



Alki

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Up Front

The WLA president speaks

CAROLYNNE MYALL

Adapting Through Cooperation



For most of my three decades in librarianship, my specialty has been cataloging. It's an area undergoing a lot of change. Part of that change has come from within the profession, as publication formats and distribution methods changed, and existing cataloging conventions didn't match the emerging array of information resources. But a lot of the impetus for change has come from without, particularly from users' new expectations about searching and retrieval, based on their experience with Google, Amazon, and other Web services. And shrinking budgets have meant that we're having to develop ways to meet clients' new expectations with fewer staff.

All types of libraries and areas of librarianship are working to meet changing expectations of clients, and are often struggling with decreased funding to accomplish critical objectives. Adapting to the fiscal and access realities of the mixed print and digital environment, offering meaningful services to increasingly diverse communities, and dealing with unfunded mandates and tax limitations are tough challenges for libraries and library staff.

One path to adapting, surviving, and prospering, while maintaining our traditional values of service and equitable access, is to cooperate with others in the library community: to pool our expertise, our ideas, our purchasing power, and our advocacy. WLA offers many opportunities to adapt through cooperation—and through cooperation with others, to learn and develop more ways of adapting. The interests of different kinds of libraries and different kinds of library staff aren't identical. But by capitalizing on what we share, we can advance many of our interests, increase our own knowledge, and improve library service to everybody in our state.

WLA Library Legislative Day 2006

After weeks of rain and clouds, the sun shone on library advocates in Olympia on 9 February, WLA Library Legislative Day (LLD) 2006. Our Library Day

bags and nametags made us wonderfully visible on the capitol campus. Our materials for legislators were both nostalgic and forward-looking: old-style circulation pockets (but with photos of current library scenes rather than checkout cards), concise explanations of the issues we're supporting, and custom WLA mouse pads to help keep libraries on legislators' minds. The spirited briefing session prepared us to be effective advocates—even those, like me, who had no advocacy experience. Our numbers included representation from all but two state legislative districts, and supporters from all kinds of libraries. We delivered our messages to legislators, and even saw them in action. What a good day!

This year's LLD Committee cochairs were Jennifer Wiseman, Jodi Reng, and Deborah Jacobs. Tracie Clawson did a great job with local arrangements, and WLA Legislative Consultant Steve Duncan provided the know-how and strategy. After our visits with the legislators, Washington State Library staff hosted a reception and tour, which included books Governor Isaac Stevens purchased for the Territorial Library in the 1850s. Thank you, LLD Committee, for your work on behalf of libraries and library advocates. And thank you to all LLD participants, too.

Next year I hope to see even more of you at Library Legislative Day. Advocating for libraries in a positive manner, in cooperation with other supporters from around the state, is a way each of us can help make a difference for libraries.

See You in Tacoma, 19-22 April 2006

Neel Parikh, Susan Odencrantz, Robin Clausen, Jennifer Wiseman, and all the 2006 conference committee members have planned a terrific conference for us in Tacoma: "Grow: Connect, Learn, Aspire." In addition to presentations by nationally recognized speakers and writers, events include sessions with innovative colleagues from our region, table-talk opportunities to share experiences and insights with our peers, a reception at the Washington History Museum, and my fave, the ever-pertinent research of the Society of Gaius Julius Solinus V. Washingtonius. Register now! Conference programs, as well as the chance to confab with other library folks, offer us the chance to hear from our most inventive peers, to discuss our own successes and challenges—and to have a lot of fun. I look forward to sharing a great time with you in Tacoma. You're all invited to the WLA president's reception!

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C o n t e n t s

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Alki

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Alki's purpose is to communicate philosophical and substantive analyses of current and enduring issues for and about Washington libraries, personnel, and advocates, and to facilitate the exchange of research, opinion, and information.

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From the Editor

CAMERON A. JOHNSON

Adapt or Die? Nah.

Two extinct animals that have become symbols for the inability to adapt to change are the dinosaur and the dodo. Dinosaurs ruled Earth, but died out when a meteor strike changed the planet's climate. Dodos were perfectly acclimatized to the island of Mauritius, but succumbed to the degradation of Dutch settlers and their dogs. Despite their use as symbols of maladaptation, neither was an evolutionary failure; sudden catastrophe, not gradual change, did both in.

Humans, thankfully, are very adaptable. Consider the article by Lon Dickerson, whose Jefferson Parish Library (JPL) library suffered serious damage from hurricane Katrina. Dickerson, a former director of Timberland Regional Library, relates how his library (unlike the dinosaur and dodo) is working to overcome a devastating blow. His inspiring tale of JPL's road to recovery begins on page 16.

The idea for Dickerson's article came up at the September 2004 meeting of the WLA board, as did the article by Fort Lewis librarian Christi Bayha. The board made a donation to help finance Bayha's trip to found a library in "the creeks" area of Nigeria. It is a story of how logistics, preparation, and principled courage can succeed even in an environment as different from Washington state as equatorial Africa. What resulted is the compelling story, beautifully illustrated, which begins on page 5. Bayha's piece proves that one doesn't always need to react to change, but can *create* change.

The notion of adapting to technology is addressed by Whitworth College's Tami Echavarría Robinson's well-researched article about how social changes in our increasingly mediated society have led libraries to evolve—or metamorphose—their forms of library instruction. Also, from her perch atop the information food chain, WLA webmaster Evelyn Lindberg and Tamara Georgick ask how our WLA website can adapt to our members' rising expectations.

