

Good Library Recipe

Mix well:

Collegial climate
Learning opportunities
Comfortable ambiance
Professional organizations
Effective interaction
Fresh perspectives
Collaborative working
Due recognition
Maximized strengths
Peer-support network
Humor & friendships
Job satisfaction
Personal warmth
Shared information
Emotional well-being
Intellectual stimulation
Fair leadership
Community of learners
Special occasions
Collective responsibility
Valued partnerships
Common goals

Dispense widely!

The Care and Feeding of the Library Community

The WLA President speaks

WLA and the Care and Feeding of the Washington Library Community

by Carol Gill Schuyler



The Washington State library community is composed of public, academic, school, special, and government libraries and their staff, Friends' groups, volunteers, and trustees. Within the state, libraries range in size from nearly fifty branches with hundreds of employees to single outlets with one employee who performs every task. The Washington Library Association serves all libraries in the state and wants to become even more vital in its involvement with them. Our mission statement reads: "The purpose of WLA shall be the promotion of library service, continuing education, and library advocacy on behalf of the people of Washington State." WLA's mission is to support libraries (and their staff, Friends, and trustees) in Washington. The Association accomplishes its mission through its strategic plans.

Each Association president has the opportunity to work with members to develop a strategic plan to guide the direction of the organization for a two-year period. WLA is committed to the "Care and Feeding of the Library Community" through its "2001-2003 Strategic Plan." The strategic plan has four goals:

- to revitalize the Washington Library Association;
- to promote library advocacy within the library community;
- to network with associations and organizations with common goals; and
- to increase public awareness of the value of libraries.

This "road map" for the next two years will enable the Association to nurture all libraries, their staff, and the people they serve.

To revitalize the Washington Library Association: Not only do we want to encourage new membership (staff, Friends, and trustees) in the Association, we also want to actively involve members in the organization. We want members to participate in conferences and workshops, in interest groups, in committees and task forces, and on the board. We want all members to have the opportunity to participate at the level that they wish, and to feel that the Association is there to support their needs. Through conference planning and workshop development, we want to increase

continuing education to support on-going training needs for every level of our library community. Increasing the number of active members strengthens the health of WLA.

To promote library advocacy within the library community: The Association wants to ensure that all library staff, Friends' groups, volunteers, and trustees are informed about library issues and core values. The board hopes to have approved the draft of the *Intellectual Freedom Handbook* by the time you read this. The *Handbook* will be distributed along with intellectual freedom tip sheets. The tip sheets are designed to support front-line staff, who usually are the first to be confronted by those hard-to-answer questions. Advocacy programs will be a part of all conferences as well as offered through workshops and other continuing-education opportunities. We want to reach out to all unaffiliated Friends' groups, educate them on the value of WLA, and encourage them to join the Association.

To network with associations and organizations with common goals: The first step in networking with other groups is to identify those that potentially share common goals. We already have a reciprocal membership with the Washington Library Media Association (WLMA) and hold joint conferences with the Oregon Library Association. We are planning a joint conference with the Pacific Northwest Library Association (PNLA) for 2004. Can we more actively cooperate in program development and continuing education with both WLMA and PNLA? Another organization with which we would obviously network is the Washington Literacy Guild. We want to expand these affiliations because they are mutually beneficial for these organizations and their members. This goal creates almost limitless opportunities for growth, not only *in* members, but also *for* members. We would like to recruit speakers from other associations to share their expertise with our members, link from web-page to web-page, and share information about conferences and workshops.

To increase public awareness of the value of libraries: The goal for WLA is to make information about the value of libraries available to our service populations. Libraries of all types are expanding their information resources and formats. We support our communities in ways that were never available before now. Unfortunately, we are currently experiencing the Chinese curse—"May you live in interesting times." We are in the midst of increased political pressure and scrutiny. WLA has the ability to present a global picture of the value of all libraries in Washington, not just a snapshot of a single library in one community. The Association can show how libraries make a significant impact on society, a positive contribution to whatever community they serve, whether in a government, public, academic, or specialized environment.

During the past few months, our country has gone through terror, fear, grief, and determination. Our lives will never be the same. We need to look at the future with resolve and remember our values. Libraries are the epitome of freedom, and freedom

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Alki

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From the Editor

Now That We're Here:

The Care and Feeding of the Library Community

by Carolynne Myall

Recruiting is a topic that appears often in library literature. Recruiting staff with special skills. Recruiting a diverse staff. Recruiting volunteers and friends from all sectors of the community. Recruiting active library users.

But now that we are here, part of the library community, what next? How do we sustain and deepen our commitment to libraries, through fiscal crises, galloping technological change, and the ups and downs of any long-term relationship? How do we avoid burn-out, boredom, and complacency? How can individuals, libraries, and library organizations aid in nurturing the library community?

This unusual issue of *Alki*, "The Care and Feeding of the Library Community," shows how we do just that. Articles describe forums, workshops, and staff development days; consider unions and professional organizations; discuss the role of friendships and collegial work relationships, the pleasure of learning new skills, the excitement and risk of developing new services such as shared database licensing. In several cases, nourishment of the library community is literal, involving celebration and food, a symbol of library hospitality

Carolynne Myall is Head of Collection Services and Chair of the Library Faculty at Eastern Washington University.

and the connection between body and spirit.

And if you need a laugh—there's Angellynn King's hilarious "Library Olympics." Enjoy!

"I'd Rather Be Reading"

Nancy Pearl was unable to contribute to this issue, but she will return in March. In the meantime, we are fortunate to have guest columnist Konny Thompson.



Here, the editor (left) and other library and information technology staff hand out "Subs on the Steps" to welcome students to the library, Eastern Washington University, Oct. 2000. We all had fun! Photo by Carol Raczykowski.

Oops!

Photographer Deb Cutler took some wonderful photos of the 2001 Conference for *Alki*. Unfortunately, though, the picture in the July issue of Mary Palmer, winner of the CAYAS Visionary Award, was not really of Mary at all. We apologize, Mary! This time, we really do have a picture of the winner of this important award. It appears on page 29.

Coming Issues

The theme for the March 2002 issue is "Otherness, Difference, and Diversity in Libraries." We hope to have articles on Washington State Library's Diversity Initiative, population trends in Washington and their implications for libraries, among other topics. Send your contributions!

Following *Alki's* tradition, the July 2002 issue will cover the conference, and examine the major themes and issues emerging in conference programs and discussions. And then it's over to a new

editor, Cameron A. Johnson of Everett Public Library. What themes would you like to see covered in *Alki* during Cameron's tenure as editor? Programs and special events in all kinds of libraries? Management issues in everyone's lives? Best practice and pitfalls for library Websites and OPACs? Or ... ?? Send Cameron your ideas and suggestions at cjohnson@ci.everett.wa.us.

Up Front (Continued from page 2)

is based on access to information. That access is a core value of libraries of every kind. We cannot afford to be passive, but must be proactive.

The Washington Library Association is committed to the "care and feeding of the library community" at all levels. We support active dialog among all facets of the library community through conferences and our listserv, continuing education of both general and specific interest for our

members, interest groups so that people with the same concerns and issues can come together to discuss them and learn from each other, legislative involvement that helps every library in the state, and both a regional and national presence for issues that extend beyond our borders.

Part of "care and feeding" is finding out what the dietary needs are. Please let the Association know what your needs are so that we can provide the nutrition to support your strength and well-being!

Service With a Smile: My Experiences in the Fine Art of Library Catering

by **Angelina Benedetti**



The first library where I worked housed place settings for twenty, a crystal punch bowl, and a silver tea service within its cupboards. Its director understood the value of a good party. Known for his generosity, he would carve turkey and serve homemade pineapple upside-down cake at holiday celebrations that would have made Old Fezziwick proud. The cares of the past year would slip away as the staff sipped fizzy pink punch and traded roll recipes. I had known for a long time that librarians appreciated good food, but had not guessed that party planning was such an important part of good public service.

There and then I learned the value of quality catering.

This lesson has been reiterated and reinforced so often in my relatively short career that I have come to believe that alongside cataloging and database searching, every prospective librarian should learn the art of playing host. Our patrons, staff members, volunteers, and benefactors can then bask in the good will generated by our gracious hospitality.

Lucky for me, I continued to work in “Fezziwick’s” library as I went to library school, where courses in how to make a good pot of coffee were conspicuously absent from the curriculum. My first professional position was in a branch that hosted a yearly Bookfest. My new boss wondered about my sanity when I offered to be in charge of Author Hospitality for the event. In the absence of a crystal punch bowl and silver tea service, I brought in a crock-pot of spiced cider and my grandmother’s ancient percolator. The napkins and cups matched and the Friends brought in batches of homemade cookies. “I’ve done quite smashingly!” I thought to myself as the staff oohed and ahhed, but this young Jedi had much left to learn.

My next library hosted weekly evening programs for the community. Crowd size ranged from a few dozen to a few hundred, depending on the week’s offering. I thought these events were tremendous fun until the evening the performer failed to show. In a panic, I recalled the one lesson the most gracious of my library school professors had taught in program planning. Her advice? Always have a back-up plan. “Great,” thought I, “maybe I’ll think of one after tonight.” In the end, no one in the crowd of over three hundred complained as I told jokes and stories and apologized for the cancellation. Afterwards, I wondered where I could put “advanced training in crowd control” and “improvisational theatre” on my resume.

I took these dubious skills to my next post, the Redmond Library. Redmond was destined for a new building, and I took the job knowing how much I would learn from the experience of moving a library. Little did I realize how many of my lessons would be in the fine art of library hostmanship. Volunteers helping with the move were met with coffee, tea, cocoa, cookies, donuts, and fruit in a well-stocked buffet supplied by the library’s Friends. Opening the new facility meant reception after reception with a similar spread in the meeting room and fresh

flowers on the Reference Desk. Over the next year, the library hosted author after author, and over and over again its meeting room was filled with well-fed patrons.

Just when I thought I had absorbed every “good thing” there was to learn, Redmond hosted the Governor’s Writer’s Awards. At the hands of the gifted Chapple Langemack, our system’s “Empress of Reading for Pleasure,” our reading tables were transformed into an elegant dessert buffet, sporting bouquets that would have been at home in the lobby of any four-star hotel. As I sampled a cracker loaded with brie and Chapple’s homemade chutney, my heart glowed with the fire of the converted. I knew with certainty that the catering arts would be an important part of my career, that all those hours poring over the cookbooks on the new book shelf would not go to waste so long as there were moments like this.

For me, those moments have now become few and far between. I have taken a job in collection development, and temporarily retired my apron and matching napkins and cups. Part of me still longs for the thrill of planning and executing a good party. When called to speak at a library’s teen book group, I smiled when I was served cocoa and Lorna Doones by one of its members. Whether on a big or a small scale, library hospitality spreads joy amongst our multitudes, and reflects the spirit of service that drives us.



Angelina Benedetti is Young Adult Selector with the King County Library System.



From Turmoil to Tropical Relief: Evolution of A Staff In-Service Day

by Holly Blosser

The Fort Vancouver Regional Library District (FVRL) has held an annual staff in-service day since 1989. Director Sharon Hammer began the event as a way to bring staff together during a period of turmoil. All Staff Day, as it was originally known, was initially held at the district headquarters in Vancouver, Washington, then began to rotate between Clark County and FVRL locations in neighboring Skamania and Klickitat Counties. Large-group sessions dominated the day, with staff having only occasional opportunities to choose which sessions to attend. The sessions varied from motivating speakers such as actress Geri Jewell, Kaycee Hale, and noted library consultant Pat Wagner, to such less-than-stimulating topics as blood-borne pathogens, insurance changes, and the hazardous-materials communications program.

We thought the new millennium was enough reason to make some changes in a yearly tradition that had become something staff dreaded, rather than a day they enjoyed. We identified problems to remedy. For example, the topics did not always meet employees' needs; and staff had very little choice about what training they received. In addition, as the number of staff in the district grew, adequate meeting space became scarce. We also wanted to take some of the burden off the administrative staff, who usually did much of the work that day, so that they, too, could enjoy the event and participate in it.

We knew that we wanted to move to a format similar to a one-day conference, with a keynote speaker at the beginning and breakout sessions the rest of the day. The biggest hurdle was finding a location, so we looked around our community and located a gold mine: Clark College, the local community college right down the street from our operations center. We learned that if we could adjust our in-service date to a time when classes were not in session, we could have access to everything we needed: an auditorium, classrooms, the cafeteria—even a computer lab! And so FVRL's Staff Development Conference was born.

Now that we had a location, we set our minds to planning the event. The theme for the day became "Hawaiian Daze: Taking You to Another State," which we thought would represent the event-changes well. We surveyed the staff to find out what they were interested in learning, then found some really great speakers, both from inside and outside our organization.

With only a few minor glitches, the day was a rousing success. The employees overwhelmingly

enjoyed being able to choose the sessions they attended for information they could apply back on the job.

We learned a lot during this process. But no matter how successful an event is, there are always changes that will make it even better next time.

What Worked:

- **Keep It Fun!**

In keeping with the "Hawaiian Daze" theme, we encouraged staff to wear their personal Hawaiian shirts, had leis for everyone, and had grass table skirts. This really contributed to the positive vibes of the day. It is never easy to find the perfect balance between fun and seriousness, but it can be done with success.

