Puerto Ricans, Italians, Jews, and Irish. When I returned, a large part of the graduating class were Chinese from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the Mainland; Blacks, yes, but instead of being sons and daughters of the

American South, they were Haitians, Guyanese, Barbadians, and St. Lucians. The valedictorian was born in the Ukraine, and the salutatorian was born in Indiana—and both were going from Brooklyn to the Ivy League. How does this gradually wear away at ossified old notions of what America is? Maybe, just maybe, we'll start to see proficiency in other languages as an asset rather than a handicap, and in more places than before see multiracial ancestry as incidental, interesting maybe, but not a hindrance. Maybe ethnic and racial voting blocks will make a little less sense, encourage a politics that includes alliances built around common interests and goals rather than common skin color and last names. ... We're working on it, I think. I'm seeing a lot of cracks in the walls of hard-heartedness I saw a lot of when I started to travel the country interviewing and writing.

... Here in Washington State, you're going to be a part of it all—the fights between left and right, the new Asian migration, the new Latino presence, the knowledge economy, productive agriculture. Every part of the state grew in the '90s, some more than others, the northeast corner the fastest of all. ... You've got a front-row seat on the 21st century. This could be one of the best places in America to sit and watch how your 281 million fellow Americans work it all out.



Do Birds Have Wrists?

by Diana and Evan St. Lifer

Do birds have wrists?
Does it rain in heaven?
Who decided days of the week should be seven?
Can a boy marry a girl who is taller than he?
Will it impress you most when I learn how to read?
If you say last night, why not say last morning?
When bugs fall asleep can you hear them snoring?
Do small rocks come from big rocks?
Why are baby goats called kids?
How come every bowl in our cabinet doesn't have a lid?
Why is a sneeze "ah-chew," but a cough has no name?
Why are twins two people who look the same?
Which is bigger—me or my reflection?
Are they the same thing—love and affection?
Are brothers always boys, and sisters always girls?
How come elephants are big but have such small tails?
Why is there a warning light before we hear the thunder?
About all these things I sit and wonder.
I ask these questions because I want to know

Important things that will help me grow
If you don't know the answers, that's OK
I will find them all out for myself someday.
But just one more question and then I'll stop
If birds have wrists can they wear a watch?

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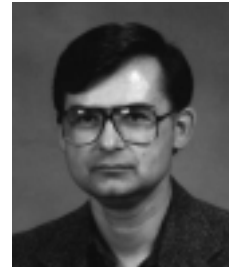
Keynote speaker Evan St. Lifer with Programs Co-Coordinator Louise Saylor (l.) and Local Arrangements committee member Rachel Fenske (r.). Photo by Deb Cutler.



Who's On First?

Putting Our IF Principles into Practice: Now Is the Time for Active Advocacy

by Tom Reynolds



Tom Reynolds

A New IF Statement of Principles, But What Does It Mean?

"There is more to intellectual freedom than just idealism." — Sharon Hammer, WLA 2001 Annual Conference.

With this simple observation during her acceptance of a WLA Emeritus Award, Sharon Hammer reminded us that it is only when we put our principles into practice, only when we advocate for intellectual freedom through our actions, that we actually further the cause of openness and access in our libraries.

Yes, actions speak louder than words. Now more than ever, it is important that libraries, library systems, and state and regional library associations find ways to advocate actively for intellectual freedom in their libraries and communities.

As I reflected on this issue in the weeks after WLA voted to endorse the new IF Statement of Principles, I found myself questioning the direction Washington libraries are moving on this issue. As a member of the committee that drafted the new statement, I had hoped that our discussion of the draft IF statement would be the catalyst for renewed commitment by Washington librarians to advocate for intellectual freedom and to work to increase access for all Washington library users. But as I watched events unfold at the conference and afterward, just the opposite seemed to be happening.

Since the passage of the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) last December, major Washington library systems have been scrambling to review their Internet policies, required as a first step toward implementing CIPA's filtering mandate for libraries that want to continue receiving FCC e-rate discounts. Some of these reviews appear to be a sincere attempt to balance intellectual freedom principles with the need or desire to continue receiving e-rate discounts. But under increasing pressure by local censorship groups and politicians, it appears that some library boards are using the passage of CIPA as justification for revising Internet policies to place restrictions on access, without a thorough discussion of the implications of such policies for juvenile and poor patrons.

There has been a rush to action on this issue that I find disturbing. It appears that some boards and directors have grown weary of fighting for

principle. There seems to be a desire just to get the censors off our backs. This has translated into a search for a quick political solution embracing access restrictions for an entire group of patrons—children and teens.

The fact is, on both the national and state levels, the library community's "inside game strategy" has failed. We need to take a page from the censors and make our case directly to the public. An educated, aroused public could be our greatest ally. So far, we haven't really tapped the constituency we keep talking about.

The Censors' Strategy

With CIPA challenged in court by ALA and the ACLU, while the FCC rule-making to implement the law swings into full gear, censorship groups are seeking to pressure libraries into changing their policies to restrict Internet access *before* the courts decides on CIPA's constitutionality. The scenario that was played out at Everett Public Library this spring may be replayed at other libraries over the summer.

Under pressure from a group called SAFEPAC (Secure Access for Everyone Political Action Committee), certain members of the City Council, and the *Everett Herald* (which has taken an editorial position supporting filters), Everett Public Library has adopted a policy that limits individuals under age 18 to filtered Internet access only, unless their parents specifically request that they have unfiltered access. Moreover, only patrons having library cards will be able to log on to the Internet at all.