Everett Public Library's Scott Condon proposes a context for technological change in libraries: our public libraries' time-honored mission, which he sees




as "the egalitarian nurturing of knowledge." Condon warns against allowing technology and marketplace pressures to reshape this mission, which the public already understands and supports.

We have also included two pieces about school libraries. Patience Rogge, a long-time library trustee, gives an example of how advocacy works in the real world as she participates in a successful campaign to restore funding to a school librarian position in Port Townsend. And Chris Gustafson, a librarian with the Seattle School District, reveals how school librarians must actively demonstrate the library's value within an educational environment that centers on classroom teaching. Gustafson says demonstrating your value requires entrepreneurship and, yes, adaptation.

Check out our "Solinus" piece this time, as Lynne King of Highline Community College reports that change *is* possible, despite our dinosaurian tendencies.

We round out this *Alki* issue with King County Library System (KCLS) catalog librarian Cindy Richardson's article about the costs to staff and patrons of a staffing scheme called *clustering*, in which a library staff member may be assigned to work at multiple libraries. And the redoubtable David Wright finishes up with part one of his two-part column on books for twenty-somethings.

Our issue icon is the archaeopteryx, a feathered dinosaur.

I want to thank assistant *Alki* editor Margaret Thomas for her help on this issue. Margaret not only wrote a sidebar for the Cindy Richardson article, but also did the rough layout of the issue using our elaborate and powerful page design software. Margaret is progressing well in learning the lore of *Alki*. The July 2006 issue will be our last collaboration before she assumes the editorship starting with the December 2006 issue. Our July conference issue will be devoted to the 2006 WLA conference in Tacoma. Deadline for submissions is 15 May. Please contact me if you'd like to contribute. 

To the Editor:

Please thank Elena Bianco and Nancy Slote for "The E-Document Shell Game" (*Alki*, v. 21, no. 3). It is exactly the paper I've been trying to write for the past two years. Only better. And thank you to *Alki* for publishing it.

— Lee Walking, Librarian
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CHRISTI BAYHA

Founding a Library in Nigeria

My journey started on 22 July 2005 with an email. The subject line simply said, “[iProJobs] Global Citizen Journey—looking for participants” and the first line read, “Global Citizen Journey is looking for someone to join them in Nigeria where they are building a library.” My inbox beeped, and a new message appeared: “FW: [iProJobs] Global Citizen Journey – looking for participants,” and when I opened it up, a good friend had simply typed, “This sounds like something you would be interested in!”

If you visit the U.S. State Department website, it will tell you:

1. If you travel in Africa, don't go to Nigeria.
2. If you have to go to Nigeria, don't go to Delta State.
3. If you must go to Delta State, definitely avoid “the creeks.”

I don't consider myself a thrill seeker or even much of a risk taker. I am a librarian. I can't define that very well some days, but it's a core part of who I am. It's my passion and what moves me to act. I also have longed my whole life to see Africa. Within ten minutes of receiving those emails I had called and scheduled an interview.

Global Citizen Journey is a grassroots peace organization that has its origins in Earthstewards, another grassroots organization that formed in Northern California in 1979 and is now based on Bainbridge Island. The founders, Susan Partnow and Mary Ella Keblusek, have years of experience in the peace movement, but this was to be their first foray into leading a peace mission. They wanted to pick some place “edgy,” some place often ignored and avoided by the civilized world. They picked Nigeria. They partnered with a Nigerian organization, the Niger Delta Professionals for Development, and eventually agreed that a library in “the creeks” would be the best project for the journey.

The village of Oporoza, Nigeria, is in the very heart of the creeks, in Delta State, Nigeria. Delta State is the source of 80 percent of Nigeria's wealth but also the poorest state in Nigeria. Surrounded by the gas flares of the oil industry, knowing that those flames represent wealth they will never touch, the people live in abject poverty. A few years ago, the Ijaw and Itzekiri tribes started to fight among themselves. The two tribes accused each other of hoarding imagined jobs with the oil companies and each side felt cheated. Frustrations led to violence and many people lost their lives. Whole villages burned to the ground.

Since that time, the area has been widely considered to be lawless. People warned me that I might be killed, but our trip leaders assured us that the recent peace accord between the tribes was secure. My father was so concerned that I thought he was going to disown me at one point. Very few people thought that I would really go. After all, I'm not a risk taker. I'm an overweight, out-of-shape, thirty-something librarian with a husband, two cats, and a mortgage.

The trip turned out to be one of the most intense and profound experiences of my life. No one was killed; no one was even threatened. Oporoza was our home for one full week. We lived with the Ijaw people and brought Itzekiri people into the village with us. Everyone was greeted with open arms and treated like royalty. (The Itzekiri woman in our group actually received several marriage proposals!) We managed to



Christi Bayha is a librarian with the Fort Lewis Library System. Photos courtesy of Christi Bayha.



complete the library and stock it with 1,400 books. We made new friends, and learned just how much hope and resiliency a people are capable of.... But let me start at the beginning!