- **Breakout Sessions**

Having specific training that employees could directly apply to their jobs was the most valuable part of the day. This was the key component that had been missing from previous in-service days. We tried very hard to have something for all the different interest areas, and for the most part we succeeded. Sessions ranged from "No Teens in My Library," which gave staff insight into what makes teens tick, to "Dealing with Aggressive Patrons."

- **Make It Easy**

Streamline wherever you can. We had one caterer bring everything for breakfast—coffee, tea, juice, muffins, cups, etc.—so all the organizers had to do was show up. We scheduled speakers with similar equipment needs in the same location to avoid shuffling equipment.

- **Feed Them!**

We provided breakfast in the morning while staff members were networking with each other, and lunch in the middle of the day. You can always count on comments about the food. You will never please everyone; but if you can please the majority, you have succeeded!

- **Evaluate**

Find out what worked, what did not, and what needs to be changed. Evaluations are also a great way to gather programming ideas for the coming year. Consider repeating successful sessions as training for staff during the rest of the year. Not everyone can attend every session they want in one day, so popular sessions are great to bring back later on.

Learning Opportunities:

- **Start Planning Early**

It is never too early to begin planning. Start a minimum of six months before the event. You do not want to be finalizing the speakers one week before the big day. A time line is an essential tool.

Holly Blosser is Training Coordinator, Fort Vancouver Regional Library.

- **Delegate**

Our staff training committee provided a lot of valuable input, but I would like to involve them even more next year. Being the one person in charge of finding speakers, arranging the food, selecting decorations, making arrangements at the facility, etc., was a huge and rather stressful responsibility. Now that we have a general idea of how to plan the event, delegation will be much easier.

- **Networking**

Staff members really value networking with their fellow employees. We did plan some time for this at the beginning of the day, but staff would have liked even more. One idea suggested was to have one block of breakout sessions as networking sessions for the different functions in the library

(circulation, reference, youth services) or even topic areas (dealing with problem patrons, storytime, technology). Providing opportunities for staff members to share ideas with each other has great value.

We are already thinking about how to make our 2002 Staff Development Conference an even more valuable and fun learning experience for staff. We will begin our planning process for the September event in early spring. Bolstered by one solid success, we are ready to create a tradition that staff will anticipate as the high point of their work year.



InForum *(Continued from page 8)*

staff-related pages; here we also keep copies of our policies and procedures manuals, our Strategic Plan, and in-house “cheat sheets.” We share documents on our system-wide servers, so folks in geographically distant locations can update the same file during the course of a day. And, needless to say, we use e-mail almost to excess. Like 95% of those reading this article, we are suffering from information overload, sitting in front of our computer screens. This year, InForum assemblies are taking our fingers off the keyboards for ninety minutes a month so that we can share ideas and news in person—across library units, academic disciplines, and job classifications.

One of the more interesting InForums took place the week after the September 11 tragedies. People’s sense of loss and desire for action was palpable in the lecture hall, and a lively discussion stretched the meeting far beyond its ending time. Partly as a result of that exchange, a team of staff members prepared a set of September 11-themed web pages (viewable at <http://www.lib.washington.edu/about/sept11/>), and the UW Libraries were an active participant in the October 11 University Day of Reflection and Engagement. Getting together as a staff definitely made a difference!

At another memorable InForum, Betsy Wilson moderated a panel discussion regarding the concept of transformation. The necessarily short time-frame left both audience and speakers wanting more—so the InForum planners arranged an additional hour-long meeting at which each speaker could have more time. In turn, that meeting sparked an interest in holding discussion meetings (moving away from the large assembly concept) that would also be open to all staff. At one of the Transformation panels, an employee offered several terrific ideas on how the Libraries could improve efficiency, and people wanted a chance to discuss her specific suggestions. Out of this was born a second meeting—called “OneWednesday” because it takes place on the first Wednesday of each month. We have held two OneWednesday meetings, at which people are encouraged to take off their hats and exchange ideas freely.

The UW Libraries InForum assemblies are a work in progress. They require a tremendous amount of planning, forethought, and preparation on the part of the sponsoring libraries and speakers. Even with all the assistance we give each other for each program, technical glitches with such things as microphones or PowerPoint presentations are inevitable. We are still fine-tuning the types of information people most want to share, as well as the length, format, and scheduling of meetings. The big picture is not without tension: the InForum concept

doesn’t work for everyone, and the unenthused minority does voice concerns that are taken seriously. Unless we shut down the library system during the meetings, not everyone can attend every meeting. Employees at our Tacoma, Bothell, and Sand Point installations have to make special arrangements to get to the Seattle campus. Since change is inevitable, we don’t know how long the InForum format will continue. Many of us hope it will have a long life, with improvements and innovations along the way.

For many, a typical work-related nightmare would involve being trapped in one endless meeting after another. George Soete maintains that library people, because we tend to have few fixed time constraints, hold more meetings than people in almost any other profession (Soete, p. 2). There are meetings one secretly dreads and other meetings one actually—YES!—looks forward to. We hope that the InForums are in the second category. Since this past May, UW Libraries employees have the option of gathering en masse to inform each other, celebrate accomplishments, and share our plans for the future in a unique forum we envision, develop and lead ourselves.

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In Praise of Assemblies: The University of Washington's New "InForum" Meetings

by **Cassandra Hartnett**

Since May 2001, my library has offered its staff the opportunity to attend monthly all-staff assemblies known as "InForum" meetings. Many library employees have gone from healthy skepticism about this large group meeting to being enthusiastic converts. Let me explain!

Staff-wide assemblies in the library? Aren't assemblies something we remember from high school? (Just the word "assembly" calls to my mind the garishly colored curtains in my high school auditorium.) Actually, assemblies are nothing radically new at the University of Washington Libraries; until this year, we were accustomed to attending the Director's annual "State of the Libraries" address, opening the Libraries late that day to insure that all staff could attend. Managerial-level librarians here traditionally attended an irregular (though mostly monthly) business meeting known as the Director's "Information Meeting." And naturally we've always enjoyed good staff turnout for social occasions—holiday parties, retirement send-offs, and the like.

In any of these large-scale staff gatherings at the University Libraries, whether for business or pleasure, I always get caught up in the energetic buzz as people, personalities, and ideas converge in one space. Veteran conference-goers know about this buzz—they know that the most significant professional interactions usually occur in the hallways outside the official meetings as attendees discuss ideas, get the scoop on new problems, introduce themselves to strangers, and learn about each other's jobs. It's a real challenge for a library director to encourage these face-to-face encounters, not only in the hotel lobbies at a WLA or ALA meeting, but in the halls of his/her home institution. That's not such an easy proposition for a large organization of approximately 400 employees.

In her inaugural address to the staff, our new Director of University Libraries, Betsy Wilson, suggested a monthly forum for in-person exchange. She was met with an enthusiastic response. Two months later, in March 2001, a committee of ten volunteers began planning these meetings in earnest; and the Libraries InForum assemblies were born. The planning group's early discussions were thought-provoking: What do people need to hear in person? What do staff want to know? What types of news/information aren't they getting now? And

what should we call these meetings? ("InForum" has grown on me; it's catchy and captures the inclusiveness of the Roman "forum" or place of public assembly. Close runners-up included "All Hands," "The Unmissable Meeting," and "You Heard it Here First.")

To date, we've held five InForum assemblies, the first in May 2001. The location—instead of the cavernous lecture hall for the Director's annual speech or the familiar classroom for the managerial-level meetings—changes from month to month, as various units host or "sponsor" the InForums. We also vary the meeting time so that different workday schedules are accommodated. Sponsoring libraries to date have included the Music Library, Foster Business Library, Chemistry Library, Architecture & Urban Planning Library, and Natural Sciences Library. We have moved from auditorium to auditorium, getting a sense of our place on a sprawling, diverse campus. In July, in lieu of a "regular" InForum, we invited staff to tour our interim technical services facilities at the former Sand Point Naval Base and eat lunch out in the sun at nearby Magnuson Park.

Based on attendees' comments and our own sense of what works, InForums now include these core elements:

- review of the collections, services and staff at the host library;
- introduction of new staff (for variety and humor, we also introduce a more long-term staff member, known as the "mystery staff person," and highlight the individual's work and personal interests);
- featured speaker of the day;
- staff announcements; and
- Director's update.

All meetings have been successful and well-attended, and are already contributing to a subtle but perceptible change in the corporate culture of our Libraries. In *The Complete Handbook of Business Meetings*, author Eli Mina weighs the advantages and disadvantages of face-to-face meetings (Mina, pp. 273-274). Truly, the benefits listed ring true for InForums: interactivity, responsiveness, group cohesion, team spirit and social interaction, as well as "control and accountability." All attendees are guaranteed of seeing and hearing the same thing at the same time.

Reflecting on our recent history, UW Libraries employees are skilled at keeping in touch with each other. As is true in nearly all libraries nationwide, our internal electronic communication has flourished over the last decade. We have three long-standing e-newsletters for Libraries staff: the *Weekly Online News* (our main vehicle for general communication and announcements), the *Personnel and Staff Development Update* (more training/development oriented, and the place to announce staff changes), and the *Library Staff Association News & Views* (reporting on the staff association's meetings and promoting upcoming events). We have a staff web space on which all UW Libraries units and committees maintain their

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WLFTA: Listening, Caring, Advocating

by **Bonnie Taylor**



There is only one major difference between old-time telephone operators and our state alliance of library Friends and trustees—it is okay for us in the Washington Library Friends and Trustees Association (WLFTA) to eavesdrop.

Actually, we are just listening carefully. Like telephone operators, our number-one job is connecting Friends to each other. In our case, that is Friends with a capital F, and trustees. We listen to find out what is going on at public libraries across the state. Then we encourage library supporters to talk to each other about what we learn, and to talk not just by phone, but also by newsletter, programs, online chat, and email. The expectation is that first-rate communication will enable library volunteers and governing boards to carry out their duties with more confidence, enthusiasm, and pleasure.

WLFTA's newest communication tool to help library supporters hook up is a survey. This winter, library Friends, trustees, and staff on the dry side and the wet side, from the northern stretches of the Columbia River along its wandering route to the Pacific, will be asked their views on issues important to public libraries and their advocates. The survey also asks what activities WLFTA should undertake to boost advocacy and support for public libraries, and how Friends and trustees can better connect to share ideas and concerns. The survey is being distributed inside a special edition of the WLFTA newsletter, *The Advocate*, and online through the WLA web site. (Go to WLFTA.) You may also phone WLA coordinator Gail Willis at 1-800-704-1529 to request surveys.

WLFTA is growing. With more than 220 members this year, our numbers include not only Friends and trustees, but also WLA board members and library professionals. But we need to grow even more to succeed as a multi-faceted channel for talk, interaction, education, and even inspiration for all of Washington's public libraries. By being a conduit for information, WLFTA finds out about the activities, challenges, and achievements at both small and large libraries throughout Washington, and shares their successes and visions for the future. Part of the on-going mission of WLFTA's steering committee is to spread praise and gratitude for all the efforts of public library supporters.

As one of the largest interest groups, WLFTA could develop into a stalwart partner for professional librarians to protect intellectual freedom, to keep public financial support for libraries strong, and to expand libraries' influence and use. It also could be a catalyst for WLA itself to grow and prosper. WLA's new strategic plan calls for WLFTA to increase its membership dramatically in the next two years. The only way that WLFTA can come anywhere near this goal is for each and every public library director in the state—and their staffs—to see the value of WLFTA. Why else would they encourage their Friends and trustees to join and take part? It would be a boon, too, if library directors themselves joined us. Two Washington library directors, John Sheller of Sammamish and Victoria

Bonnie Taylor, current Chair of WLFTA, is a Friend and Trustee of Mid-Columbia Library.

Parker of Orcas Island, play pivotal roles in WLFTA by serving on our steering committee. They will be the first to tell you that without active, enthusiastic volunteers and knowledgeable, dedicated trustees, their libraries would suffer. Those of us on WLFTA's steering committee know we have a real challenge in the next year or two to build interest in our mission at all our public libraries. Hopefully, the survey will show the way to do that.

Establishing a sense of camaraderie among WLFTA members is important to us, so whenever we get together we try to have fun. Our merry little frog mascots symbolize our joyful attitude toward our commitment to libraries and appear in abundance at all our sessions. Our WLFTA co-chair, Audrey Stupke of Orcas Island, says that WLFTA wants to take huge leaps forward for publicly-funded libraries.

Frogs and all, we will come together in 2002 for Library Day activities and for the WLA Annual Conference. In the fall, WLFTA will hold a Friends Forum, as we did in 2000, to share ideas and consider library issues that affect volunteers and trustees.

Many of WLFTA's members double up their advocacy efforts by also taking part in Grassroots, a WLA interest group led by another of our dedicated members, Patience Rogge of Port Townsend. Together, these two WLA interest groups could be referred to as the dynamic duo, ready to fight for libraries and to support the wonderful persons who choose librarianship for their life's work. After all, passion for libraries is also a life-long commitment of those in WLFTA.



The “Care and Feeding” of Our Library Community

by Cindy Lesh

We all know the library feeds our minds through books, the Internet, audiotapes and videotapes, magazines, etc. But have you thought how much a library can feed your body and soul?