Library Director Mark Nesse went to great pains to state that EPL's actions reflected a genuine community concern and were not influenced by the positions of ALA, the ACLU, or SAFEPAC. Looking at the EPL's process and its outcome, this commentator can only feel that the rights of juveniles, the poor, and the homeless to basic access to information through their public library have been trampled.

Choosing Filters, Restricting Access: Everett's Questionable Model

The decision-making process Everett Public Library used to decide to install time-out software to restrict Internet access provides a clear example of how a rush to action may lead to bad policy decisions.

Censorship forces have been networking in Snohomish County over the last year. Enraged by area libraries' insistence that access to the Internet be available to all and that parents be actively responsible for monitoring their children's activities while using the library, many of these folks have coalesced under the mantle of SAFEPAC, a group organized by Arlington resident Dan Andersen. The group's avowed goal is to end access to what it sees as obscene material via the Internet in Snohomish County libraries ("PAC Pushes Filters").

With support from the Family Research Council, SAFEPAC sent a targeted mailing to Snohomish County residents to ask for money and attack EPL for disseminating obscene materials

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to minors. Subsequently, Everett Library management proposed adding scheduling and routing software to the library's Internet terminals. This software would require that users have a library card and would allow three options with regard to filtering: no access to the Internet, filtered access to the Internet, and open access to the Internet. The EPL Board decided to take comments on the filtering issue at their April meeting.

I'm not sure how or if EPL attempted to generate public interest in the meeting. Those in attendance reported that only six or seven members of the general public along with three or four library staff attended. A minuscule turnout on which to base policy changes affecting access for many individuals to one of the library's major information resources.

Of course, SAFEPAAC members were there. They brought their usual litany of horror stories: my child walked by an Internet terminal in a library and saw a naked person on the screen, I saw a pedophile in the library viewing the Internet and then talking to a teen, etc. *Dangerous Access: Uncovering Internet Pornography in America's Libraries*, the inaccurate report published by the Family Research Council and authored by David Burt, a former librarian working for N2H2 (the firm that produces BESS filtering software), was introduced as evidence of libraries' complicity in the distribution of pornography. One SAFEPAAC member said the library should filter all Internet access for both adults and juveniles.

On the other side of the issue, two library staff members and one retired librarian made a variety of points about the access problems implicit in the management proposal to install scheduling software. Here is a summary (in my own words) of those points:

**The proposed policy changes are a move toward restricting the free flow of information. Cited was a study by the Electronic Privacy Information Center that showed that filtering programs censor age-appropriate educational and political information based on what appears to be ideological bias. Other studies showed that filters cannot be relied on either to block all pornographic sites or not to block legitimate political and information sites.*

**N2H2 (the provider of BESS to EPL) has a history of gathering information on juveniles' Web-surfing activities and selling it to marketers.*

**Everett has a large population of disaffected teens and homeless. Many of these people regularly use the Internet at EPL for such activities as job hunting; but under this policy, they would have no access to the Internet because they would not be able to get a library card (they have no permanent address).*

**The policy change implies a lack of trust in kids. Most kids are in the library using the Internet to do legitimate kid things, including school work. Rather than promoting the library as a place where kids learn to use judgment, this policy sends kids the message that they are perpetual suspects.*

**Public libraries have a long history of basing policy on First Amendment concerns and erring on the side of access. If the board wants to change policy, it should do so in a way that does the least damage to all library patrons' rights to access material.*

After the Board heard comments, a motion was made to accept the proposal to buy the software and work out the policy details at the May meeting. At that meeting, the EPL Board passed its new restrictive Internet access policy without debate. It is difficult, if not impossible, to know what EPL board members' thoughts were about the First Amendment implications of their policy changes under these circumstances.

Answering the Wrong Question

Apparently, one question the EPL Board had a hard time

Washington Library Association Intellectual Freedom Statement

The Washington Library Association supports the principle of free, open, and unrestricted access to information and ideas regardless of the medium in which they exist.

A democracy can only succeed if individuals have access to the information necessary to form opinions and make decisions on issues affecting their lives. Libraries play a key role in providing access to this information.

The Association regards this access as a right of all individuals. Therefore the Association believes that libraries have a responsibility to provide access to a wide range of perspectives and viewpoints.

The Association believes that parents and legal guardians have the right and responsibility to guide their own children in the exercise of their rights of access.

The Association recognizes privacy and confidentiality as essential components of intellectual freedom.

The Association encourages and supports local community involvement in developing policies that uphold the United States and Washington State constitutional guarantees of free speech and intellectual freedom.

The Washington Library Association endorses the American Library Association's Code of Ethics, Freedom to Read Statement, Freedom to View Statement and Library Bill of Rights and its Interpretations.

Therefore, the Washington Library Association opposes censorship and restrictions on access to the full range of constitutionally protected materials and speech.

Ratified at the Annual Conference of the Washington Library Association, Spokane, Washington, April 6, 2001.

answering was, "Does your library purchase pornographic materials?" Of course, the follow-up question is, "If not, why do you allow access to pornographic materials via the Internet?"

Like many questions in the filtering debate, this one is formatted to generate a specific answer. The problem is that the question should be different, if the response is to reflect how public libraries really select materials.

So, what's the answer? No, libraries do not purchase material that is solely pornographic. But many items in public libraries might be considered objectionable by certain groups or individuals. And

public libraries often purchase books, magazines, or videos that have sections, scenes, or pictures that might be considered pornographic if judged out of context. Yet the materials are in the library because they are not obscene when considered as a whole. This is the same situation that libraries face with the Internet. Only a small percentage of sites are pornographic, but groups like SAFEPAC want libraries to censor access to the entire information system and to restrict or eliminate e-mail and chat simply because they find a few sites on the Web objectionable.