From the Beginning

Once I was accepted as a delegate in summer 2005, I needed to raise \$2,950 to meet my commitment to Global Citizen Journey, plus money for my airfare and shots. I spent the rest of my summer and fall writing letters, holding raffles, and generally beating the bushes for funds. At one point, I sent out an email that was received by Anne Bingham (WLA IG Coordinator), who had gone through graduate school with me. Anne took it upon herself to approach WLA on my behalf, and WLA supported me with a check for \$500! When I heard about the contribution, I felt great. That kind of professional support really meant a lot to me.

The other U.S. delegates came from the greater Seattle area too, and had a variety of backgrounds. All hoped to do something worthwhile on this journey. My companions were students, teachers, mothers, and husbands. They were Mormon, Jewish, Christian, and undecided. Five hundred dollars of the money that each of us raised had been earmarked to sponsor a Nigerian delegate. The Nigerian delegates also came from all walks of life and from all over Nigeria.

While individual delegates were busy raising funds, Global Citizen Journey was hard at work. Through their efforts we were able to secure from a youth organization a donation of personal computers for the library. Global Citizen Journey planned every aspect of our trip and coordinated the effort with the Niger Delta Professionals for Development, hoping to thereby ensure a safe journey.

I arrived in Lagos late at night on 17 November, a Thursday. First impression: hot and humid! We stayed in Lagos for the first two days, spending most of our time in various meetings with representatives from Chevron and the King of Badagary, and in sessions about the history and culture of Nigeria. Attending a performance by the Nigerian National Dance Troupe was a particular treat!

On Sunday we traveled to one of the oldest cities in the world, Benin City, where we met up with the Nigerian delegates for the first time. On the way to Benin City we passed palm tree plantations and burned out trucks. The orderliness of the trees stood out in stark contrast to the chaos on the streets around us. Gazing out from the safety of our air-conditioned vans, we passed lepers and roadblocks, and saw white egrets picking through piles of trash. The landscape was more lush than I had imagined. We traveled through rolling hills, occasionally catching sight of large boulders and rock outcroppings. When we reached Benin City, our group grew from nineteen to forty! I was surprised to learn that it wasn't just American parents who were unsure about their child's choice of destinations. The Nigerians told their own stories of standing up to their parents' opposition, of writing their wills "just in case." I wondered if I had made a wise choice.

On Wednesday morning, we boarded the speedboats for Oporoza. For some of our Nigerian friends, this was their first boat ride ever! How can I describe the Niger Delta? As if uneager to reach its



destination, the Niger River fans out, creating a maze of waterways through lush vegetation as it nears the Atlantic Ocean. Everything is vibrant blues and greens. Our boats sped around corners and dodged past water hyacinth with clusters of purple flowers. This was the creeks.

The boat ride passed quickly and then we were there! Immediately we were surrounded by festively decorated dugout canoes, with drums beating, people singing and dancing and cheering our arrival! It was overwhelming. I've never felt so welcomed in my whole life. As I climbed off the boat, there were many hands to help me up the stairs, and many more pressing in from all sides—"You are welcome!" they exclaimed, as they all reached to shake our hands.

Once we were all off the boats we were led through the village by two "masquerades," representatives of the spirits who appear at important times in village life. To represent our journey, the masquerades were made to look like a car and an airplane. We were led to the town hall where we were officially welcomed by the elders and chiefs of the Gbaramantu (Ijaw) Kingdom. The welcome ceremony was followed by dance performances by many of the young people of the village.

The light was fading by the time we were reunited with our luggage and were taken to the homes of our host families. Another delegate and I stayed at the home of Patrick and Marris, two of the most generous and sweet Nigerians you will ever meet. There were several beautiful houses in the village, Patrick's being the nicest in my opinion. But no plumbing! This presented its own challenges, but I won't go there! Suffice it to say, it was rustic.

Susan and Mary Ella had traveled to Oporoza in August with some of the money we had already raised and had held a ground-

breaking ceremony for the library construction. Finally, Thursday morning I got to see the library! The building looked pretty good—four walls, a roof—but no windows, doors, or furniture... and the grand opening was only five days away! The contractor assured us it would be ready, so I turned my attention to the books. Most of the American delegates had packed books as their second piece of luggage. We now unpacked them and stored them in the village's secondary school.

My Nigerian counterpart, Nicholas Dekpen, and I wanted to complete an inventory of the books and leave it with the library's board of trustees, but the school had no electricity and we only had three laptops with limited battery power. So, several people sat with pen and paper and started to write. When the laptops were available, we created Excel spreadsheets and transferred the data from our paper lists. It was long, tedious work and yet amazingly satisfying. On Friday afternoon, the delegates met with the villagers to discuss peace, self-empowerment, and other issues. Nicholas and I slipped away and walked in a light rain back to the school. We worked in perfect silence for the next hour and a half until the sun set. It's my favorite memory from the trip.

Unfortunately, the light rain of the day turned into a downpour that night. When we arrived at the school the next morning, we were dismayed to find that the roof had leaked and several of the children's books had gotten wet. The sun peeked out from scattered

(Continued on page 9)



Opposite page, top: Pastor Blessing and Nicholas Dekpen, the Nigerian librarian delegate, share a happy moment in the reading room of the Niger Delta Friendship Library.

Left: Two local delegates prove Nigerian women can carry anything on their heads.

Above: Canary nests fill an Oporoza palm tree.

Right: Young girl reads in the new library on Commissioning Day.

Page 5: Map of Africa showing location of Nigeria. Author standing on the jetty with delta in background. Library under construction: Several delegates work with the villagers to plant palm trees and clean up construction debris.