Let's first look at feeding our bodies. I remember the fun of having a special cookie at a holiday celebration while visiting with someone about my favorite holiday novel and the newest mystery author I'd just discovered, then finding that she loves mysteries too. The next thing I knew, I was writing down a list of my favorites and taking down hers.

While volunteering to help the Friends sort through all the books that have been donated for the next book sale, I was given a hot cup of coffee. Coffee has never tasted so good as after working in that cold, dusty garage.

How do we celebrate our library volunteers? With a party, of course! Anything from an ice cream social to a high tea. I was familiar with only a few volunteers at the first function I attended; but over the years, the number of people I have seen and worked with in the library increased, so coming back to visit is more enjoyable each year.

When a library employee is exceptionally nice to me, it is fun to surprise him or her with cookies!

How did I get to know our new director or new trustees? I invited them to lunch, asked them about

their lives, and told them about mine over a simple salad or a sandwich. Eating is the common denominator, the feeding of our bodies. It's really not the food so much as the camaraderie, but it helps.

For the feeding of our souls, not only is there a tremendous amount of life-changing self-help material to choose from in any library, there are people there to help you find it. It's the people who can make such a difference in library patrons' lives. Many times reference librarians have suggested resources I had not thought of checking. And I'm sure you've had the experience of being in the check-out line and noticing that it's taking a little longer than you expected. Then you realize that the patron is telling the circulation clerk a personal fact of his life, maybe about his dog that he'll pick up at the vet's office that afternoon, or about the grandchild who has just won an award for his biology class insect collection. I remember that once there was a child having his hand stamped with a dinosaur stamp, and he turned and told me just what kind of a dinosaur is *his* favorite. Yes, it may take a few more seconds to be on my way, but those personal exchanges are so important to so many. Doesn't the kindness of strangers make us all feel special?

Have you been to a library Friends meeting? It's not just about books or sales but about making friends with people who have a common interest. And are you ready for a challenge? Apply for the library board of trustees. It can be a commitment for five or seven years, or even two terms for fourteen years of service! But what a reward it can be, with challenges, goals, and achievements you have never imagined.

Personal friendships developed with strangers—what better food for the soul could there possibly be? Libraries are not just about books, they're about people, relationships and caring. I love my library for its diverse staff, and for all the ways it feeds me and my community.

Cindy Lesh is Chair of the Board of Trustees, Jefferson County Rural Library District.

Pumpkin Squares

Crust:

1 cup flour
1/2 cup quick oats
1/2 cup packed brown sugar
1/2 cup room temperature margarine
Mix and pat into bottom of 13" x 9" pan.
Bake fifteen minutes at 350 degrees.

Filling:

2 cups pumpkin
2 eggs
1 can (12 ounces) condensed milk
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
1/4 teaspoon cloves

1 teaspoon cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ginger
3/4 cup sugar
Mix and pour over crust. Bake twenty minutes at 350 degrees.

Topping:

1/2 cup chopped walnuts or pecans
1/2 cup packed brown sugar
2 tablespoons room-temperature margarine

Mix and crumble over filling. Bake fifteen minutes at 350 degrees. Serve with cream, ice cream, or whipped topping.

This is one of my favorite recipes from one of my favorite friends, Blanche Gray. Cindy Lesh.

Food, Friends, and Fun ...

by **Cindy Wigen**



Combine over 400 gallons of lentil chili, 5000 people, festivities and activities for all ages—and you have the 13th National Lentil Festival held August 24-25, 2001, in Pullman, Washington. Each year the Lentil Festival grows in popularity, and this year the Friends of Neill Public Library (Pullman city library) and the Friends of Whitman County Library collaborated to host a festival booth to showcase each Friends' fund-raising activity and promote library services.

On Friday evening, Main Street in Pullman is closed off and limited to foot traffic wandering through the street vendors, booths, live bands, a beer garden, giant inflatable kids' activities, and, of course, a huge pot of lentil chili to serve the 5000 visitors. The staff and Friends of NPL and WCL volunteered for shifts to staff the Friends' booth Friday evening and all day Saturday. Saturday's festivities kicked off with the Annual Lentil Parade followed by a grand celebration at Reaney Park, a couple of blocks from Main Street.

The park activities include food vendors, arts and crafts, storytelling, swimming, games, a live fishing pond for the kids, live bands and dancing, another beer garden, and free taste-testing of the top six lentil "cook-off" recipes. The Friends' volunteers thoroughly enjoyed the lentil samples, but disagreed on the winning recipe.


Partnering for the Lentil Festival was a great opportunity for the NPL Friends to sell their popular pleated canvas book bags, and for the Friends of WCL to peddle their recently published *Recipes from Our Friends* cookbook. Each sold for only \$10 and was a hit with festival attendees.

Cindy Wigen is Public Services Manager at Whitman County Library and is a Friend of the Library



Pictured from left to right at Friday night's street fair for the 2001 National Lentil Festival are Peggy Bryan, Friend and business manager at WCL, Cindy Wigen, Friend and Public Services Manager at WCL, and Andriette Pteron, Friend and public services librarian at NPL. Photo supplied by Cindy Wigen.

Pullman is a college town with regular yearly turnover of students and professors. Scheduling the Lentil Festival the weekend before classes begin allows the new residents to become familiar with organizations, retailers, and agencies (including the library) in a friendly environment.

Over the past several years, the two library systems have increased their shared activities and partnered on a variety of community events including the countywide Palouse Empire Fair in September, held five miles outside of Colfax; the annual Family Fair on the campus of Washington State University each February; the ongoing responsibilities of the Parent Resource Center, a task force of the Whitman County Alliance; and sponsoring an Inquiring Minds series through the Washington Commission for the Humanities. 

National Lentil Festival Lentil Chili Recipe

Ingredients	Festival Quantity	At home
Brown lentils	535 lbs.	5 lbs.
Water	321 gal.	3 gal.
Onion, diced	107 lbs.	1 lb.
Celery, diced	54 lbs.	.5 lb.
Carrot, diced	54 lbs.	.5 lb.
Tomato puree	54 gal.	2 qt.
Pace brand salsa	27 gal.	1 qt.
Chili powder, mild	21.4 lbs.	0.2 lbs.
Cumin	10.7 lbs.	0.1 lbs.
Granulated garlic	10.7 lbs.	0.1 lbs.
Granulated sugar	26.75 lbs.	.25 lbs.
Kosher salt	16.5 lbs.	.15 lbs.
Crushed red pepper	2.2 lbs.	1 tbsp.

Instructions:

1. In a large stockpot, boil all ingredients for forty-five minutes.
2. When lentils are done, but still firm, taste test for any adjustments.

Garnish:

You may use shredded cheddar or any other cheese, diced tomatoes, onions, jalapeno peppers, cilantro, sour cream, bacon bits, shredded chicken, diced tofu, croutons, garlic bread, tortillas, chips, etc.

Storage:

1. Hold at 170 degrees for serving.
2. When finished, chill in four-inch-deep pans, but only pour in two inches deep.



Toward a More Perfect Union: Breaking Down the Caste System in Libraries

by Martha Parsons and Troy Christenson

There is a long history of division between MLS and non-MLS staff in libraries. It is common in library circles to hear anecdotal stories of “professional” staff not being allowed to befriend or socialize with “nonprofessional” staff, and vice versa. Often the two groups did not fraternize with one another even when no formal rule or policy precluded these interactions. Consciously or not, this division extended to an attitude of keeping the non-MLS staff members in their place. We hope to have come a long way since those days, but “us vs. them” (MLS vs. non-MLS) thinking and practice is still prevalent in many libraries. This attitude can manifest itself as a destructive undercurrent, or as a blatant divisiveness in the workplace. It can even occur without any awareness that a comment, action, or policy is being taken as an “us vs. them” issue. We would like to bring the issue out into the open, provide food for thought, and suggest positive approaches to encouraging rapport and working together.

Obviously, “us vs. them” thinking can come from either side. But since it is usually the MLS holders who have more power (power to institute rules, set policy, and control budgets), it is more commonly non-MLS staff members who feel they are not given equal opportunity or treatment. A complicating aspect of this issue is the lack of standards for positions in libraries. There are huge variations in position descriptions, job requirements, titles, and pay for both MLS and non-MLS staff in different types and sizes of libraries. Staffing needs created by changing technology, attempts to create career ladders, or personnel budget cuts sometimes result in promotion of non-MLS employees into positions formerly held by librarians, and conversely may see librarians hired into support-staff positions for which no MLS degree is required. This situation is often referred to as *role blurring*. These job transitions may be good for an individual or an organization, but they add to the complexity of the overall picture of what roles MLS and non-MLS staff play in the library profession. Whatever the reasons for role blurring, it can sometimes make MLS holders overly protective and defensive of their degree and their standing in the profession. Ironically, staff

Martha Parsons is a Library Specialist at the Washington State University Energy Program Library in Olympia, and President of the ALA Library Support Staff Interests Roundtable. Troy Christenson is the Resource Sharing Manager at Eastern Washington University in Cheney, and past Chair of the Washington Library Association Interlibrary Loan Interest Group and the Spokane Area Interlibrary Loan Interest Group.

members holding advanced degrees other than an MLS are given no recognition or acknowledgment for their academic accomplishments. These role factors, though often not openly acknowledged, may be a component of job dissatisfaction and “us vs. them” attitudes. And it is important to recognize that these attitudes may be isolated or common, or may occur without people’s awareness.

There are basic considerations and good practices that can help organizations avoid “us vs. them” divisions. Below are some areas to consider in evaluating the situation in your organization, and some suggestions for solutions.

Communication Flow:

- Is there mutual, two-way sharing of information among all levels of staff and management?
- Is an open, knowledge-sharing environment nurtured?
- Does management respond to support-staff requests, needs, and concerns?
- Do conference or training announcements come addressed to the director, dean, or human resources department and never go any further, or are they sent only to “professional” (MLS) staff?
- Are support workers given credit for their suggestions, if implemented?

Communication is probably the most important area where “us vs. them” thinking occurs. Talking to all employees in the organization is a good way to build understanding and rapport among them. A two-way flow of communication among all levels of staff can reduce misunderstandings. When information is restricted only to those staff members that someone thinks need to know, other staff feel out of the loop. Staff questions require responses, and staff suggestions need to be considered seriously. When suggestions are implemented, the individuals who made the suggestions should be publicly acknowledged and commended; and when suggestions are not implemented, an explanation should be provided. This feedback builds rapport, trust, and confidence between individuals and management.

Knowledge should be shared. Some non-MLS employees may, especially in their areas of expertise, know more than some MLS employees. News, announcements, and training opportunities should be posted for all to see. Even if some employees do not want to participate themselves, they may know of someone else who does. If team play is desirable, everyone must be part of the team. Open communication is one of the most effective, easiest, and no- or low-cost ways to avoid destructive attitudes in an organization.

Attitude and Respect:

- Do MLS staff use the “only” word—that is, “she *only* has a M.Ed. degree” or “he’s *only* a library assistant”—implying that anyone who does not have an MLS degree is inferior?
- Are the terms “us” and “them” or “we” and “they” used, suggesting an adversarial situation?
- Is a degrading tone of voice used?
- Is there body language that says, “I’m better than you”?

People want to be wanted, and need to be needed. When librarians do not respect the support staff with whom they work, or when staff members do not respect their supervisors, a negative work environment results. Commending people for their ideas, holding open discussions, asking for advice, and sharing information—all can help build a positive work environment.

Education and Training:

- If education and training opportunities are available, are they offered to all members of the organization? If so, what levels of staff are given release time?
- Does the library pay workshop or seminar registration fees only for some levels of staff and not for others?
- Are staff given opportunities for cross training and self-improvement, or must any training be directly related to the person's current job?
- Does the library have an education and training plan that includes all employees?
- Are there adequate financial resources to support continuing education?

Education and training opportunities are obvious ways to keep all levels of staff involved and interested in their jobs. While not every workshop or program is appropriate for every person, there is a wide variety of training available. Most people want to keep learning and are more satisfied if they are mentally stimulated. If a department can send only a few members to a conference, attendance could perhaps be rotated within a department, with attendees reporting back to the group what they learned. If budgets are the issue, libraries can look for strategies to share the available resources equitably or to find new funding sources. Someone on staff could be assigned to locate funding sources, assist in grant writing, or help others plan for training. Having a plan that delineates what kinds of programs are acceptable and supported—i.e. classes, meetings, conferences, training programs—can be helpful.

In large institutions, those in lower levels of responsibility can feel isolated. Encouraging them to serve on campus-wide or institution-wide committees or to participate in activities outside the library can help reduce the feeling of isolation, and can incidentally provide valuable insight to employees, to their work divisions, and to higher levels of administration. Generally, except for release time, there is no cost to the institution for staff participation in such activities.

Evaluations and Reward Systems:

- Are librarians evaluated in the same way as support-staff members?
- What results from a good evaluation? Are results the same for professional and support-staff members?
- Are "outstanding" evaluations achievable only for some levels of employees, but not others?
- Are recognition and reward systems in place for all levels of employees?

Evaluations must be fair, consistent, and used to identify and improve the work of individuals. If they are not, they can cause poor morale and dissatisfaction. Many organizations are required to perform standardized evaluations whether or not they are needed or wanted. They are often performed, filed, and ignored until next year. This isn't helpful.