Defaulting to Open Access: An Alternative Model

When discussing the installation of scheduling software the setting of the default position is a key intellectual freedom issue. Other libraries in Washington (for example, the Timberland Regional Library), after prolonged discussion, have followed an alternative approach to the one decided on by EPL. That approach is to have terminals default to open access if a parent *hasn't* specifically requested that their child's access be restricted.

Why is this a better position from a First Amendment point of view? This approach places responsibility where it belongs: first with the parent, and then, if the parent fails to exercise such responsibility, with the primary user, the juvenile. Under policies like those adopted by EPL, the library takes on the role of substitute parent, offering second-class Internet access to kids whose parents have, for whatever reason, failed to request otherwise. This radical step moves libraries away from an approach that errs on the side of access and requires that challenges be decided on a case-by-case basis, toward one in which the library censors access to an entire information system for an entire category of people.

A Grassroots IF Lobby for Washington Libraries

"The CIPA lawsuit has sparked an unprecedented need for articulate spokespeople who understand the issues and are eager to communicate our important message." —Nancy Kranich, President of ALA (Kranich).

Many library supporters were shocked when "Harmful to Minors" legislation almost passed the Washington State Senate this spring as an amendment to the state budget. At the last minute, a substitute amendment passed, requiring only that libraries have "policies" protecting people from accessing pornography. Still, some library administrators believed the Senate vote showed that libraries were losing the support of moderate legislators; and the close vote fueled the fear that if libraries don't do something about filtering, the legislature is likely to do it for them. In his final *Olympia Report* on the 57th Washington State Legislature, WLA lobbyist Steve Duncan called on librarians to do a better job of educating legislators about what libraries are doing to address this issue (*Olympia Report*).

Certainly we can do a better job of educating legislators about what Washington libraries are doing to make using the Internet a positive experience. But I think this emphasis on the inside game of directly influencing legislators misses a key point. Washington libraries must address the woeful lack of public understanding about how the vitality and relevance of library service is directly connected to policies grounded in our First Amendment principles. Playing just the inside game has proven less and less effective in protecting the First Amendment rights of library users on both the state and national levels.

Now is the time to actively advocate to our public about the importance of freedom in everything libraries do. We need a grassroots citizens effort under the banner of keeping libraries free and library services accessible to all. Such a grassroots citizens organization will give a public face to our efforts to maintain access to library materials and information.

Any "Harmful to Minors" legislation is likely to be declared unconstitutional by Washington courts. But if we really want to stop the slow erosion of library policies supporting IF principles, Washington libraries need to galvanize a core of public supporters on this issue. Both local libraries and WLA should be involved in this effort.

CIPA Decision-Date Delayed until 2002

And now for a little good news. The American Library Association has successfully challenged the original opinion by the FCC that libraries must comply with CIPA's filtering mandate by October 28, 2001. The new deadline for libraries that want to apply for Year 5 FCC e-rate discounts is July 2002. To find out more about the CIPA timeline and the options libraries have with regard to the CIPA, check ALA's CIPA Web page at www.ala.org/cipa.

Support ALA's CIPA Challenge

Twenty-five state and regional library associations have passed resolutions supporting the American Library Association lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of CIPA. Included in this group are such conservative bastions as Alaska, South Carolina, and Wyoming, along with Oregon and Montana. Other associations such as WLA have contributed money to ALA's CIPA Legal Fund (\$1,000 in WLA's case).

Individuals can also make contributions to the CIPA Legal Fund. For those interested in preserving our libraries' commitment to quality information services and freedom, this may be the most important political contribution you'll ever make.

And yes, I have sent mine. To send yours, mail checks, payable to the American Library Association, to ALA Development Office, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, Ill. 60611. Earmark your contribution for the "CIPA Legal Fund."

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WLA and WLFTA Awards 2001

This year's awards recognized the accomplishments of several individuals and groups in the Washington library community.

There were two recipients of the **WLA Emeritus Award**. **Sharon Hammer**, retired as Director of the Fort Vancouver Regional Library, was recognized for her service in an extraordinary diversity of library positions in the state; for her breadth of knowledge, skill, and commitment to the library profession in Washington, the region, and the nation; for her success in activities ranging from development of innovative services to defense of intellectual freedom; and for her service as a mentor and leader of many individuals and groups. **Ralph Huntzinger**, Media Specialist and Reference Librarian, retired from King County Public Library, was recognized for his leadership in the development of media services librarianship, particularly of video collections. A staunch and outstanding advocate for intellectual freedom, Ralph was one of the main creators of the Washington Coalition Against Censorship's classic video, "Empty Shelves, Empty Minds." He has mentored and instructed librarians, technicians, production companies and distributors in his long and productive career.

Carol Bell, Managing Librarian, Sumner Branch, Pierce County Library System, received the **WLA Merit Award for Advances in Library Services**. Carol and her staff set a goal to reach out to the growing population of Hispanic residents in their area. Under Carol's encouragement, the Sumner Branch has increased and promoted its Spanish-language materials and

collections. The Branch has offered special programs, including a technology night and a traditional Mexican Posada celebration, which have been enthusiastically attended by members of the Hispanic Community.