EVELYN LINDBERG AND TAMARA GEORGICK **WLA's Website: At an Evolutionary Fork**

If a modern day Darwin were to sail his virtual Beagle through our website, what would he find? Are we dodos blithely strolling toward extinction with no defenses, or wily mammals positioning ourselves at the top of the food chain? As librarians, we have high profiles in the new information economy, even if we are not always recognized for our roles and contributions.

Adaptation is critical, both biologically and entrepreneurially. This doesn't mean we have to change our product—was there anyone who liked new Coke? But, it does mean we have to change the ways we create, package and deliver our products. Twenty years ago, most librarians could not have conceived of a library without a card catalog that took the form of a wooden cabinet with pull-out drawers. When was the last time you saw or used a three-by-five catalog card that was the primary record for an item in a collection? Okay, I can hear some of you catalogers saying, “Just this morning,” but let's look at the patron side for this discussion.

As a librarian, I consider our product to be information. Information can take the form of a book, newspaper, website, database, chat site, email message, RSS feed, or any other method of delivery that the patron needs and that we can deliver. A new part of our jobs is determining which of these delivery methods is appropriate and if there are resources to provide all of these avenues of delivery.

When the WLA website began, the goal was primarily to have a Web presence. We wanted people to know who we were and how to contact us. As time went on, our expectations for the website grew. We wanted a nicer logo, more timely information, special pages for the interest groups, shared forms for board members, membership registration and other advanced features. Now, our website not only provides information to our members and visitors, but it also gathers information for the association to use internally.

We've had a very positive response from end-users who want electronic access to our services. In 2005,



Evelyn Lindberg and Tamara Georgick

CAMERON JOHNSON


approximately 20 percent of all WLA memberships were purchased online. That is a 15 percent increase for online registrations over 2004, the first year in which we offered online registration. Usage of the website for conference registrations is over 40 percent. To date, we've processed over \$106,000 in online transactions for an average of over \$4,000 a month (the online payment service launched back in December 2003). Clearly, these are services that are used and appreciated by our members and reflect the expectations of information professionals for online access to information and real time transactions.

The adaptation issues here point inward. After two years of online registration, we recognize that we need to continue to offer this option. However, after two years of online registration, the internal process is still a work in progress. Aside from a couple of employees who receive nominal stipends and one overworked paid employee (you know who you are, Gail), we depend largely on the good graces of individuals and their employers who dedicate their personal and work time to help make WLA a success. The webmaster position has outgrown the days when an enthusiastic volunteer could take the reins with little experience and grow into the position. Our current site includes the processing of credit card transactions, an interactive calendar, multiple levels of permissions for various contributors, secure certificates, and a back-end database to record the transactions. This information then has to be extracted and passed on to the appropriate fiscal or committee representative for processing. Our current webmaster puts in an average of eighty hours per month and still doesn't have time to completely refine some of what she would like to see on the site.

WLA is at a decision-making point regarding our online services. Can we continue to find qualified volunteers who can devote

Evelyn Lindberg is WLA webmaster. Tamara Georgick is IT director at the Washington State Historical Society.

significant blocks of time to maintaining the site? Should we keep a volunteer for the day-to-day tasks, but farm out the e-commerce and registration portions to a paid service provider? Should we hire another employee to be a half-time webmaster and continue to keep the services in-house? All of these choices have their merits. Many of you are probably already wondering how much these various options would cost. Although I haven't addressed it, economics plays a large role in our ability to adapt to a rapidly changing online environment.

From my view near the top of the information planning food chain, it's easy to see that we need to continue adding more electronic services to our website and continue to enhance the services already being offered. I would like to see us try out a member blog and a searchable online membership directory, and experiment with some other Web-based services. WLA is an organization that adapts. I feel sure that our Web services will continue to expand and serve our members more effectively—that is, of course, barring any asteroids in the immediate vicinity. 



Bayha (Continued from page 7)

clouds as we lay the books open on the lawn in hopes that they would dry.

After awhile, it began to rain again. I pushed back my chair and yelled, "Rain!" I reached the doorway and stopped in amazement. Children appeared as if out of nowhere and grabbed up the books frantically and hustled them under the relative protection of the school roof. I smiled as I remembered listening to these same children the day before at a school assembly. Susan had asked them,

"What are we building?"

"A library!"

"Whose library is it?"

"It's *my* library!"

"Who's going to take care of it?"

"I am!"


Monday morning finally arrived. Months of construction was finally going to pay off. I had discovered the night before that my host "mom," Marris, owned the small beauty shop in the village. She insisted on washing my hair for free so that it would be clean for the celebrations of the day. What a wonderful feeling! Clean hair!

The celebrations started early and went all day and all night! After hours of speeches and dances we made our way across the soccer field for the ribbon cutting. The mood was joyous as everyone filed past the plaque on the door, which read "Niger Delta Friendship Library." We continued past the media room with its five computers, TV, VCR and DVD player, then entered the reading room and snaked through the stacks and study carrels and out the back door.

I ran my hand along the books as I wound my way through 1,400 books, seven bookcases, study carrels, and chairs. I felt exhausted and proud.