Any time there is potential for gain, there must be some benchmark to use as a starting point and some goal to reach, especially when the manager is far removed from the work being evaluated. Evaluations are difficult to do well and can be

subjective. But everyone has a need to be acknowledged for outstanding accomplishments and efforts. Meaningful acknowledgments must follow outstanding contributions.

Ergonomics:

- Is there consistent and equitable consideration of workspace ergonomics among all levels of employees?
- How are implementation priorities set? Are administrators and supervisors given priority over support staff members?
- Do librarians get private offices whether or not they are managers or have other duties requiring enclosed space, while support staff members are clustered in cubicles?
- Do librarians get brand new computers while support staff members get hand-me-downs or inadequate ones?

Everyone needs an appropriate and comfortable workspace, supplied with the tools to help them work efficiently and effectively. When support-staff members are not provided with hardware, software, and an ergonomically designed workspace, they feel like second-class employees, especially if their needs are given lower priority than those of management and professional staff.

Decision-making:

- Are support staff members included in decision-making processes, especially in areas that affect their work?
- Are support staff members asked for their opinion about problem resolution or projects?
- Are all staff members empowered to make judgment calls and decisions that are appropriate to their level of work?

Not everyone in an organization can be involved in every decision that is made, but there are times when support staff members can provide useful information and insight to the decision-making process. Sometimes people on the front line know more about what they need than the supervisors do. If the opinion is "how would they know, they don't have an MLS," a wealth of knowledge will be lost to the organization.

Management cannot expect staff members to buy into decisions without knowing where they are going and what part they play. The onus is on the persons in charge to explain the rationale for directives and decisions to their staff. And sharing in the decision-making process results in buy-in from all levels of employees, and can be a win-win situation for both management and staff members.

Professional Development:


- Are MLS staff members, as well as non-MLS staff members, given opportunities to actively participate in professional associations?
- Are professional association membership dues paid only for MLS staff members?
- Is it assumed that non-MLS staff members are not interested in or do not need to participate in

(Continued on next page)

Workshop *Continued from page 15)*

recent Effective Reference Performance training that was held statewide:

- “I didn’t want to spend the time, having done numerous ‘reference’ workshops, but I am so glad I did. This is so practical, and healthy, with application not only at work, but also in daily life. Thank you so much for the inspiration!”
- “This has been a fantastic workshop—lots of clarity, time to practice, not intimidating, information so important! Thanks for all you do to get the message out. We will carry a lot back to our library.”
- “Best workshop I have attended—first I actually expect to improve reference skills on a daily basis.”

These enthusiastic expressions remind me how powerful the pursuit of learning can be. There are few other opportunities that are as reaffirming and motivating for those of us who feel that we have “been there, done that” as that of learning something new, something different, something useful. Learning in all its guises—workshops, exploration, research, presentations—is truly a “perk” for most of us. Just as we offer it to our customers, so must we provide lifelong learning for ourselves! 



Training Opportunities for Staff in Washington Libraries

IN PERSON

- Information Literacy
- Diversity
- Reference Performance
- Digital Imaging
- Virtual Reference Services (VRS)
- Technology

[▶ Top](#)

VIA SATELLITE

- Customer Service
- Future of Libraries
- Virtual Reference Services (VRS)
- Web Searching

[▶ Top](#)

ONLINE

- Idaho
- Tennessee

[▶ Top](#)

CONTACTS/RESOURCES

- CE Grants
- WALT

[▶ Top](#)


Check out Washington State Library’s training Webpage at <http://wlo.statelib.wa.gov/services/training/index.htm>.

Caste System *Continued from page 13)*

- professional development activities?
- What levels of employees are given release time to write articles and papers, or to prepare for a conference or workshop presentation?

Most people who have been actively involved in professional associations can testify that the returns far outweigh the costs. The benefits can range from acquiring new skills, networking, confidence building, and a broader awareness of policies and practices, to good public relations for your library. These benefits can apply to all levels of employees and are extremely valuable to both individuals and organizations.

Good communication flow, with positive attitudes and respect among staff members, education and training opportunities, evaluations

and reward systems, fairly implemented workspace ergonomics, involvement in decision-making processes, and professional development opportunities are all areas to consider when evaluating and looking for solutions to “us vs. them” thinking. An awareness of the subtle ways that “us vs. them” attitudes can creep into the workplace is the beginning. After that, creative thinking and strategizing can lead to positive solutions—even within institutional constraints. It is idealistic to think that these changes will satisfy every employee, but making changes that help build rapport and motivate people to work at their highest potential are steps in the right direction. 

I Went to This Workshop the Other Day ...



by **Mary Y. Moore**

Have you ever gone to a workshop that so excited you that you wanted to go right back to the library to try out what you learned? Have you tried an online course or participated in a satellite downlink that opened up whole new horizons for you? Can you think of a learning experience that changed how you do your job or refreshed your outlook on your job? That is what a good learning experience is all about. I hope everyone reading this article has had that experience at least one time or another.

Unfortunately, we often end up “kissing a lot of frogs”—sitting in workshop after workshop looking forward to breaks or lunch. Sometimes, as our derrieres become increasingly numb, we wonder if the trainer will ever stop talking and let us do something. Or, as we have all been doing lately, we desperately try to grasp not only what the computer trainer is saying, but also what he or she is doing with the computer. Fortunately for me, those bad experiences have been far outweighed by good ones where I became excited about what I was learning and had opportunities to apply my learning right there in the classroom.

I can think of several training experiences I have had over the last few years that have provided me with wonderful tools to make me much more effective on the job. Rarely does a day go by that I do not use the skills I learned at a three-day workshop called “Accelerated Learning,” taught by Dave Meier, or at one entitled “Group Facilitation Methods,” provided by the Institute of Cultural Affairs. Recently I attended a workshop called “Dynamic Facilitation,” developed and presented by Jim Rough in Port Townsend. I was amazed that the simple act of group facilitation could have so many fascinating nuances! Although I already had attained a number of effective skills in these areas, these three workshops opened up new opportunities that I had never imagined.

The Washington State Library staff believes in the importance of training and learning, as do the members of the State Library Commission and the Library Council of Washington. Rarely do we develop a statewide LSTA (Library Services and Technology Act) initiative that does not contain a training component of one kind or another. Of late, library staff throughout the state have had the opportunity to attend several different workshops on various subjects that have emanated from LSTA projects—effective reference performance skills, digitization, cultural diversity, database-searching techniques, early childhood development, information literacy training—to name a few. Those that deal with information technology in our libraries have had access to training on cutting-edge software at half the normal price through the auspices of WSL. Public library trustees have learning opportunities through the Workshop in Library Leadership (WILL) sponsored every two

years by WSL.

Changes are occurring so rapidly in our workplaces that unless we spend our time continuously learning, we will find ourselves hopelessly unprepared for the demands of our library customers. Few of us are unaware that the expectations of our customers are growing constantly and that the only way we can meet these expectations is to keep abreast of new approaches, new technologies, new hot topics, etc. This may frustrate some of us; but on the other hand, it is a trend that keeps those of us who have been working for many years from becoming jaded and bored. Hopefully we all work for organizations that support our needs for continuous learning. If we do not, we need to take on some of that responsibility ourselves and see that we get the training that we need.

Cost is one of the drawbacks to pursuing new learning and training opportunities. But then what is the cost if we do not keep up—if we fail our customers? Through its Continuing Education Grant

Program, WSL makes funds available to library staff members regardless of where they work. The program has been around for over ten years, and lately the growth in applications for assistance has become so overwhelming that we will be doubling—to \$60,000—the amount of annual funding available in 2002. Anyone who works in an LSTA-eligible library ten or more hours per week can apply for financial assistance to attend a learning event. Library organizations can apply as well for funds to help offset the costs of providing a specific training for their staff. These funds are available on a 50-50 matching basis with a maximum for individual grants being \$500 and for organizational grants \$1,000. Libraries can no longer use cost as an excuse for not pursuing continuing education.

One of the wonderful things about being a trainer is that we receive instant feedback. If we are professional in our approach and ask attendees for feedback, we know immediately how successful we were in helping others to attain skills and knowledge. And we also can find out how inspiring, motivational, or refreshing our training sessions have been. As a trainer and a training coordinator, I regularly hear from folks who are profoundly affected by a learning experience. Here are some comments from the

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Mary Y. Moore is Library Training and Development Specialist, Washington State Library.

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Library Unions: Politics, Power, and the Care of the Library Worker

by Cameron A. Johnson

Unionization is about politics and power in the library and the local community. Unions can help or hinder directors and boards, depending on the knowledge, talents, styles, and perspectives of all involved: the chemistry between the library and union organizations can be good or bad. But whether it's an elixir or nitro, unions are a fact of life in Washington libraries.

Union Library Employees Speak Out

Mark Weber, Director of Staff Services at Kent State University in Ohio, says that organizing efforts gain support when employees "honestly believe that there are significant problems surrounding pay, benefits, job security or other issues" (Weber, p. 73).

The Congress and courts have given unionized library employees a legal stake in what happens in their workplace. Negotiated work rules that define shifts, limit arbitrary transfers between branches, establish the "just cause" principle for discipline, require that people temporarily assigned work in higher classifications be paid extra—these have been part of the American library working landscape since public sector workers earned the right to organize in the mid-1960s.

A sense of fairness in the workplace is one of the results of unionization, says Spokane Public Library's Joan Medina, who served as library representative to American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 270 for six years. "In my experience, union workers are treated more fairly and take more pride in their work than many non-union workers. They act professionally whether or not they have a degree behind their job title. In fact, I have seen some union workers behave more professionally than some professionals in our field. Behaving in a professional manner is certainly not a practice limited to folks with an MLS hanging in their office" (Medina).

Susan Towne, President of AFSCME Local 2234 and a managing librarian in the Mid-Columbia Library District, says the union influences management decision-making because it "forces managers to consistently follow procedures and working conditions, a problem before the union drive. ... Things were very arbitrary, very inconsistent, and policies were enforced differently at different branches." She said organizing brought the library's problems to the attention of the library

board, who then also initiated changes in library functioning (Towne).

Debbie Saunders, Vice-President of Local 1619-L, representing non-managerial employees in the North Olympic Library System, says the union gives employees a voice because it "helps employees to feel more secure about their jobs and allows more freedom for expressing views without fear of retaliation. Employees know they have a grievance process if they have problems." Saunders said the North Olympic system recently built a new building that had air quality problems. "Management did not take the concerns of employees seriously," she said. "A grievance ensued and now some three years later we are having work done to fix problem areas. Without a union, I doubt the problems would have been addressed." Saunders noted that the "trend has been in recent years to separate the employees from supervisors and create separate bargaining units for supervisors," which she agrees with since conflicts between supervisor and employee in the same bargaining unit can strain relationships in both the union and library (Saunders).

"I've seen the creation of our union lead to a much more professional communication pattern between administration (non-union) and managers (union)," says Susan Skaggs, a manager in the North Olympic system and member of the two-member "managers union" there. "I think this is directly attributable to the feeling of protection the union has offered. A formal communication pattern forces people to communicate in prescribed ways even when emotions are high." Skaggs says unionization can lead to a professional attitude on the part of all parties, but warns that "sometimes the 'them and us' attitude that can be created by unions can override any professionalism" (Skaggs).

Benefits of Unionization

Robert and Marjorie O'Reilly, authors of *Librarians and Labor Relations*, perceive three benefits in unionizing libraries: unionization 1) improves the economic status of both the library and the library employees; 2) tends to democratize library administration; and 3) affiliates libraries with a "broad constructive movement for concrete expression of social attitudes and desires" (O'Reilly, p. 16).

Helen Lewis, reference librarian at the University of Connecticut, reinforces their second point, noting that typical forms of union leadership can provide a better administrative model than the hierarchical and bureaucratic structure favored by most libraries. "...Union experience teaches the skills needed to develop an idea, to work in coalitions to gain acceptance to the idea, and to use existing political or power structures to enact the idea ...[T]he potential exists for the employee to become more effective at changing existing library service conditions" (Lewis, p. 19).

Kent State's Weber says that though support staff have been strong contributors to the union library movement, they have been overlooked in library literature discussing unions in libraries (Weber, p. 67). Among office-clerical workers, those in libraries are some of the best educated. Such workers are less likely to be intimidated by employers and are less likely to

Cameron A. Johnson, Assistant Editor of *Alki*, is Reference Librarian at Everett Public Library. He is also Main Library Steward, AFSCME Local 113, City of Everett.

accept management decisions without question. The omission of classified staff in articles about library unions is especially ironic here in Washington because support staff have played a large role in organizing efforts and in union participation. Classified staff in libraries say that being in a union makes them more "professional" in the sense of being more responsible and invested in the mission of the library.

The issue of antagonism between unionization and library professionalism, defined by the MLS, has appeared most frequently in library literature. Historically, many librarians have rejected unionization and aligned their interests with those of management. But Tina Hovekamp, reference head at Central Oregon Community College in Bend, sees an evolution in thinking about unions that librarians share with white-collar professionals. "Professionals often have their own priorities based on what they think is important for their work and organization, whereas management tends to place an emphasis on cost efficiency and quantity. Union organizing is one solution in dealing with this disparity of power ... [U]nions may also be seen as a means of protecting or even expanding work autonomy and securing a role for the rank-and-file in the determination of resource allocation" (Hovekamp).