Patty Duitman and **Donna Jones**, Fort Vancouver Regional Library, were joint winners of the **Washington Association of Library Employees (WALE) Outstanding Employee Award**. The Award citation noted that the overwhelming support of these two individuals during the crucial early WALE Conference years had benefited support staff throughout the state. The citation also noted that Patty's own involvement in WALE and WLA leadership and her encouragement of her staff led many others to participate in the organization, and that Donna's involvement had brought real professionalism to the WALE Conference. Both the winners have inspired many others to participate and serve leadership roles in both WALE and WLA.

The Children's and Young Adult Services Interest Group (CAYAS) presented its **CAYAS Award for Visionary Library Service to Youth** to **Mary Palmer**, of the Seattle Public Library. Through her Global Reading



Sharon Hammer received a WLA Emeritus Award. Photo by Deb Cutler.



Ralph Huntzinger received a WLA Emeritus Award. Photo by Deb Cutler.



Carol Bell received the WLA Merit Award for Advances in Library Service. Photo by Deb Cutler.



Donna Jones and Patty Duitman were joint winners of the WALE Outstanding Employee Award. Patty was a double winner—she also received the WLA President's Award. Photo by Deb Cutler.



Mary Palmer received the CAYAS Visionary Award. Photo by Deb Cutler.



Representatives of the Friends of the Clinton Library accepted a WLFTA Trustee/Friend Award. Photo by Deb Cutler.

Challenge, she is bringing books and kids together in new and exciting ways. She has facilitated collaboration between public schools and public libraries, and used workshops, presentations, and a video to create interest in the Global Reading Challenge among potential donors, schools, and libraries.

Patty Duitman was also the recipient of the **WLA President's Award**. The citation recognized her professional contributions to the Association and her many leadership roles, particularly as WLA Treasurer.

Two individuals received **Washington Library Friends and Trustees Association (WLFTA) Distinguished Service Awards to a Library Trustee**. **Dale Read, Jr.** has served as a member of the Fort Vancouver Regional Library Board of Trustees since 1987. In this capacity, he has responded thoughtfully and effectively to a variety of challenges, including bond measures, establishment of new branch libraries, numerous technological advances, and development of a Minor's Access policy that is respected throughout the country. The nomination noted that "Dale is a role model of an outstanding board member" and that FVRL "would not be where it is today without the exceptional guidance and policy development of which Dale played an important role." **Patience Rogge**, a board member of the Jefferson County Rural Library District for eight years, was cited for her many contributions both to her library district and to WLFTA. As President of WLFTA, Patience was key in organizing the October 2000 Friends' Forum, an event that benefited friends of libraries around the state; she has served in many leadership capacities in WLA, including a term on the Executive Board. The citation noted that "Patience sets a fine example for all of our citizens in her dedicated efforts to serve the library community."

Friends of the Clinton Library, Sno-Isle Regional Library, was awarded the **WLFTA Trustee/Friend Award #1**. For seven years, the Clinton Friends organized, worked with Sno-Isle Regional Library, secured land from the County Parks Department, raised over \$30,000, and built and maintained community enthusiasm for the dream of a community library. On May 20, 2000, the Clinton Library opened its doors. It now brings library service to the unincorporated township of Clinton. The nomination noted that "now that that the Friends have built a library, they are busy building a new generation of library users!"

White Salmon Friends, Fort Vancouver Regional Library, received the **WLFTA Trustee/Friend Award #2**. The White Salmon Friends raised over \$200,000 in a community with a population base of 9,600, while continuing their busy schedule of sponsoring and assisting with library and community programs and events. As a result, in April 2000, the White Salmon Valley Community Library moved from a 1,600 square-foot building owned by the City of White Salmon to a 9,015 square-foot building owned by the SDS Lumber Company. The nomination noted that their campaign "is serving as an inspiration for other Friends groups" throughout the FVRLD service area.

Conference attendance grants were awarded to **Lisa Adams, Randi Adams, Cathy Ensley, Lynda Iman-Loch, Emily Keller, Susan Lang, and Susan Ludington**. The **WLA Scholarship** winner was **David Hurley**, a student at the University of Washington Information School (see facing page).



Profile: David Hurley, Recipient of the 2001 WLA Scholarship


by Nancy Huling, University of Washington Libraries

"As a librarian, I seek fluency in the principles of information science; the technological expertise to identify, evaluate and exploit emerging technologies; and a firm grasp on the ethical, political and social concerns that should guide a responsible information-based career." David Hurley's WLA Scholarship Application, 2001.

David Hurley, a graduate student enrolled in the Master's of Library and Information Science program in the University of Washington's Information School, is the recipient of the 2001 WLA Scholarship. As is evident from the quote above, David has given serious thought to what it means to be an information professional and impressed the committee with his ability to apply the theoretical knowledge he has gained in his studies to some of the major issues facing the profession today.

David received his B.A. degree in 1997 from Vassar College, where he majored in sociology and psychology. Following graduation, he worked as a reporter intern in Rhode Island. He relocated to Arizona and worked as a library technician at the Dine College Library. The position provided him with broad-based library skills in user services, circulation, collection development, and computing. In addition to helping to develop remote services for users, David encouraged their physical visits to the Dine College Library through the creation of a weekly video and discussion series, as well as providing orientations to the campus and community.

Librarians often talk about "telling our story" to our communities. David noted in his application that "The Dine College library, located on the Navajo Nation in Tsaile, Arizona, is situated at the center of campus because in a traditional Hogan (which guides the layout of campus) the center is the position of the fire, around which stories are told and knowledge is shared. Thus the library is the center of the community it serves, both physically and intellectually." Realizing the concept of "center" that he first encountered at Dine, David views the library as "the ideal institution to work from to assist individuals, communities, and organizations in accessing the information needed to navigate, guide, or shape our information-based society."