The next several days passed in a blur and suddenly I was home again. As I write this, sitting in my house with the rain falling outside, I know I will never forget my journey to Nigeria. All this—the palm trees dripping with canary nests, the children always smiling and laughing and anxious to play and talk with us, the long jetty on the riverside, Oporoza, Nigeria—is imprinted on my heart.

Postscript

The mission of the library is to serve "the creeks" communities. A board of trustees has been formed, made up of members of both the Ijaw and Itzekiri tribes, and is in the process of hiring a librarian. Prince Yoko, a capable young Ijaw, is currently acting as caretaker of the library. I spoke with him recently and he informed me that people have visited the library every day. The next step is to acquire a permanent generator to provide electricity to the library. They have even received another donation of 300 books from another nonprofit organization. Global Citizen Journey still has a garage full of books that were donated to us and that we will be sending to Oporoza with the help of the U.S. consulate in Nigeria. 



TAMI ECHAVARRIA ROBINSON

Information Literacy: Adapting to the Media Age

From library orientations, to bibliographic instruction, to information literacy—library instruction has changed over the years. Proactively, library instruction has matured as a discipline, adding theory and depth. Reactively, it has changed with the times, as public access computing technology came into the library and as successive generations have become less print-based and more media-based.

Bibliographic Instruction

We think of library instruction as a recent addition to the profession when, in fact, it has been around since the 1880s. It began as a far less complex endeavor than it is today. Those early librarians instructed students as to the advantage of supplementing their course of study with the use of the library, and in the nature and use of devices for finding what the students sought. (1, p. 14) Librarians taught them to use the card catalog, indices, bibliographies, and other reference sources. In the 1950s and 1960s, library orientation tours were offered to students matriculated at universities.

The modern library instruction movement began in the 1960s. Visionary thinkers saw the library as the center around which higher education revolved. They devised instruction sessions and assignments to encourage students to become critical of their information sources. (1, p. 15) Instruction librarians continue to struggle with the same inclination among students today.

Instruction librarians first banded together with the formation of the American Library Association's Instruction in the Use of Libraries Committee in 1967. In 1972, Project LOEX was established as a depository and distributor for instructional materials and information. Also, in the 1970s, literature on library instruction proliferated dramatically. (2, p. 4) From this point on, the thinking about library instruction started to change significantly.

In the late 1970s, the stated purpose of library instruction, according to the Association of College

and Research Libraries Bibliographic Task Force guidelines, was providing students with the specific skills needed to complete class assignments successfully. "Instruction in how to use a library was being effectively designed, taught, and positively accepted." (2, p. 1) Students had been exposed to books since childhood, had been read to as children, and had read for pleasure as well as satisfaction of information needs. They watched television and movies only in their spare time, and were accustomed to learning from a lecture-driven teaching style.

Learning Theory

In the 1970s, before public access computers existed, two approaches to library instruction were developed that continue today. Evan Farber developed intensive integration of library instruction into the curriculum using a synchronous (real-time) face-to-face instruction model; and Miriam Dudley developed an asynchronous (any time, any place) learner-centered, self-paced library skills workbook method. Both methods focused on teaching basic library skills so that reference librarians would be enlisted only to answer more complex questions (like how to select one from among various resources) instead of simply how to find a book or how to find an answer to a question. (1, p. 16)

In the mid-1980s, interest in learning theory and its relation to library instruction began to swell among instruction librarians. In 1984, LOEX held its twelfth meeting, but for the first time the meeting focused exclusively on this topic. (3, p. vii) While some instruction librarians continued to provide bibliographic instruction in the traditional manner, others began asking hard theoretical questions about teaching and learning, and built a theoretical base for library instruction. The purpose of library instruction was broadened to include preparing students for lifelong learning by teaching them to recognize an information need, then locate, evaluate, and use the information effectively.

Library instruction continued along this track through the 1990s as public access computers, computerized catalogs, and various electronic indexes in CD-ROM and (later) in online format became available. Instruction librarians introduced students to these tools and continued to teach them to be discerning in using sources in the various electronic and print formats. As the complexity of resources increased, students learned to be conversant in both print and electronic formats. For a time, many interfaces required learning a different search interface for each tool, but over time, electronic tools began to look more alike and have similar, if not identical, search interfaces and strategies. The problem with interfaces looking alike, however, is that it becomes difficult for the student to discern what it is they are actually using. Today's students are persistently unclear

Tami Echavarría Robinson is coordinator of instructional services, Whitworth College Library.

about whether they are looking at an online catalog, a specific proprietary index or database, or an Internet site, and have difficulty understanding why it is important to differentiate these when they all look similar.

Generational Differences

While librarians applied learning theory and teaching theory to the realm of library instruction, generations of students were changing as a consequence of changes in modern society. In the 1950s, children usually had one parent who worked while the other parent stayed home, whereas children in later decades had both parents working or only a single parent who was employed. The pace of life became faster, society became increasingly consumer-oriented, and families were enticed by ever increasing commercialization and by the introduction of new technologies. Parents spent less time reading to their children or taking them to story hours at a public library. Instead, children spent more time in front of television screens and, later, computer screens, and less time reading and playing with homemade games. These technologies served as surrogate parents, as increasingly did baby sitters and daycare providers. “Modern tools of communication such as Internet, beepers, and cell phones are social lifelines for these generations.” (4, p. 121) The consequences of these changes were that children’s cognitive styles changed markedly.