The O'Reillys say that librarians and paraprofessional employees have common issues and must work together in unions. "To develop or maintain an elitist barrier between themselves as the professional group and their nonlibrarian fellow employees could hardly enhance the stature of the library as a service institution or as an employer" (O'Reilly, p. 55).

"When a workforce unionizes, they not only band together for protection and strength," says library assistant Angelo DeFazio of Tacoma Public Library and President of AFSCME Local 120-L. "They also proclaim to management their willingness to be held responsible for their actions, and to be recognized for their achievements. What could be more professional than that?"

DeFazio says there are few librarians active in Local 120-L. "The 'movers and shakers' of the massive changes wrought in the past decade [at TPL] have been, by and large, paraprofessionals," he says. "Increased involvement of librarians in union matters would be very welcome."

Adversarial Relations?

Still, unionization does not guarantee improved labor-management relations.

In the recent past the poster child for poor labor-management relations in Washington libraries was Tacoma Public Library. A Tacoma *News Tribune* article by Kim Eckart revealed how dysfunctional union-administration relations can be: "... [T]he rank-and-file union took up the cause of equity in pay and benefits, monitored how managers handled employee complaints and emphasized their role of underdog in what they believed was an increasingly top-heavy, even dictatorial administration" (Eckart). After a long struggle—with the library going to court four times against union president Carolyn Cohen and her husband John Hathaway over the release of public records—the union won the right to see the records, but not until the library had racked up \$250,000 in outside legal bills over four years, more than it spent in the same period for juvenile materials and adult fiction. Tacoma mayor Brian Ebersole blamed the library leadership for the union-management problems. Library Director Kevin Hegarty ultimately resigned in 1996 (Eckart), and conditions did not improve under successor Susan Hardie. Newer board members have charged former members with lack of oversight and a rubber-stamping mentality regarding the former administration's troubled program. The library now has a more

Negotiating Librarians' Prerogatives: Eastern's Faculty Union

Eastern Washington University is the only four-year higher education institution in the Washington state higher education system to have signed a contract with a faculty union. The faculty—including the librarians—at Eastern Washington University have been organized since 1994 as the United Faculty of Eastern (UFE), an affiliate of the National Education Association and American Federation of Teachers, with the first collective bargaining agreement signed in 1995. The university and the union recently agreed on a second contract, which runs from 2000-2004. (At the time UFE was organized, library classified staff were already represented by Washington Federation of State Employees Local 931.)

Since state law neither authorizes nor prohibits collective bargaining by university professors, the process had to be agreed to by the Board of Trustees and administration of Eastern. A group of Eastern professors—including librarian Bill Barr, now retired—approached the BOT and administration and secured the agreement, after which the faculty voted and designated the UFE as the faculty bargaining agent. The agreement was significant and historic. Central Washington faculty have tried for years to forge an agreement with their own governing board, which has always declined to authorize collective bargaining.

Since Barr's original union involvement, librarians have been active in UFE, with a librarian member on the negotiating team for both contracts. At the time of the first negotiations, inclusion of librarians as faculty members had to be reconfirmed against some resistance from part of the University administration.

UFE's contract with Eastern Washington University incorporated sections on academic freedom and tenure, professional leave, professional ethics, average academic workload, and priority for faculty in case of layoffs. The agreement allows the union to receive EWU BOT's agendas and minutes and to attend all board meetings. allows the union to request financial information from the university, and incorporates grievance and progressive-discipline procedures.

The contract explicitly includes librarians as faculty members, which in turn reconfirms the possibility of tenure for librarians in tenure-track position, and reconfirms librarians' participation in shared governance of the university. Librarians also receive salary floors, salary increases, and equity adjustments equivalent to teaching faculty. The contract gives librarians a recognized right to participate

(Continued on next page)

labor-friendly director in Susan Odencrantz.

Contrast this picture with the one at Seattle Public Library, where administration and the union have agreed on a "Labor-Management Partnership Agreement." Linda Saunto of AFSCME Local 2083 says the agreement is "an attempt to remind every employee at every level that serving our public is a collaborative process ... that decisions need to be made at the lowest level possible and that information needs to be shared to the widest extent possible ... One result is that we have union representatives on committees discussing issues that affect our work. We have never been more engaged nor had more influence in how the library is run" (Saunto). At SPL, union officers regularly attend library board meetings and even receive board packets in advance.

In 1997, *Library Journal* Editor John Berry wrote an article reporting on interviews he did with library directors nationwide (Berry). The directors' comments about unions are mixed, some crediting the union with creating a productive forum for resolving issues, others charging that unions detract from professionalism. "I find the union extremely parochial, narrowly focused on economics and having great difficulty seeing what is good for the whole organization," said one anonymous director. "The so-called professional union doesn't give a damn about professional issues ..." (Berry).

Another director anonymously stated that "in all public libraries there is great need for clear paths for varieties of staff leadership and participation. ... If the union path is the only way for a bright person to take a leadership role, then the best minds get

(Continued from previous page)

in the university's planning process, which establishes procedures for faculty retention and promotion, distribution of faculty development funds, and other prerogatives.

Ted Otto, Collection Development Coordinator for EWU Libraries and also grievance chair of UFE, said the relationship with administration is both formal and collaborative that "provides a framework for working relations between the faculty and administration."

Unions of course do not solve all workplace issues for members. The most recent contract establishes a three-year review of tenured faculty, something members were unhappy with though such reviews were probably rendered inevitable by either accreditation standards or state legislation.

Librarians' status as faculty members is often marginal, since they typically do not hold the Ph.D. and may spend limited time in front of the classroom. But being active union members has helped librarians gain respect and legitimacy within the academic caste system.

Thanks to UFE members Ted Otto and Carolynne Myall at Eastern Washington University for information used in this report.

sucked into this adversarial relationship with management. Anyway, libraries pay their staff for their work; if a staff member is constantly unhappy, he or she should find another job."

While everyone knows it takes at least two sides to fight, unions seem to take most of the blame for bad relations with management. Berry's promised follow-up of this article has unfortunately never materialized.

Angelo DeFazio of Tacoma Public Library says that the union helped to make the library a better-run and more equitable institution. "If we had not been able to do the things we did, we would still have a library board that conducted public business in executive session, held their meetings practically reading from a management-provided script, rubber-stamping everything put before them, and paid medical would be no more than a pipe-dream" (DeFazio).

Management personnel in the public sector can feel that any attempt to unionize is a "slap in the face," says Doreen Lilore, author of *The Local Union in Public Libraries* (Lilore, p. 16). One factor that intensifies this tendency is libraries' status as governmental bodies. Management "is being asked to give up what it views as governmental sovereignty, and not just the rights of management." Such sovereignty "is viewed as belonging to the people and not as something that a public manager can give away" (Lilore, p. 24).

Union members across the state report having organized employees over strenuous management resistance, including layoff threats and visits from "union-busting" attorneys. Such adverse actions by management can poison the well between labor and management before the first contract is signed. Angelo DeFazio spoke of the jeopardy employees face in being active union members in a workplace hostile to unions. "What dignity we as workers have, we have because we fought long and hard for that recognition," he observed (DeFazio). "People took incredible chances and stuck their necks out for their co-workers. It is up to us to maintain vigilance and see that these actions were not in vain."

Library Associations Quiet on Unions

Unions in libraries were one of several topics at this year's Workshop in Library Leadership Conference, a biannual event intended to help Washington public library board members become better informed about library issues. Susan Towne, panelist on the union portion of the conference, said that the session was far too short, as board members were extremely interested and curious about library union issues. "We barely scratched the surface," she reported (Towne).

Several writers on unionization in libraries have pointed out that library associations have avoided taking a stand on library employees' pay and benefits, leaving such issues to be addressed in libraries locally. "Other professional groups such as teachers or nurses have espoused a more active role for their associations in terms of salaries, benefits, or other working conditions," says Tina Hovekamp.

"Unions are a pain!" begins John Berry's article on library unions. "No matter whom you ask among America's top library managers, they agree about one thing: there is an adversarial relationship between unions and management. It takes a lot of time and effort to make that relationship effective. The union agenda is not always the one the library director would have chosen" (Berry).

Maybe not, but the effort is likely worth it. Library unions have legal standing and are not about to go away. While it is clear organizing a union does not solve all problems for unhappy employees, it does give them a dialog with management, and most employees feel this represents some measure of justice. If administrators are able to see unions as more than just an

impediment to their rightful prerogatives, then collaborative relations like those at Seattle Public Library become possible.

Maybe now is the time to bring management-union issues out of the shadows. Eastern Washington University librarians are organized along with the rest of their faculty. Libraries in Seattle, Bellingham, Tacoma, Everett, and Spokane are all or partially unionized, as are the Mid-Columbia and North Olympic and Fort Vancouver systems. A group of non-managerial librarians recently organized in Kitsap Regional Library System as well. There could very well be others; unionization does not appear in the state library statistical report about public libraries. But despite this large number of organized library employees, WLA has no committee or interest group that addresses union issues.

The union presentation at the WILL Conference is a good beginning, but WLA could do more to promote understanding and cooperation between unions and libraries. Maybe the time has come to form a labor-management interest group in WLA. As in all things WLA, this requires someone to step up. Is anyone willing?

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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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Future of the Statewide Database Licensing Project

by Rand Simmons

Will the Statewide Database Licensing Project (SDL) be alive July 1, 2002? The question is primary in the minds of Washington State Library staff and many librarians in the library and school communities.

In order to prepare a request to the Washington State Legislature for state funds to continue the project, Washington State Library staff issued a survey to SDL participants—the SDL Continuance Survey, which queried participants about their ability to continue in the project in the face of rising costs. This article reports the results of the survey.

The Issue

The SDL pilot project, arguably one of the most successful projects initiated by the Washington State Library, will need ongoing funding if it is to continue as a program administered by WSL. Federal funding for the ProQuest database license ends June 30, 2002.

Washington State Library staff, together with leaders from the library and school communities, determined that the state library should approach the Washington legislature and request that federal dollars, both for database license and program costs, be replaced with state funds. The library and school communities would continue to pay for half the cost of the database license using local funds.

Background

Begun in 1998 as a pilot project, SDL was a joint venture between the Washington State Library and the Washington library and school communities. SDL has been funded through federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds provided through the Institute for Library and Museum Services. LSTA has funded half the cost of the ProQuest database license, and the school and library communities have matched those dollars with local funds. LSTA has also paid for staffing and other program costs. The State Library provides administrative overhead (office space, etc.) through its operations budget.

The Good News

If state funding is secured, the majority of schools and libraries will continue to participate in the Statewide Database Licensing Project.

Eighty-six individuals representing public, private college, technical and community colleges, medical, tribal, and school libraries

responded to the SDL Continuance Survey—a fifty percent response rate. Forty-two of the responses came from public libraries and library systems. SDL staff surveyed the nine Educational Service District (ESD) Media Directors to assess continued participation by school libraries.

By and large, respondents indicated they would remain in the project if the cost did not change. Eighty-one respondents (ninety-four percent of the total) indicated their libraries would remain in the project. (See Table 1.)

Table 1 indicates that if federal dollars were replaced with an ongoing funding source the Statewide Database Licensing Project would continue.

The Bad News

When federal dollars disappear and are not replaced by some other funding source (state funds, increased library contributions, etc.), the library and school communities will need to decide whether to take full responsibility for SDL. How able are SDL participants to continue in the project?

Table 1
Remain in Project if No Changes

Type of Library	Will Remain in the Project			Will Not Remain in the Project or No Response		
	Total Respondents	Number of Responses	Percentage	Total Respondents	Number of Responses	Percentage
Public Libraries	42	40	95%	42	2	5%
Academic Libraries						
Private Colleges	12	11	92%	12	1	8%
Technical & Community Colleges	11	10	91%	11	1	9%
Special Libraries						
Medical Libraries	13	13	100%	14	0	0%
Tribal Libraries	1	1	100%	14	0	0%
ESDs	7	6	86%	7	1	14%
Aggregate Total	86	81	94%	86	5	6%

The survey queried respondents about their ability to pick up the total costs of the database licenses—about double their present level—and the cost of administering the project. Table 2 illustrates a dramatic change from Table 1.

Table 2 - Remain in Project if Cost Includes Full License & Program (Question 7)

Type of Library	Will Remain in the Project			Will Not Remain in the Project or No Response		
	Number of Respondents	Number of Responses	Percentage	Number of Respondents	Number of Responses	Percentage
Public Libraries	42	23	55%	42	19	45%
Academic Libraries						
Private Colleges	12	5	42%	12	7	58%
Technical & Community Colleges	11	2	18%	11	9	82%
Special Libraries						
Medical Libraries	13	7	54%	13	6	46%
Tribal Libraries	1	0	0%	1	1	100%
ESDs	7	3	43%	7	4	57%
Aggregate Total	86	40	47%	86	46	53%

Dr. Rand Simmons is the director of the Washington State Library Statewide Database Licensing Project.

Overall, forty of the eighty-six respondents (forty-seven percent) indicated an ability to continue under this scenario.

Who Drops Out? Who Remains?