When David entered the master's program, he was interested in the confluence of libraries, multicultural environments, and the potential of technological solutions to information-service problems. Although still engaged by these issues, he notes that each class sends him off in another direction, and that "right now I'm happily lost as to what I want to do, and excited by the diversity of possibilities." David looks forward to getting acquainted with WLA and its members, and will be joining the Alki Committee in the role of intern. 



Patience Rogge
with her WLFTA
Trustee Award.
Photo by Deb
Cutler.



Dale Read, Jr.,
received a WLFTA
Trustee Award.
Photo by Deb
Cutler.



Representatives of
White Salmon
Friends of the
Library accepted a
WLFTA
Trustee/Friend
Award. Photo by
Deb Cutler.

Profile: Lisa Oldoski, Recipient of the 2000 WLA Scholarship

by Nancy Huling, University of Washington Libraries

"During my first year of college, I discovered that my favorite thing about being a college student was that I now had access to two entirely different library systems. During my second year, I realized that there were people who got paid to be there. I



David Hurley won
the WLA
Scholarship. Photo
by Deb Cutler.

immediately found a librarian to talk to about this wonderful phenomenon.” Lisa Oldoski’s WLA Scholarship application, 2000.

The year was 1995 when Lisa Oldoski fortuitously discovered that she could turn her love of libraries into a career, and she hasn’t looked back since. During her undergraduate years, she served in a variety of library venues: research docent at the UW Tacoma Library, intern with the Tacoma Art Museum Library, and intern in serials processing and circulation at the UW Tacoma Library. Following her graduation from the University of Washington’s Tacoma campus with a Bachelor’s of Liberal Arts, Lisa enrolled in the University of Illinois’s Graduate School of Library and Information Science through their distance learning program (Lisa’s experiences are detailed in the March 2001 issue of *Alki*). At the same time, Lisa continued to work as a serials technician in the UW Tacoma Library, a position she obtained after completing her bachelor’s degree. To gain additional knowledge, she completed a practicum at the Rainbow Center, a gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender nonprofit organization and community center, where she created a library.

Susan Madden and Angelina Benedetti, Scholarship Committee members active on other WLA committees, wasted no time in recruiting Lisa for the Membership Committee. Lisa also joined the *Alki* Committee as an intern. She noted that the people she has met through WLA have provided strong encouragement and mentoring throughout her graduate studies.

Although her original intent was to pursue a career as an art or theatre librarian in the academic world, it is probably not surprising that given her contact with Susan, Angelina, and Eva-Maria Lusk (*Alki* Committee), Lisa discovered a true passion and calling for youth services. And her advisor at Illinois was Christine Jenkins, also a youth services specialist. Lisa has obtained a part-time youth services librarian position with the Lakewood branch of the Pierce County Library System. Future plans include working in programming for young adults. At some point, she would like to initiate a storytelling program for high school students. In the foreseeable future, Lisa has been invited to participate in a panel discussion on distance learning at the WALE conference in October.

Lisa graduated from the University of Illinois in May 2001 and attended commencement virtually in the comfort of her home. She received one of fourteen awards given during commencement, the Herbert Goldhor Award for Public Librarianship. Sponsored by the Friends of the Urbana Free Library, it recognizes “an outstanding GSLIS student showing excellence and interest in entering the area of public librarianship.” WLA congratulates Lisa on her achievements, and looks forward to her continued involvement with the organization.



Mike Eisenberg, U. WA i-School, makes a point. Photo by Deb Cutler.



WLA thanks our wonderful exhibitors! Photo by Deb Cutler.

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For general information, contact Katrina Disbennett, chair, email: katrina@krl.org, or phone: (360) 405-9124, or see the WLA Website at <http://www.wla.org>.

Anatomy of a Grant

by Judy T Nelson

Science can now prove conclusively that learning begins at birth. Hardly a revolutionary idea, or is it?

Knowledge of brain development in early childhood is revolutionary. The question being debated is no longer “nature” versus “nurture”; the answer is decidedly both. How exciting! Early childhood learning is discussed on television news shows, written about in books for laypersons, and featured on the cover of *Newsweek*. It has been the subject of both a Presidential conference and a high-profile Washington State Governor’s Commission.

As head of the children’s department of a large library, I saw a need for providing materials and services for parents, child-care providers, and very young children, so I’ve been offering Young Toddler story times once a week for about three years. This has been the fastest growing segment of my customer base. But while the exciting news about babies and learning has been making headlines, there continues to be limited information for librarians on how to provide service for this age group. I believed in providing an introduction to literacy at a very young age, but I did not have any real knowledge about how a baby’s brain works. Like many others, I had learned by doing, reading articles about lap-sits and service to the very young, and by talking to others who were offering programs and materials.

Then in 1998, the Washington State Governor’s Commission on Early Learning was convened, chaired by two high-profile, high-powered women: Mona Lee Locke, the wife of the Governor, mother and former reporter, and Melinda Gates, wife of Bill Gates, mother and former Microsoft executive. They brought together business leaders, public health officials, members of the Washington State legislature, child-care providers, Head Start and ECEAP officials, child-care licensing officials, service organizations, educators, and researchers in the field of brain development—everyone who had a stake in identifying and working to solve problems of early childhood learning.