The term “cognitive style” refers to a learner’s “characteristic mode of perceptual and intellectual functioning, how an individual understands and categorizes individual variations in modes of perceiving, remembering, thinking, and problem solving.” (5, p. 4) At an early age, the activities of watching television and using computers begin to influence a child’s learning patterns in a way that persists for the rest of that person’s life. Specifically, television and computers condition children and adults to have shorter attention spans and more fragmented thought. “Children today are capable of handling a much higher level of fragmented thought, but at the same time they are not able to maintain a single focus for any length of time.” (6, p. 1) Writing about teaching strategies for students who are members of Generations X and Y, Joel Snell comments that “they have short attention spans,” and adds, “ten minutes is a very long time in the media, and for these generations it is a long, long time.” (7, p. 482) Yet, these students are also independent and resourceful.

The term “learning style” actually refers to a preferred way of learning, or how a person learns best. Thus, the learning styles of today’s college students—the majority of whom are Generation X, Generation Y, and Millennials—are very different from those of most of the Baby Boomers who are probably the ones teaching them. Many adult learners prefer personalized, interactive learning environments but are capable of being passive recipients of information. Younger students are accustomed to being entertained and stimulated, expect instant gratification, view peers as more credible than teachers, are indifferent to rules and regulations (8, p. 26, 30), and regard information that is not from the Internet as “not worth knowing.” (9, p. 20) These students often learn about complex multimedia environments by showing each other what they have discovered. And they are rarely critical of the validity of their sources of information.

Younger students are accustomed to being entertained and stimulated, expect instant gratification, view peers as more credible than teachers, are indifferent to rules and regulations.

Because their attitudes and attention spans are so different from generations that were born before the prevalence of television and computers, these younger generations are challenging to teach successfully. That fewer people read and write in the print medium, and that more engage in this activity in digital information environments, has serious implications for learning as well. Traditional print resources (books, for example) require a long attention span and encourage the reader to read deeply and intensively about a single topic. The World Wide Web and other multimedia resources encourage the user to explore widely, and seduce the user away from reading and thinking deeply about a single topic. “Browsing” or “surfing” may encourage one to “become familiar with much but understand little.” (10, p. 163)

Information Literacy

As instruction librarians’ awareness and understanding of learning styles expanded, and as learning styles of students changed, bibliographic instruction became information literacy instruction. The term “information literacy” expresses, for instruction librarians, a main goal which is to create lifelong learners and information seekers who contribute positively to the learning community and to society. The information literacy instructor seeks to instill an integrated set of knowledge and skills that enables a person to recognize an information need and locate, evaluate, and use information effectively. The individual who is information literate constructs a variety of strategies to reduce the information gap, evaluates and selects the most appropriate strategy, and assesses the strategy’s effectiveness. (1, p. 5)

But information literacy is not just a conglomerate of skills and concepts. It seeks to make changes in an individual’s worldview—the way in which he or she values, relates to, and interacts with information—which enables the person to master the skills of information literacy. Using the Internet requires students to analyze and critically evaluate the validity

of information sources. (1, p. 8) And because younger students are so trusting of the Web, dismissive of print sources, and dependent on their peers, instruction librarians need not only to teach skills but also to overcome attitudes.

Instruction librarians, like other teaching faculty, are teaching to diverse learning styles. Students have preferences in how they like to learn, and although they can learn if information is presented in a manner incongruent with their learning style, they “learn more efficiently if allowed to process information in the manner most congruent with their own style preferences.” (1, p. 79) Library instruction has moved away from a resource-centered focus to a user-centered focus. Active learning is incorporated, allowing students to participate more actively in their learning process rather than merely being passive listeners. In teaching information literacy, instruction goes beyond teaching how to find information sources that satisfy immediate information needs to teaching transferable critical thinking skills for evaluating the validity of information sources. The goal is to teach students to transfer problem solving skills from one situation to another, thus preparing them to do so in post-college years as a habit of lifelong learning.

The technological abilities and life experiences of Generation X, Generation Y, Millennials, and Baby Boomers differ. When student and instructor are of different generations, both are challenged. The interaction between learning style and teaching style affects both the amount of learning that takes place and the levels of satisfaction with teaching. “The larger the divergence between styles, the lower the students’ gain in achievement; and the greater the divergence between styles, the less positive the students’ attitude toward the subject.” (11, p. 114) So instruction librarians, like other teaching faculty, are compelled to teach to a variety of learning styles.

As today’s students are often “surfers” and “scanners” instead of readers and viewers, it is difficult for faculty to find enough time to deliver course content. (4, p. 122) This presents problems for all teaching faculty, but especially for instruction librarians, who are usually granted only fifty to eighty minutes to deliver all the content. “In order to motivate learners, their curiosity must be aroused in combination with their perception of relevancy to their personal goals, and they must perceive that the success in learning is possible within the context of outcomes of the learning experience being consistent with their own reasons for learning.” (12, p. 39) For students to become informed and critical lifelong learners and information seekers who are socially engaged, information literacy must

tap into their ongoing curiosity and conversation that helps them understand the world. (13, p. 8)

Some instruction librarians say that information literacy instruction has evolved from bibliographic instruction. Perhaps the relationship between the two can be described more correctly as metamorphosis. It has certainly changed with the times, both proactively and reactively. Learning and teaching theory has developed that gives greater depth and breadth to library instruction. While this has been intentional on the part of instruction librarians, other changes have been more reactive to changes in the library environment (due to technological innovations) and to the way students of the 21st Century learn. The practice of library instruction is far more complex today than early practitioners could ever have imagined. Instruction librarians have adapted our teaching methods to current students’ learning styles because we have recognized that this approach yields information literate, productive, engaged citizens. And isn’t the ultimate goal of library instruction to create lifelong learners?