Public Libraries That Will Drop Out without State Funding	
under 5,000 service population	8
5,001 to 25,000 service population	9
25,001 to 100,000 service population	1
100,001 to 250,000	1
250,001 and above	0

As anticipated, libraries and library systems with the smallest populations will be hardest hit. One respondent wrote, "This has been a great project, but I am afraid that without state subsidy all but the largest systems will be priced out of this product. ... The statewide [federal] subsidy has provided much-needed funds enabling libraries of all sizes to provide access to important information useful to students, adults, really anyone looking for information."

School districts in rural counties will be affected. "Our schools love having access to the databases," an ESD respondent wrote. "... I can't say we would not participate if the prices went up significantly, I just mean we would have to come up with the money from someplace—and at this point, I don't know where it would come from."

Some technical- and community-college respondents indicated they would not be able to continue in the project if required to bear the whole cost. Others indicated that if their costs rose, they would be forced to shop around for better deals.

Administrative Costs

Survey respondents were asked about assuming the "administrative costs" in addition to the database licenses. Responses clearly indicated that the question was not well formed and required further definition.

Federal dollars pay for SDL staff to negotiate and maintain contracts with ProQuest, but also to facilitate other group purchases. One example is the public library contract with Gale Group. Federal dollars have also supported the database trials, vendor fair and e-book conference, travel expenses for advisory committees, expenses accrued in representing SDL at state, regional, and national conferences, printing costs, postage, publicity, training, and more.

One respondent wrote, "Offhand, the costs seem exorbitant. What are we paying for in these costs?" Another wrote, "I would want a clear cost-benefit analysis that made the investment in SDL clear and easy to understand."

For some respondents, assuming the administrative costs in addition to the full cost of the licenses made a difference. "Picking up administrative costs could put the SDL out of our price range," a public librarian wrote. Another stated, "Any administrative costs we had to pick up would reduce the amount we have to spend on databases by that amount."

Other respondents indicated that program costs should be the responsibility of the state, or that federal funds should continue to support these costs. One public library respondent wrote, "It is a minimal cost to my library, but I think it is minimal to you too. ... I would not wish to pick up my share of the cost."

Themes

Survey respondents were encouraged to comment at three different points in the survey. Recurring themes were seen in the responses.

Some libraries indicated they would have to give up services

and programs to continue in the SDL project. "It would be a stretch for us to pay double, but the periodical/newspaper database is the only access we have to articles and indexing. We would give up other sources of information to keep this one," wrote one respondent. Another said, "Our budget for all database purchases will be the same in 2002 as in 2001. We could pay twice as much for ProQuest, but would have to drop other databases in order to do so."

Other respondents noted they would have to weigh the benefits of continuing in SDL if costs increased significantly. "We like ProQuest, especially the Washington Newsstand. Under scenario B we would have to cut another database subscription to make this work, but would probably do so. But this figure is getting high compared to other products, and we would have to monitor its cost effectiveness."

Some respondents noted that they have other options. A private-college librarian observed, "Yes, I would most likely continue to subscribe if the costs increase by 2.0 or 2.3, but I would certainly be looking around at the costs for other databases. We are in a variety of consortia and there are other opportunities for group purchases." And another stated, "The thing that makes the SDL great is the lower costs. Increasing the database costs through SDL may make alternative consortia more attractive."

Respondents commented on the added value SDL brings to their libraries. "I appreciate not having the hassle of dealing with contracts, etc. myself and am willing to pay for it." Another wrote, "Small price to pay not to have to administer it ourselves."

"If SDL falls apart due to lack of funding, more than likely so will the other cooperative purchases which include Reference USA, Gale and FirstSearch. The SDL administration costs also support the administration of these other statewide cooperative purchases," a public librarian noted.

A community-college librarian wrote, "We believe that this is an extremely valuable project. The centralized work with vendors and evaluation process seems to have become very systematic due to the efforts of those at the state library and participation by the committee members. This saves us significant time at the individual library level. If this effort cannot be sustained at a statewide level, we not only will lose in terms of cost savings but other important elements such as evaluation of available products."

Several respondents expressed uneasiness about stability of local funds. An ESD respondent noted, "My commitment is based on a continuing participation in my program by member districts. Numbers changing in this area would affect our future participation. For instance: A drop in member schools? Our continued participation would be affected."

A public librarian stated, "A doubling or more would cause us to seriously consider the affordability of the program. We may well have to drop one or more databases, especially if I-747

(Continued on page 24)



Collegiality and the Environmental Climate of the Library

by Tami Echavarría

Libraries are the depositories of human knowledge, the collectors of human imagination, activity and creativity. They have become the basis for ongoing discussions where people express opinions, add to and interpret data, and change the direction of the colloquy. Through the literature, scholars interpret the human record and speak to one another through writings, extending the universal conversation. Libraries bring people into relationship with each other on the widest variety of topics. The endlessly engaging world of scholarly dialog spans space and time, where readers can locate specific conversations or participate in critical inquiry (Bechtel 1994, pp. 25-26).

All types of libraries share a common commitment to learning and are a customer-oriented service. Libraries are places in our society where lifelong learning can take place. As part of a learning environment, we encourage our patrons to learn; and we ourselves continue to learn throughout our careers. For these things to take place, the library environment needs to have a climate conducive to promoting learning, an ambiance comfortable enough for learning to take place. Such a place of intellectual stimulation is found where the culture is one of collegiality and teamwork.

A culture such as this is not necessarily representative of society at large. We live in a society that emphasizes competition over cooperation, where individual professional advancement is respected and admired, frequently at the expense of others (Frank, p. 35). In a competitive culture, unsolicited contributions from co-workers may be perceived as threatening, or as interference. Individuals zealously guard their turf. Information is hoarded and used for self-aggrandizement or manipulation of others. The atmosphere engenders fear of not receiving credit for one's contributions or assistance, and creates fear of being made to feel stupid when asking for help. Use of shame and blame may prevail, with little use of positive motivation. A willingness to pitch in is absent when backbiting and competitiveness abound (Jones, p. 166). Individual accomplishment is lauded. Requesting assistance is an admission of failure. But such an organizational climate is the antithesis of a fertile learning environment.

Libraries are a place where everyone engages in the enterprise of learning. "A community of learners can create a collegial environment which prizes and encourages learning" (Lehman, p. 1). So it is important that a sustained effort be made to create and maintain a collegial environmental

climate in libraries, one in which productive learning is fostered. Collegiality is "characterized by the collective responsibility shared by each of a group of colleagues, [or] cooperative interaction among colleagues" according to *The Random House Unabridged Dictionary* (p. 404). In a library setting, that responsibility is shared by librarians, modeled by the administration and librarians, and extended to the library staff. Cooperation is stressed and leads to a striving toward common goals. If the team is working toward common goals and working for one another, rather than as individuals competing against one another, the library and its clients are the beneficiaries of the teamwork (Jones, p. 164).

We must see ourselves as a team, interactively working together. Collaboratively working with others can provide mutual support and opportunities for sharing ideas that enhance learning. We work as partners, as members of a community. A well-functioning team builds on the strengths of its individual members and promotes an atmosphere conducive to consultation and sharing. When each member is cognizant that the team values his or her contributions, provision of consistently excellent service is more easily achieved.

Such an atmosphere depends in large measure on the library's leadership. Through modeling, we can convey the values and behaviors consistent with what we believe to be truly important about learning and a learning atmosphere. The library director should be a role model for fairness, cooperation, encouragement, and striving for excellence. "The leadership that is required and that is appropriate ... is one characterized by discussion, consultation and persuasion, rather than by fiat or directive" (Bechtel 1985, p. 553), and is as important for the leader as it is for the rest of the staff. When managers treat employees the way they would like to be treated, they are rewarded with the kind of dedicated and loyal work force that will consistently meet the needs of the library's clientele. When required, correction should be done gently and privately, avoiding humiliation. Communication must include everyone, not just select persons. Training as needed, and clear expectations—communicated and available to all—ensure that everyone is working toward the same goals. Favors and privileges should not be accorded to particular employees (Jones, p. 168). As professionals, librarians are ethically responsible for modeling respect, dignity, and fairness to one another, and to support staff and library patrons.

Collegiality is exercised consistently, and is based on one's attitude toward having his or her ideas continually honed and refined by the ideas, opinions, and imaginations of one's colleagues. (Bechtel 1985, p. 553). Colleagues are seen as resources readily available for the improvement of library service. Collegiality flourishes in an atmosphere where sharing is a safe activity, and where interacting effectively with one another is done to provide optimum services to patrons. "Because libraries are learning environments, we ourselves need to be committed to our own learning and sharing our knowledge with our colleagues" (Huling, p. 68). The working environment fosters trust, and thus encourages consultation with colleagues, with the expectation of receiving assistance. Communication is honest, allowing for brainstorming, discussion, and controversy,

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giving due credit for creativity and ideas, and encouraging people to participate, while always showing respect for others.

As professionals, librarians have an ethical obligation to treat colleagues with respect and courtesy. This ethical responsibility extends to patrons and support staff as well. If added to that is a willingness to learn from one another and behave ethically toward one another, trust develops. Learning can bring personal satisfaction, growth and confidence to the learner, while influencing the collegiality of the environment (Lehman, p. 102). In a team where this type of behavior is exhibited, working toward a common goal together becomes more achievable. In an information age where the amount of information and subject knowledge is overwhelming, colleagues can rely on one another for expertise that ensures excellent service to library patrons. Such teamwork is indispensable if we are to achieve this aim.

Getting along well with co-workers is a vital skill in this climate. Treating one another with courtesy and respect, behaving ethically toward one another and toward library patrons, trusting one another, and being willing to learn from one another are the cornerstones of capitalizing on one another's strengths. Informal and relaxed communication should include greetings and polite conversation. This does not preclude disagreement, or require that one always agree with the team. On the contrary, a collegial climate provides a safe space in which to share varying points of view, diversity of backgrounds and educational expertise, and original ideas with a confident assurance of being heard and understood, rather than being belittled.

Motivation to work well with others is highest when morale and job satisfaction are high. Acceptance and encouragement build confidence and morale. Working as a valued part of a team gives team members the sense of being included. When team members appreciate one another's unique or special qualities, the team is best able to build on those strengths. Team members find a way of bringing their strengths to bear on something that is important to the organization. These types of collegial relationships promote an atmosphere of support and trust. This atmosphere can be further heightened by recognition of special occasions. A spirit of caring—if genuine—contributes to the morale of individuals in the group. Individuals who have job satisfaction have lower absenteeism and lower job turnover (Jones, pp. 166-167). Humor, mutual interests, and friendships with co-workers are all conducive to a positive atmosphere. Additionally, such an atmosphere is conducive to higher creativity. Mutual interests may develop into research and writing partnerships among colleagues.

Conversation is the process for realizing collegiality. Information on all issues is shared among librarians and, as much as possible, with support staff as well. Librarians lead by persuasion. Decisions are made most commonly by consensus. The conversational paradigm provides the means for problem solving, resolving conflicts, accomplishing change, and future planning. "Conversation ... demands collegiality to inform significantly the articulation of mission and goals, the role and character of librarians, and all aspects of the library's work" (Bechtel 1994, p. 26). Collegiality is dependent on staff commitment and stability over an extended period of time. Selecting able librarians and staff, and nurturing them over a period of years, results in dedicated library staff that articulates and sustains the organizational philosophy of responsive and responsible library service.

The organization sees itself as a community concerned about its members. Indicative of such collegiality are the comments of Whitworth College President Dr. William P. Robinson, in a message to college faculty:

I think we also need an extra measure of grace from each other. We need to give it, and we need to receive it. With all our gifts and frailties, we have come together as a community. And as a community we best defend ourselves from the hurts that can damage us as individuals. We need to take care of each other (Robinson).

Such inclusion contributes to building a positive daily environment in which morale is high. A generally high level of trust and comfort is pervasive, and encouragement for professional development and creativity add to the atmosphere of collegiality. The library plays its part in this learning environment and in collegiality both within the library itself and within the college community.

Although the academic library setting is most associated with the collegial management model, collegiality itself is not applicable only to academic libraries. The Hawaii Association of School Librarians developed a Collegial Assistance Network that provides the same type of collegiality to school library media specialists. It provides informal assistance among colleagues and promotes the exchange of ideas. Based on existing research on adult learners, the social learning atmosphere for professional development "breaks the barriers of isolation and helps professionals develop fresh perspectives" (Harada, p. 79). The "connectedness" of the members fosters a sense of inclusion, affiliation, and personal warmth. The statewide peer-support network involved beginning, veteran, and retired school library media specialists, who empowered one another to share their knowledge and grow together.

Just as different types of libraries can develop collegial climates, collegiality is not confined to professional librarians. Professional and administrative staff need to treat support staff with respect, dignity, and courtesy; to make expectations clear; to share information, training, and support; and to make their job performance as problem-free as possible. Library support staff should be recognized as highly trained people whose skills and knowledge are not easily replaced. The longer a person is successfully employed in the library, the more valuable he or she becomes in sustaining excellent library service. The employee's knowledge, performance, and commitment should be acknowledged and his or her advice included in planning and decision-making. The employee's inclusion in the library team results in everyone's having a clear sense of the significant part he or she plays (Bechtel 1994, p. 32).