Librarians were not included in this commission, an oversight recognized by a group of library directors and youth services coordinators, who realized that public and tribal libraries would be excellent partners for many of the organizations and agencies providing direct services to families, parents, child-care providers, and child-care service educators. The concerned group of librarians realized there was money available through LSTA (Library Services and Technology Act) funds from the Federal government. They applied to the State Library for LSTA funding, and received it. The group wanted to address the omission of libraries from the Governor’s Commission, by teaching library staff about early childhood education, and by educating outside organizations and agencies about the potential service opportunities available through partnering with libraries. The grant was named the Washington State Children’s Initiative, later changed to the Washington State Early Learning Initiative.

While public and tribal libraries have a unique position in their community through providing materials and services to their clients, there has not been a widespread movement for these institutions to join with other groups that provide service to young children. Librarians have a tendency to assume that the general public knows how wonderful we are and how much

we can offer. We do not do an adequate job of selling our services or demanding a presence on policymaking boards and commissions. We wait to be asked. Well ... we weren’t asked to join the Governor’s Commission on Early Learning.

Libraries needed to get involved in this exciting revolution, but how to do this? In February 2000, I joined a group of children’s librarians in King County Library System that was interested in working on a new project. There was a newly-funded grant from the Washington State Library, and the State Library was looking for a library system to execute it. The focus of the grant was the emerging importance of early childhood learning, and the relationship between public and tribal libraries and this developing field.

The grant specified several components:

First, the grant required library staff, both public and tribal, to be educated about brain research and what this research reveals about early childhood learning. The grant envisioned a series of workshops statewide that would teach everyone the basics of how a baby’s brain works.

The second requirement was to create a steering committee to oversee the work done by the project manager. This committee would consist of interested library staff and representatives of organizations and agencies. Librarians may not have been involved with the Governor’s Commission, but many of the same participants that were part of the Governor’s Commission could be included here.

Through the steering committee, the third component would be started. With help from committee members, the project manager would begin establishing statewide partnerships with non-librarians involved in childcare, family services, and early learning. Libraries would describe materials and services they currently made available to their clients, while asking what else they could do to provide more complete service. Now was the time to raise libraries’ visibility within the community.

For the fourth component, if the steering committee was to oversee the workshops and begin to develop statewide partnerships, it was essential that they teach those library staff members learning about the brain to go out into their own communities and start local partnerships.

The fifth and final part of the grant was to identify best practices throughout the United States and worldwide, as well as what was being done in Washington State.

The Washington State Early Learning Initiative was a grant with a two-year cycle. The first year was to provide the training. The second year made funds available for local libraries to create programs they might not have been able to afford without outside assistance. The final piece was to prepare libraries to apply for funds of their own to develop local programs.

Judy T Nelson is Children’s Librarian Lead, Bellevue Regional Library, King County Library System.

These were the five concrete expectations of the grant. King County Library System applied for and won the right to execute the Washington State Children's Initiative, and I was asked to manage this new grant on behalf of KCLS. KCLS had offered to create a Website at the end of the training to provide library staff and any other interested parties access to information about children, the brain and how it works, existing programs, and organizations already involved in any or all of these issues. When I became project manager, I wasn't really sure what was involved in complying with the requirements described in the grant application. And I had about nine months to do it.

Developing the steering committee was the starting point. With the help of the initial grant writers, a list of potential members was compiled. We needed someone from a tribal library, as well as representatives of various-sized public libraries across the state. I also sought a public information officer from a library system to help us "get the word out." Using the list of steering committee members from the Governor's Commission, we started looking for representatives from the child-care arena, the public health sector, family literacy, and Head Start, as well as any other organizations that might be relevant. Gradually the committee grew to nineteen members, and is still a work-in-progress as new players are identified. Due to the short time period, we decided that the committee would meet face-to-face only once or twice. All remaining business would be conducted by e-mail or teleconferencing. We hoped that through the steering committee, dialogues with other organizations and agencies could begin. The first meeting was set for early July.

Prior to this meeting, I needed to complete as much background work as possible. I realized no one in Washington knew all the services and materials that were currently being offered by libraries across the state. To correct the situation, a team of children's librarians from the King County Library System called every public library system and every tribal library to get answers to a short survey about services and materials available for children under the age of six years. Once the spreadsheet of replies was assembled, we had a quick look at where we were as a state. This information would be used to structure the second-year grant requirements.

I did a great deal of reading, both about brain research and young children, and about existing programs for this age group, and began to envision the components of the four or five workshops that were to be offered across the state. I also sought a keynote speaker for the workshops. We wanted someone who could educate as well as inspire. Washington is home to several key researchers in infant learning. Two prominent scientists had recently co-authored an excellent book suitable for the lay reader, *Scientist in the Crib*. Dr. Andrew Meltzoff, one of the authors, was supportive of the effort and willing to help.

We decided to call the workshops "Amazing Minds: From Crib to Kindergarten, Libraries as Partners in Early Learning"—the first big decision of

the steering committee. Then, with the help of the public information officer on the steering committee, we cranked up the publicity machine. We knew we needed support from library directors in order to get adequate attendance at the workshops. We offered a presentation at their biannual meeting, and succeeded in arousing interest, especially after we noted that grant funds would be available for libraries for the fiscal years 2001-2002. We also created an announcement for the annual Washington State Library Association Conference.

As July approached, I finalized plans for our steering committee meeting. The all-day affair exceeded all expectations. Discussion throughout the day centered on existing partnerships at the libraries and agencies represented, an exchange that generated much information on ways to improve services generally and in specific circumstances. We also discussed the workshops themselves, and created a blueprint for them. I received excellent input concerning a potential trainer/keynote speaker, potential workshop locations, and suggestions for statewide partnerships, such as BrainNet.