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CHRIS GUSTAFSON

School Libraries: Adapting and Surviving

“Shhhh! Chris, keep your voice down.”

“If you’re not going to check that Mary Stewart book out, make sure you put it back in exactly the right place.”

“No, of course you won’t find what you’re looking for under ‘cars.’ In the card catalogue, you need to look under ‘automobiles.’”



Sometimes I hear that voice from the past—my own middle-school librarian. By nature, I wasn’t all that quiet, I didn’t love order, and I was frustrated to tears by the Sears subject headings, so my experiences of libraries in middle school library weren’t all that positive. That I would have a career as a school librarian never crossed my mind. Today, I work in that very same middle school library where once I read Mary Stewart, those many years ago. However, the 1960s version of my library wouldn’t meet the needs of today’s students, teachers, and budget realities. The library has had to adapt, or else it would have died.

Students Change, and So Must We

Students’ needs have changed since the 1960s. My library serves about 1,000 middle-schoolers in grades six, seven, and eight. Some students read at above high school levels, others are mildly mentally retarded and read about as well as the typical first or second grader. Our English-as-a-second-language students have different needs than our learning-disabled students, but all want to find library books that reflect their interests, reading abilities, and backgrounds.

The more they read, the better they will read, so we create ways to lure them into the library. We offer magazines and graphic novels.

Chris Gustafson is a librarian at the Whitman Middle School, Seattle School District. Photos courtesy of the author.

With booktalks and the new book display, we entice students to try more challenging titles. Using classroom performances of reader’s theater plays taken from current titles, we give students the courage to try to read books they might not otherwise have picked up. We offer “book passes,” in which students learn to evaluate and select books thoughtfully. We have established a year-long promotion to recognize students who read any of the books from our list of fifty prize-winners from the previous publishing year. And we always encourage students to share titles or series they think should be in the library. Student readers are the best judge of what they like, so suggested titles often end up on the shelves.

The school library is in the business of creating lifelong library users, so our sixth grade teachers make sure all incoming students have public library cards. Students can pick up public library card applications in the school library. In October, we have a public library card drive and reward students who come to the school library to show us their public library cards. When teaching research strategies, I encourage and model the use of databases provided by the public library as well as those provided by our school district.

My students have never known a world without email, and many assume that they know everything they need to know about research—they just ask Google, and if they can’t find their answer directly and quickly, they complain, “There’s nothing on the computer.” School libraries adapt to the budding technology skills of their students by teaching them more: more about databases, more about search terms and advanced searches, and, especially, more about evaluating information online. We teach students the difference between Wikipedia and World Book Online. We define plagiarism, and teach students how to summarize, paraphrase, and cite. Whenever possible, we pull out attractive, engaging books, and sometimes can convince students they can find information more quickly and easily by using them.

Libraries in the School Environment

The school library adapts to the needs of teachers. For teachers at the elementary level, many school



librarians provide teacher-preparation periods by taking the teachers' classes at regularly scheduled times. But teachers at middle- and high-school don't have to interact with the librarian at all, so the school librarian must clearly communicate and demonstrate the value of the library program to the rest of the staff. There's no pressure like that of having your school's test scores published annually in the local newspaper, and it's the job of the school library to provide indispensable support for the school goals of raising the achievement of each student. Demonstrating our value starts with our occupational title. Many librarians working in schools call themselves teacher-librarians. I prefer library teacher, since it's a fit with gym teacher, computer teacher, language arts teacher, or science teacher, so that's how I introduce myself to my students.

One of the most important assets of a school library teacher is successful classroom teaching experience. The school staff needs to know that the person in the library has corrected papers, written report cards, conducted parent conferences, and planned lessons. Most teachers are observed only rarely by their peers, but the library teacher is almost always teaching in public. In an environment where student achievement is the bottom line, the school library teacher must be an excellent instructor, familiar with current research on student learning, and able to integrate research skills or literature promotion while collaborating on lessons with the classroom teacher.

How can a library teacher earn the trust of the rest of the teaching staff so that they will be willing to collaborate on lessons and units? The effective library teacher can't wait for other teachers to initiate collaboration. Every six to eight weeks, I pack up a basket full of freshly baked chocolate chip cookies, a staff list, a pencil, and my plan book. I visit every classroom teacher in my building, offer a cookie, and ask what the teacher has been teaching. The responses help me in collection development, and provide openings for me to suggest ways we could collaborate. Could I introduce the unit on *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by

talking to the class about the author and helping the students perform a short reader's theater piece adapted from the book? Could I gather some books at different reading levels about the Revolutionary War to send to a classroom? Could I do booktalks to introduce a unit on mystery and horror books? Could I teach Web evaluation skills when I show students how to use ProQuest for current-events study?

I communicate with the teaching staff via a weekly newsletter full of reviews of recently acquired books, including suggestions of ways to use those books to support the curriculum. I make sure I am familiar with the reading strategies used in the classrooms so that I can reinforce these strategies when students come to the library. When our school started academic support and enrichment classes for students who did not meet standard on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL), I booked extra time with those classes in the library, teaching them literacy strategies in the context of library resources.