A number of barriers and pitfalls can hinder collegiality. Competitiveness is a major stumbling block that fosters mistrust and professional jealousy. The feelings of insecurity that competitiveness engenders may lead to the provision of incomplete training, and may inhibit an individual's willingness to help or ask for help. Lack of communication is another culprit that may be manifested when certain individuals receive information and others are expected to discern it indirectly. Hoarding information, or the lack of

(Continued on next page)

information sharing, and subsequent grouching among individuals—rather than group problem solving—are other manifestations of a lack of communication. Emotional conflict can result from competitiveness and can be detrimental. This is not the kind of conflict that is constructive and civil. Dictatorial leadership style can be a cause of staff resentment, as can leadership that discourages projects and personal goals. Envy hinders collegiality and is best countered by fair recognition of each person's unique contributions to the team. A lack of acknowledgement of one's contribution provides little motivation for achieving good work and is also a hindrance. Conversely, developing the polite habit of giving simple thanks to someone goes a long way toward providing motivation and appreciation. Professional librarians may have the additional pitfall of seeing themselves merely as technicians who have mastered a skill, rather than as educators well qualified to participate in the conversation that informs lifelong learning (Bolin, p. 54).

Learning is an ongoing, lifelong process. It is the basis of understanding for our intellectual and emotional growth and well-being. Understanding enables us to change and develop, and has important social outcomes that are dependent on appropriate and effective lifelong learning opportunities for everyone. Such learning and understanding occur in the interplay and exchange of ideas where human knowledge is found. Libraries are key institutions in this process and achieve the goals of excellent service to their patrons when the environmental climate fosters

learning. Collegiality facilitates the interchange of ideas, and produces energy and creativity for librarians, library staff and patrons. Such an atmosphere empowers people to work together for the advancement of the library's goals. It provides challenging professional opportunities for those who work in libraries.

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Licensing Project

 (Continued from page 21)

passes."

Other respondents commented about the negative effect on customer service if SDL ceased to exist. "We want to participate and probably will continue on a much smaller scale. We may only be able to subscribe to one or two [other] databases, probably journal/magazine databases. Our patrons would suffer." Another public librarian noted, "With the possible failure of this project, it would seem that the great digital divide is beginning in regards to information."

Finally, several respondents noted that even having to bear the total cost of the program they would continue to enjoy the benefits of group purchasing.

Summary

Will SDL survive July 1, 2002?

I am writing this article in mid-October. The Washington State Library has just submitted a request for slightly less than \$650,000 in state funds to replace federal SDL dollars. It is impossible to predict what will have happened to that request by the time *Alki* subscribers read this article.

If state funding is not secured, SDL staff and its advisory committees will work with leaders from the library and school communities to find a means to continue statewide aggregated purchasing of database licenses. SDL staff salaries are funded through September 30, 2002.

A couple of observations are in order:

- Only fifty percent of the individuals who received The SDL Continuation Survey responded. While that is a healthy return rate, one cannot say with certainty that the fifty percent that responded represent the fifty percent who did not respond.
- The survey was built around a worst-case scenario. There is no certainty that if state funding is not obtained the cost to participants for the database license would double. There are many factors that account for database license pricing. Of particular importance is which libraries remain in the project and which drop out.
- There are other factors besides funding that will affect the continuance of SDL. Librarians must be willing to continue the project as well as have the financial ability to do so.
- Even with state funding, libraries may face other issues such as inadequate local funds that will affect continuance of the project. I-747 looms large at the time of this writing.

Whatever happens, there is no denying that as a pilot the Statewide Database License Project demonstrated the effectiveness of aggregated, statewide purchasing. Many Washingtonians have rediscovered their libraries in accessing databases from their homes and offices. SDL has proven the worth of multi-type library cooperation and has made database licenses affordable. It has shown that a basic information service can be delivered to people in all parts of Washington, overcoming geographical and geopolitical boundaries.

The Library Olympics

by Angelynn King

Turnstile Vault

There are two divisions in this event: scofflaw and code enforcer. In Division I, contestants leap a barrier carrying eighteen to twenty-two pounds of art and/or human sexuality titles; Division II contestants, responding to auditory stimuli, must enter the playing field in a single jump from behind the circulation desk and hit the ground running. Speed and agility are emphasized.

Flooded Basement Freestyle

Archivists wade/swim down lanes between stacks to retrieve rare and fragile items. Targets are situated above the surface but directly beneath heat-activated sprinkler nozzles for added suspense.

Pairs Cataloging

Teams of two librarians unable to see or communicate with one another attempt to generate identical MARC records from identical items. Married and/or cohabiting couples are barred from this event.

Bindery Clean and Jerk

Boxes of bound volumes are lifted over the head and transported quickly from the curb to an area beneath the overhang of the building. As this event takes place in an outdoor venue, weather is a significant factor.

Light Pen Marksmanship

Circulation workers target bar codes on books clamped into armpits, concealed in backpacks, and/or obscured by decanted foodstuffs. Maximum score is partially determined by degree of difficulty of the maneuver.

Trustee Meeting Slalom

Teams of 2-4 library staff on book trucks steer a course to a funding source while avoiding local press photographers, trays of sticky hors d'oeuvres, and any direct expression of opinions. Up to two pit stops are permitted.

Microform Shuttle Run

Competitors dash among storage cabinets, reader-printers, and a single change machine in an overlapping figure-eight pattern. Body checks are permitted, but use of the film edge as a weapon is grounds for disqualification.

Security Dancing

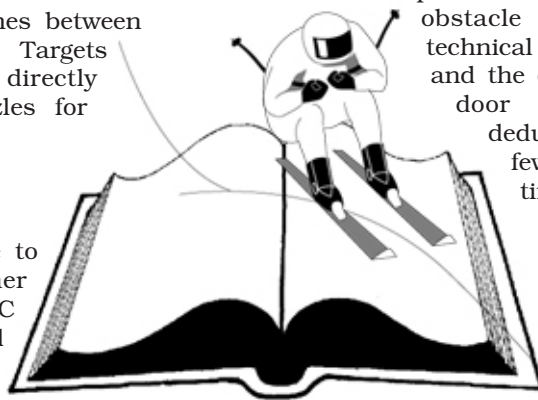
The public services employee mirrors a patron's movements while remaining an obstacle between the patron and the technical services area, the director's office, and the emergency exit. Activation of the door alarm causes serious point deductions. Partners must remain fewer than twelve inches apart at all times.

Renovation Hurdles

Each participant is issued an extra-large hard hat, an extra-small flashlight, and a single 3 x 5 card. The objective is to return from the construction area with all of the listed items before the patron uses the term "taxpayer" in conversation.

Special Demonstration Event: Management Triathlon

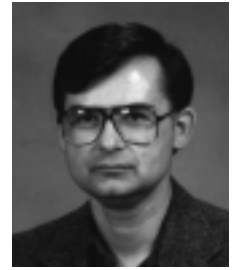
Library administrators must think outside the box, push the envelope, and take the ball and run with it. Style, grace, athleticism, technical merit and artistic expression are ignored, with points based entirely on the amount of money spent on equipment.



Who's On First?

Too Dangerous and Subversive?

Kids, Books, the Internet, and Libraries



Tom Reynolds

by Tom Reynolds

We loudly castigate nations like Afghanistan and China when they brutally suppress the freedom of their citizens to say, write, e-mail or otherwise communicate whatever they want. But then we turn around and try to do it ourselves. —Chris Winters, South County Journal (Winters).

One of the most important books published this year is *Children and Libraries: Getting It Right*, by educator, children's librarian, and former Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) President Virginia A. Walter. The author of the ground-breaking book for young adults *Making Up Megaboy*, Walter is uniquely positioned to critique the status of children's library service in the United States at the beginning of the 21st century. In *Children and Libraries*, she does just that, and finds our approach to library service for kids, like our larger national commitment to youth, confused and wanting.

Robert Lipsyte, this year's winner of the Margaret Edwards Award for Lifetime Contribution to Young Adult Literature, says something equally relevant: Our culture doesn't really want kids to read. Lipsyte contends that despite our pro-education rhetoric, many people see reading as too "dangerous and subversive" to encourage (Myers, p. 46). Many adults harbor this same notion regarding kids' access to online technology.

Lipsyte and Walter point to the troubling failure of many of our institutions to respect the developmental and informational needs of juveniles. At a time when adult fears and their political impact drive most library decisions regarding kids' access to information, Walter contends that a rightful respect for children's information needs must become one of the basic philosophical premises for future library service to youth (Salvadore, p. 42).

Are Washington libraries considering those developmental and informational needs when they make major policy decisions that affect kids' rights to information and knowledge? Recent actions to deny many youths access to unfiltered Internet terminals by a number of Puget Sound-area public libraries raise this troubling question.

Are we losing the battle to see that youth can access the online services they need in their local library? In the now heavily-filtered Puget Sound area, libraries are applying filters based on

differing views of what is acceptable and appropriate. King County Library System, Seattle Public Library, and the Timberland libraries offer the best options for youth access to the Internet, while across the country libraries already using filters are now looking at ways to lessen their impact for various groups of juveniles.

Will today's juveniles—denied needed services because of irrational fears and politics—willingly become tomorrow's taxpaying library supporters? This is one of the most fundamental questions facing America's public libraries today.

Children and Libraries: If No Longer Advocates, Then What?

The concept of youth librarians as advocates for kids and teenagers took firm hold in our profession in the middle of the past century. At the same time, librarians successfully resisted pressure to act *in loco parentis*, thus placing squarely in the hands of parents responsibility for their children's reading and information-gathering activities. Libraries did not restrict access to materials by users' ages, and individual parents were to determine what their own kids (but only their kids) read and saw.

This pragmatic approach worked well for libraries facing censorship challenges to individual books, magazines, videos, and music. Then along came the Internet, which allowed users to access hundreds of thousands of sites around the world, to exchange e-mail, and to chat anonymously with anyone. The Internet radically changed our relationship to information by offering a tremendous tool for education and empowerment—and for potential abuse.

As Virginia Walter points out in *Children and Libraries*, consensus about the direction of library service for juveniles broke down during the 1990s when many adults began to feel that the world had gotten more dangerous, especially for kids. But feelings and perceptions—particularly media-driven ones—don't always correspond to the facts. A major event like a school shooting brings calls for more restrictions on communication and free expression for kids (Walter, pp. 67-70, 73-77).

By the late 1990s, despite strong evidence that youth violence was decreasing and that law enforcement was aggressively prosecuting adults preying on youth through the Internet, public fear of such crimes grew. Certain adults who wanted to ensure that kids are protected from threats (both real and imagined) organized politically, generally under the banner of making libraries "family friendly." They argued that juveniles have no substantial rights, and that libraries need to step in to help parents regulate kids' behavior. More and more libraries are listening, even as they feel increasingly uncomfortable with what they are being asked to do.

Walter points out that part of the problem is that librarians lack a coherent vision of what our services to youth should be. Some libraries provide tremendous spaces for children and young adults and encourage an environment where youth are

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nurtured and respected, while other libraries speak vaguely about transforming themselves into kids' places but lack a clear commitment of staff and resources for the purpose. We struggle to address a critical lack of children's librarians and bemoan the difficulty in attracting adolescent boys to libraries, but simultaneously develop policies and services restricted in ways that run counter to kids' developmental needs.

One reason for this is that young voices are seldom heard when libraries begin discussing policies and services. Kids wouldn't vote for dumbing down Internet service, and neither would most adults if forced to use a dumbed-down service themselves. But adults are perfectly willing to restrict kids' access in the name of safety. The truth is that the voices of youth, their advocates, and youth-serving librarians have become increasingly marginalized in this movement to restrict youth access to online technology.

As we look toward the library of the future, we may pay a high price for this neglect of kids' needs. Children in the information age, Walter contends, "learn and play differently than they did ten or twenty years ago because of the power and seductiveness of the computer." As a result, they also use our libraries differently (Walter, pp. 95-99).

Anyone who watches youth in our public libraries sees them using computers to do their homework, play games, send email, and chat with other teens. Walter marvels at how our adding computers has addressed one of our great concerns—getting adolescent boys into the library. But this initial success could be jeopardized as libraries restrict kids' access to—and options for—using the Internet. After all, juveniles, especially teenagers, will go where they can get the services they want. Our effort to control kids' information-seeking behavior creates an inherent conflict between our practices and the service needs of our young patrons.

Pushing Back the Filter: The Douglas County (CO) Experience

As libraries look at filtering in relation to their goals as information-disseminating or educational institutions they often realize the inherent conflicts. The most restrictive filters also restrict access to much legitimate information.

School libraries, which were among the first to embrace filtering software, are finding they have to push back the filters if they are to attain their educational goals. The experience of the Douglas County School System in Colorado is a case in point.

Douglas County wanted to emphasize a positive approach to its main objectives—information dissemination and research—so it developed a tiered approach based on age to allow students in a K-12 system increasing freedom to access the Internet. By focusing on affirmative strategies for guiding students' research and using such concepts as "direction over protection," they reduced their reliance on their filter to that of background protection. They did this because they realized that mature juveniles have broader legitimate information needs than do younger juveniles. While such an approach might not work for public libraries, it indicates how libraries are beginning to grapple with the contradictions posed by filtering (Sortore, p. 20-21).

The ACLU Speaks Out About Kids Rights, Filters and Libraries

Doug Honig, Public Education Director for the American Civil Liberties of Washington, took some time in early September to speak with me about the impact and legality of recent policy changes by Washington libraries that restrict unfiltered Internet access for those under 18. I presented Mr. Honig with five questions. He discussed the ACLU's role in promoting intellectual freedom and particularly its view on issues involving public access to online information in the library.