Now I was armed with enough information and contacts to start developing the workshops themselves. After several weeks, I had confirmations from hotels and from the main speaker, Victoria Tennant. Suggestions continued to come in with regard to structuring the luncheon panel and afternoon learning sessions. I was beginning to believe that we really could indeed create a workshop worth everyone's attention, not just individuals directly involved with Children's Services! Victoria Tennant was an expert trainer on the subject of how the brain works, especially in young children. She had created curricula for schools, businesses and state agencies, and was someone who could provide education and inspiration. She could take Dr. Meltzoff's research and help laypersons understand what it meant and how to use it.

The luncheon panel would bring three different speakers together to introduce the idea of partnerships. Mary Kay Dahlgreen, Youth Consultant for Oregon State Libraries, could describe statewide partnerships and, in particular, "Oregon's Child, Everyone's Business," the Oregon equivalent of what we were attempting to set up in Washington. Sangree Froelicher, State Coordinator for the Washington State Child Care Resource and Referral Network, would speak about how libraries could work directly and indirectly with childcare providers across the state. Jane Coolidge, hearing and speech specialist for the Muckleshoot Tribe Head Start program, would address some of the issues that arise when working with tribal communities.

This left the afternoon sessions. We needed someone to teach attendees how to apply for a grant. Educational School Districts (ESDs) across Washington State have grant writers on their staffs, who not only apply for grants on behalf of school districts but also teach teachers how to do it themselves; Pamela Federline of one of the ESDs agreed to be our teacher. Mary Kay Dahlgreen agreed to offer an afternoon session on ideas that work, incorporating some of the best practices. This session would describe concrete programs in existence in Oregon and around the United States. Attendees would get actual ideas to copy or develop. My final task was to obtain the services of a local librarian at each of the five sites. This librarian would be responsible for bringing in one or more partners with whom they had worked. Together this team would talk about how they set up their partnership, with all the attendant pitfalls and triumphs.


Now it was time to create registration forms, confirmation notices, and hotel confirmations; to plan menu choices and travel arrangements; to print workshop packets; to obtain "give-away" selections; to make copies of handouts, and to collate the packets. Time was running out, and mountains of paperwork

were required. With excellent support from KCLS, five outstanding workshops were offered across Washington State, an e-group was established for discussion purposes, and a Website was created. Grant information is about to be released.

Final statistics showed that about 200 people attended the workshops. Fifty-five libraries, organizations, and agencies were represented, including public and tribal libraries, public health representatives, librarians from the Washington State Correctional Facility for Women at Purdy, Washington State Literacy, and Washington State Services for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired. Also included was a representative of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which has set up an Early Childhood Foundation to finance projects developed from the Governor's Commission on Early Childhood.

Libraries are a very important partner in the field of early childhood education. In Washington, over 40% of all children under the age of six are currently in some form of child care.

Providing quality story times in the traditional manner is no longer enough. We now know that children begin to learn at birth and that libraries must adapt their service priorities to include very young children, and all their care providers, whether they are parents, extended family members or paid childcare providers.

We may not have been at the first table, the Governor's Commission; but we succeeded in bringing members of this group and others to our table, and in opening a dialogue with organizations and agencies previously unfamiliar with public library service. During the second year of the grant cycle, we will have the opportunity to watch the ideas be implemented around the state. 

Information *(Continued from pg. 13)*

What is in the future? Washington State Library has planned an impressive campaign. The first we will see of this campaign will be radio and television public service announcements this fall. Employing the public relations firm of Daniels-Brown Communications in a three-year plan using \$400,000 in federal funds (from LSTA, the Library Services and Technology Act monies), year one, 2000, a statewide planning committee was organized to establish standards and develop a plan. This year, 2001, a statewide training program will be initiated along with an extensive program of marketing, a "media blitz," to all Washington citizens. In the last year, 2002, the project will assess and evaluate the successes of the program and set in place an ongoing oversight group. They will be offering "train the trainer" workshops starting this summer, and these trainers will in turn offer workshops around the state to library staff. Some of the benefits of the Information Literacy Project will be an increase in citizen awareness of the role of libraries and librarians in information awareness, an increase in citizen ability to solve information problems and to evaluate information for its legitimacy, library staff throughout the state trained to assist customers to become more information literate, the establishment of best practices using model library programs, and the establishment of a statewide oversight group to continue to maintain and expand the goals of this project.

Seattle Public Library seems to be the only public library in the state that has an actual position dedicated to information literacy. Brian Bannon is the Coordinator of Public Instruction (full-time, while Rhona Klein at WSL is only 3/4 time) and is in the process of creating a center for information literacy for the new (temporary) Seattle Public Library to open in June. Bannon says that information literacy for SPL means restructuring and changing the philosophy of how libraries do public instruction. The skills taught will be ones that the library hopes patrons will carry with them throughout their lives. He plans for the SPL Website to include information about the goals of information literacy this summer.

Partnerships between private and public sectors are not uncommon in this area of growing concern. The Pacific Bell/UCLA Initiative for 21st Century Literacies, begun last year and continuing through this year, addresses

- (1) the need to educate the end-user of information;
- (2) the need to design information materials and systems based on good principles and practices; and
- (3) the need to address emerging policy issues.³


For more examples of information literacy projects in other

states, check the Websites listed below, compiled by ALA.⁴

Does information literacy sound good? What are the problems? Most librarians know the main obstacle is lack of time. Librarians from all types of libraries interviewed by WSL said they did not have enough time to devote to the role of user instruction, "usually identified as central to the mission of their library."

There may be obstacles, but surely with the ambitious campaign by the Washington State Library, we can move forward toward some shared goals. After all, "the more we teach others to find and evaluate information, the more they understand the breadth and complexity of the information universe, and the more 'brilliant' they think we are."⁵

References and Notes

1. Adler, Richard. *Information Literacy: Advancing Opportunities for Learning in the Digital Age: a Report of the Aspen Institute Forum on Communications and Society* (FOCAS). Washington, D.C.: Aspen Institute, 1999, p. viii. http://www.aspeninstitute.org/publications1/bookstore_communications_literacy.html.
2. Ibid.
3. Created in 1990 as a response to ALA's Presidential Committee on Information Literacy, the National Forum on Information Literacy is a good source for more information on this topic. See <http://www.infolit.org/documents/pacball.html>
4. <http://www.ala.org/kranich/examples.html>.
5. Washington State Library Information Literacy Steering Committee meeting, 9/27/2000. 



I'd Rather Be Reading...

Notable Non-Fiction and Poetry



Nancy Pearl

by Nancy Pearl

In the last issue of *Alki*, I talked about the fiction selections of the Notable Books Council (of which I am a member) for 2001. Now here's the second half of the down-and-dirty reviews of the Notable Books for 2001, focusing on the non-fiction and poetry choices.

Non-Fiction

Jacques Barzun's *From Dawn to Decadence: 500 Years of Western Cultural Life, 1500 to the Present* (HarperCollins) is an impressive work. And although its length might imply otherwise, it is a most readable cultural history—almost like a conversation between you and the author, a longtime professor and historian.

Dave Eggers's *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius* (Simon & Schuster) was on almost everyone's Best-of-2000 list. This story of how the author raised his younger brother after the death of both parents within a span of two months is totally postmodern and terribly affecting.

Barrow's Boys by Fleming Fergus (Atlantic Monthly) is the fascinating story of a varied group of British explorers, sent out by British Admiralty officer John Barrow in the mid-19th century to fill in the gaps in the maps of the world. Perfect for history fans.

In a surprisingly accessible analysis of post-war France, Alice Kaplan's *The Collaborator: The Trial and Execution of Robert Brasillach* (University of Chicago Press) tells of the events surrounding the trial and eventual execution of a French intellectual who sided with the Nazis during World War II.

Matt Ridley's *Genome: The Autobiography of a Species in 23 Chapters* (HarperCollins) is heady and difficult reading about

genetics. Yet given the wealth of information it contains and the clarity of the explanations, it is well worth the concentration it takes to read it. (I reread the first chapter four times and—despite this clarity—I am still not entirely convinced I understand what he's saying!)

New York Times journalist Elaine Sciolino's *Persian Mirrors: The Elusive Face of Iran* (Free Press) offers a view of life in Iran since 1979. It gives readers a thorough picture of this complicated and fascinating place.

Bruce Chatwin (Doubleday) by Nicholas Shakespeare is an unflinching portrait of a complicated and fascinating man, a novelist and travel writer.

Colin Thubron's *In Siberia* (HarperCollins) is the perfect book for armchair travelers, since the author is generous, interesting, interested in everything and everybody, and pretty much fearless.

Poetry

Seamus Heaney's poetic translation of *Beowulf* (Farrar) has made this Anglo-Saxon epic (that many of us groaned and/or yawned our way through in high school or college) come to life.

Poet Laureate Stanley Kunitz's *Collected Poems* (Norton) is a book to cherish. The poetry is superb and yet perfectly accessible to the ordinary reader.

Australian Les Murray's *Learning Human: Selected Poems* (Farrar) are both complex and vivid. They remind us that you don't have to totally understand a poem in order to love it.

All these works are well worth considering for your personal reading, as well as for your libraries.

Nancy Pearl directs the Washington Center for the Book at the Seattle Public Library.

INSTRUCTIONS TO CONTRIBUTORS

Alki: The Washington Library Association Journal is published three times per year (March, July, and December). Each issue is centered on a theme relevant to Washington libraries. Unsolicited contributions are welcome and encouraged, but will be published based on the needs of specific issues. All submissions may be edited. The Editor and the *Alki* Committee reserve the right to make the final decision on any submitted material.

Deadlines for submissions are January 15 for the March issue, May 15 for the July issue, and October 15 for the December issue.

Format: Submissions should be in electronic form, if possible. The preferred formats are Word for Windows or ASCII text transmitted as an e-mail message or attachment (in rtf format), or submitted on a PC-formatted 3.5-inch disk. Hard copy will be accepted if the author does not have other options. Photos should be black-and-white. The Editor should be contacted before submitting artwork. Photographic prints and artwork will be returned, if requested. Otherwise, they will not be returned.

Articles typically range in length from 1,000-5,000 words and need not conform to the issue's theme, although theme-related articles are more likely to be published in the corresponding issue. Unsolicited articles unrelated to the theme, if they are selected for publication, will be published on a space-available basis. Articles should be in-depth examinations of issues of importance to Washington libraries. **Alki** publishes news and announcements in a column format.

News of personnel changes, professional organizations, awards, grants, elections, facility moves or construction, and/or establishment of newsworthy services can be submitted, and may be edited and included on a space-available basis. Items that require a timely response should be submitted to **The WLA LINK**, instead. **Columns** appear regularly and cover specific areas of library service or operations. Columns typically are pre-assigned in advance, and may be written or administered by a designated person. Anyone interested in submitting material for a specific column should contact the Editor.

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