Tom Reynolds: The American Civil Liberties Union is one of the most important organizations working to promote and protect Americans civil liberties and constitutional rights. The national ACLU joined the American Library Association in successfully challenging the Communications Decency Act and is the lead plaintiff in one of two major lawsuits questioning the constitutionality of the Children's Internet Protection Act, legislation that would restrict federal aid to libraries to those that install filtering software. What are the major activities of the ACLU in Washington State?

Doug Honig: The ACLU is a nonpartisan citizen organization that anyone can join. Although most people have heard of us because of our legal efforts to protect peoples' constitutional rights, we do a lot more. Through our public education work, local chapters, and lobbying program, we work to support citizen efforts to see that legislation and governmental policies don't undermine the rights of access to information. Our website (aclu-wa.org) has a special section to help citizen activists oppose local crusades for mandatory filtering. In the area of libraries, we have provided expertise on the effect of legislation and local policies on citizens' rights of access.

TR: As more area libraries have amended their policies to restrict youth access to the unfiltered Internet, many reference and youth-serving librarians are asking, "What rights do juveniles have when it comes to accessing online information, particularly in the public library? Are the rights and the information needs of juveniles always subordinate to the wishes of adults?"

Doug Honig: The law is unsettled with regard to the rights of juveniles in obtaining information in the public library. In general, juveniles have fewer rights than adults, but that doesn't mean that they have no rights.

In this area, as with other civil liberties questions, the law is being developed over time based on the United States and state constitutions as interpreted by state and federal courts. In decisions on the federal Communication Decency Act and the Washington Erotic Music Law, the U.S. and Washington State Supreme Courts have found that efforts to restrict juvenile access to sexually explicit materials may be unconstitutional if they actually result in a restriction of adults' access to this same information.

TR: How dependable is filtering software?

To serve freedom and democracy, American libraries must continue to provide materials and information that some will consider controversial, dangerous, and yes, even subversive.

Proponents of filters claim that filtering technology has developed to a point where it can effectively block objectionable material while not restricting access to legitimate entertainment, informational, and political sites. Yet study after study has found that across-the-board filters can't be relied upon to block obscene material or to protect access to controversial (but constitutionally protected) material.

Doug Honig: One of the reasons the ACLU is challenging the Children's Internet Protection Act is that while proponents claim that only child pornography and clearly obscene material will be blocked, we know this will not be the case. It is not a matter of individual flaws in particular software programs. Given the nature of the technology, there will inevitably be blocking of constitutionally protected material. Peacefire (www.peacefire.com), among other groups, has tested major filtering software and found that all block, to one extent or another, legitimate sites. A former Republican congressional candidate who once supported filtering has joined our CIPA lawsuit because he discovered that his election website was blocked by certain filters.

TR: Much of the impetus behind the actions of major library systems to further restrict juveniles' access to the unfiltered Internet comes from a fear that our Washington State Legislature is prepared to pass legislation taking away state funding from libraries that do not implement such restrictions. What is the ACLU's view of the constitutionality of such legislation?

Doug Honig: The ACLU would question the constitutionality of such legislation. It's important to remember that the Washington State Constitution includes stronger free speech protections than does the U.S. Constitution. These could provide the basis for challenging such legislation. The CIPA case involves similar provisions, and its outcome also will impact the outcome of such cases at the state level.

TR: What would you say to youth who find their access to information blocked by library policies that restrict their access to the Internet, and what would you say to libraries as they review and discuss kids' rights and Internet access?

Doug Honig: Librarians have been the unsung heroes in the fight against censorship. It is important to realize that the cutting edge of the efforts to censor materials in libraries these days is the drive to censor the Internet.

If a parent or child in Washington believes that a certain minor has been denied access to specific necessary information because of a library's policy, the ACLU wants to hear about it. Juveniles have rights to information. Such rights are typically determined on a case-by-case basis depending on the maturity of the juvenile and his or her need for the information. But they are there.

An Uncensored Celebration

In conjunction with our national celebration of Banned Books Week, the ACLU of Washington and the Book-It Repertory Theater on September 27 sponsored the second annual "Uncensored

Celebration" of challenged or banned books at Seattle's Broadway Performance Hall.

Nancy Pearl, Executive Director of the Washington Center for the Book at the Seattle Public Library, was master of ceremonies; and members of Book-It read excerpts from *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, *Huckleberry Finn*, and the original *Song of Solomon*.

Particularly chilling was the group's final reading from Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*. Here is a part of that reading:

It was after the catastrophe, when they shot the president and machine-gunned the Congress and the army declared a state of emergency. They blamed it on the Islamic fanatics, at the time.

Keep calm, they said on television. Everything is under control.

I was stunned. Everybody was, I know that. It was hard to believe. The entire government, gone like that. How did they get in, how did it happen?

That was when they suspended the Constitution. They said it would be temporary. There wasn't even any rioting in the streets. People stayed home at night, watching television, looking for some direction. There wasn't even an enemy you could put your finger on (Atwood, p. 249).

In reading and celebrating books that have been challenged or banned, we recognize some people in our country consider books dangerous and subversive. We also realize that institutions disseminating such books—bookstores and libraries—may come under attack for this very reason. Most librarians recognize that a fundamental part of their job is providing access to controversial material and ideas. This role takes on even more importance when the nation feels threatened, when we are stunned by some terrible event, when we cannot understand or even identify an enemy.

Today citizens are being asked to unite in the cause of democracy and freedom. But to serve freedom and democracy, American libraries must continue to provide materials and information that some will consider controversial, dangerous, and yes, even subversive.

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Building Bridges: 2002 Conference

by Kristy Coomes, Coordinator, WLA 2002 Conference

From April 17-20, the Oregon Library Association and the Washington Library Association will meet jointly just across the Columbia River Bridge at the Doubletree Jantzen Beach Hotel in Portland. We're looking forward to building bridges among librarians, trustees, and students throughout our states' library communities.

Look in your mailbox for the registration packet early in January! And in the meantime, visit the WLA Website (www.wla.org) to review the program offerings. As a teaser, here are some of the many programs and events that are planned.

Wednesday, April 17

Start your conference by attending one or more of the seven half- and full-day pre-conference sessions:

- Libraries and the Internet, Advocacy Training;
- Children and Libraries: Getting it Right;
- Marketing to Culturally Diverse Communities;
- Subject Matters! A Workshop on Subject Analysis;
- Management: Delegation, Communication, Time Management and Tools for Office Organization;
- Beginning at the End: Outcomes Assessment as a Tool for Change; and
- Expanding your Reach: Outreach Services for Everyone.

Following a dinner sponsored by the Oregon Public Library Division, join the WLA Membership Committee for a celebration of new (and long-time) WLA members. Relax, enjoy a memorable dessert, renew acquaintances, and chat with WLA officers, Board members, and Interest Group chairs.

Thursday, April 18

Dr. Holly M. Carter is the joint conference keynote speaker. Dr. Carter's presentation, "The Digital Divide," addresses sustainable development through technology in under-served communities.

After the Exhibitors' Gala Opening, select sessions from ten subject tracks: Serving Children, Serving Young Adults, Serving Adults, Management and Leadership, Technical Services, Trends in Technology and other Services, Community Connections, Trustees and Friends, Intellectual Freedom, and Collection Development. Session topics range from the Library of Congress Online, to creating your own ezine, to information literacy, to baby storytimes. The annual WLA Business Meeting is during the luncheon included in your registration fee.

Thursday evening features an exhibitor-sponsored social hour before the Joint Associations Banquet. Author Lisa Scottoline, winner of the Edgar Award (her eighth legal thriller is *The Vendetta Defense*), and author and film director Dennis Lehane (winner of the Shamus Award and author of a *New York Times* "Notable Book") are the banquet speakers.

Then we'll honor the Presidents of the Washington and Oregon Library Associations at a joint reception at the new Fort Vancouver Regional Library Three Creeks Branch. The last evening activity is The Society Gaius Julius V Solinus Washingtonius. Contribute to the Annual Meeting of the Society's *Journal of Irreproducible Results*—or at least be a

member of the astounded (but laughing) audience.

Friday, April 19

This year's CAYAS Breakfast features author/illustrator Janet Stevens. Stevens has over fifty books still in print, including the recent and award-winning *Cook-a-Doodle-Do!*, *To Market To Market*, *Old Bag of Bones*, *Coyote Talk*, *Gates of the Wind* and *Tops and Bottoms*.

The ten subject tracks continue on Friday; session topics include pop culture and teens, healthcare system 101, intellectual freedom, the basics of fundraising, and visions and trends of academic libraries. The WLA Awards Luncheon, included in your registration, honors individuals and groups who made outstanding contributions to WLA and to the advancement of libraries during the past year. And in the late afternoon, there will be special event with our exhibitors, including drawings for some great prizes. Then plan to embark on a wonderful, scenic cruise up the Columbia River, replete with dinner and entertainment on the *Spirit of Portland*. This special evening is not to be missed.

Saturday, April 20

Washington Library Friends and Trustees (WLFTA) will hold its annual breakfast and business meeting, and present the American Library Association program, "@Your Library." Today's libraries are dynamic, modern community centers for learning, information, and entertainment. Librarians are information experts, making sure our libraries are up-to-date and accessible to people of all ages, incomes and backgrounds. But how do Friends, trustees, and library workers tell that story? —This workshop will teach you to do just that.

See you in April for an exciting, informative conference!



At the 2001 WLA Annual Conference, Mary Palmer received the CAYAS Award for Visionary Service to Youth.

I'd Rather Be Reading...

Connie Willis



by **Konny Thompson**

I rarely read novels by living authors. It's not that I have anything against them—I just enjoy 200 year-old books, and don't have the patience or life span to wade through everything that is published these days to find the good stuff. But occasionally I will happen across a modern author I find intelligent, entertaining, and worthwhile. Connie Willis is one of those.

Ms. Willis writes speculative fiction, in the best possible sense of the term. Her books are often peopled with researchers of various kinds—historians, sociologists, psychologists. Time travel is a common plot device, but by no means endemic to her work. The situations can, at times, become gut-wrenchingly dismal; but throughout her writings, a refreshing sense of humor flows.

Willis' most recent novel was published just this year, and is called *Passage*. The protagonist is a hospital psychologist who is researching near-death experiences. She partners with a physician who has learned how to simulate such experiences chemically, and ends up being one of the subjects. Dark-sounding stuff, but lightened with interspersions of their attempts to navigate around the crazy-quilt hospital, while being pursued by Mr. Mandrake (who writes popular books on the afterlife and seems almost infernal in his ability to pop out of elevators).

The first of her novels I stumbled across was *The Doomsday Book*. This one is about a student historian who manages to get herself sent back to the Middle Ages. Dual story lines chronicle the student's experiences and those of her faculty and friends back home, who are caught in an epidemic. It took me two readings to appreciate just how tightly constructed this one was. I recommend it highly.

To Say Nothing of the Dog is another piece about time-traveling historians, but much lighter. These Oxford academics are traipsing through Victorian England, searching frantically for the bishop's bird stump, whatever that may be. At least one of them is also suffering greatly from time-lag and overwork, which makes it difficult for him to discern whether his partner is really the most fascinating creature he's ever met, or if he just needs a good rest. They become embroiled with spiritualists, star-crossed lovers, and the characters from an actual Victorian novel, *Three Men in a Boat*, to *Say Nothing of the Dog*. (This ties in well with my penchant for old books!)

I am not going to go through Willis' extensive work book by book, but will offer just a few more suggestions. First, if you like old movies, the 1994 novel *Remake* is a skimpy but satisfying

read. It is set in a future Hollywood, where live actors have all been replaced by digitizations of classic actors, movies are all remakes, and computer graphics are the only method used to make them. Along comes a starry-eyed youngster who just wants to dance in the movies, and will find a way to do it. Willis has managed to instill her characters with the same kind of naive determination one finds in characters in a 1930s musical, without letting them get sappy.

Right now I'm reading *Bellwether*. Its main character is a sociologist who studies the origin of fads. I already like her, because she is a library user. At some point she found out from her librarian that, due to space constraints, the library was forced to withdraw any book that hadn't circulated in a year. So each time she goes to the library, she checks out a few classics—and actually reads them! Here's a library patron who cares.

Finally, with Christmas coming, I recommend a book of short stories, *Miracle and Other Christmas Stories*. The introduction alone is worth the price of admission. It begins "I love Christmas," and she surely does. What she does NOT love are *It's a Wonderful Life* and Hans Christian Anderson, who "froze innocent children, melted loyal toys into lumps of lead, and chopped harmless fir trees who were just standing there in the forest, minding their own business, into kindling." While I take issue with her view of *It's a Wonderful Life*, I welcome her unabashed glee in Christmas and her quirky but happy seasonal stories whole-heartedly. One character accidentally has the Spirit of Christmas wished upon her by her sister, and he won't leave until he gives her her heart's desire. A bookstore clerk spends the holiday with Dickens' Spirits of Christmas. Mary and Joseph get a bit sidetracked in time. But those characters who accept the season as a time of possibilities have sometimes startling, sometimes happy holidays. And I hope you do too.



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