This year it became obvious that the physical arrangement of the library wasn't ideally suited to the needs of our teachers. Demand for library time exceeded supply, and the twenty library computers were often needed by classes for follow-up work after research lessons. With the computers right in the middle of a fairly small library, it was difficult to host more than one class at a time. A parent volunteer, who is also an architect, is helping redesign our space, moving the computers to a corner of the library and the teaching space to the opposite corner so that followup activities can happen in one spot while book talks or other instruction can take place in the other, with the center available for drop-ins.

Budget Realities

If a school library has adapted effectively to the needs of students and teachers, it will be less painful for it to adapt to budget realities. That's not the same as painless. The Seattle School District uses site-based decision making. This means that, every March, the building leadership team receives an estimate of their enrollment for the coming school year and a budget based on that enrollment. Each classroom teacher takes up a set amount of the budget. Because of our education requirements, the set amount budgeted per library teacher is higher than the amount budgeted per classroom teacher. If the library teacher is not considered an integral part of the staff, is not seen to support teachers and positively impact student learning, it's extremely tempting to cut the library position or reduce its clerical support, leaving the library teacher less time to work with students.

The staff at my school met last March to grapple with extremely painful budget cuts, and many voices spoke up to maintain our current staffing of one full-time library teacher and one 0.8 full-time equivalent library assistant, without whom I would not be able to fulfill many of my teaching roles. I believe the outcome would have been different if the Whitman Middle School library had not been seen as an essential partner to promote student learning. Every year we face such an evaluation.

In some Seattle schools, cuts are made no matter how good a job the library teacher is doing. The politics of school choice make

it very hard to close schools in Seattle, leaving a number of small schools without enough students to fund a full-time library teacher. Some library teachers have had to adapt to serving two schools, and must continually determine what is possible given their time at each school, sometimes compromising what is best for kids and teachers. Some library teachers may work less than full time.


Adapting to budget constraints can mean learning new skills or taking on new tasks. Steve Marsh, from Muir Elementary, runs the computer lab and maintains the school website, in addition to his library job. Janet Woodward from Garfield High School points out that many Seattle library teachers completed their training before the Internet and email. They've had to update their skills either by teaching themselves or by taking classes. Continually changing information formats—for example from VHS to CD to DVD—also pressures them to adapt and retrain.

Because school budgets can't be counted on, public school library teachers must also adapt by finding new funding sources. We write grants, conduct book fairs and used book sales, and ask for supplemental funding from our PTSA and parents' groups. This is a vital part of our job, because such funding brings in attractive new titles in popular formats. Such books connect students with books

and give them a reason to come to the school library on their own time and not just with their classes.

Continuities

In some ways, the librarian from my days as a middle school student would not recognize his job as the same one I'm doing in the same physical space, though I suspect his job description was similar to mine. Means and materials have changed since those days. I see myself as a promoter of literacy and reading skills, charged with teaching students and staff to locate, evaluate, and use information.

But, while adaptation is a requirement in much of our work, other things never change. Phil Quinn, from McClure Middle School, says, "The most important part of our job, the loving and caring, the working with and teaching of children, will never change. We learn to know the individual child and their needs and try to fill some of those needs. The rest—books, computers, tables and chairs—they help but are only tools. More things are nice, but what we need is more people who care about working with children." 

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LON DICKERSON

Building from Disaster: Lessons from Hurricane Katrina

We are about to lose New Orleans,” read a *New York Times* editorial on 11 December 2005. The editorial went on to say that until we make a commitment and allocate funds to build levees and new drainage canals that can withstand a Category 5 hurricane, businesses and homeowners will stay away. It called on the President and Congress to take swift action to save the city. The editorial concluded, “We decide whether New Orleans lives or dies.”

The situation has been compounded by the disastrous delays of FEMA, National Guard, and American Red Cross, and costly errors made by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. State and local officials have also been unable to act in unison or in a timely manner. Hurricane Katrina came ashore on 29 August. Five months later, returning residents still couldn’t find temporary housing, and nobody knew in what parts of the city they could rebuild. Huey Long’s demagoguery, nepotism, and corruption affect to this day people’s view of Louisiana politics, and color the perception of what will happen to any federal dollars allocated for recovery. Although Edwin Edwards and David Duke were sent to prison, cronyism and bribery are so entrenched here that local residents are apathetic about their political system. Some people also attribute the delays to racism and/or the soaring federal deficit. Whatever the reasons, paralysis has reigned supreme. The *New York Times* calls the reconstruction a “rudderless ship.”

Libraries in greater New Orleans have never done anything cooperatively, except to participate in the state-sponsored summer reading program. Our library in suburban Jefferson Parish is the biggest one, and we’re looking at things differently now. I should explain that here in Louisiana “parishes” are what people in other states call “counties.” The term dates from the early 19th century, when Louisiana formed governmental units that closely corresponded to existing Roman Catholic parishes. Post-Katrina, Jefferson Parish Library (JPL) has embraced and run with the

opportunities Katrina has afforded us to make major changes. Perhaps the most symbolic change was the scrapping of nonresident fees when we were finally able to reopen three of our fifteen libraries on 3 October 2005. All our area library systems had inhospitable barriers, and the bigger ones required teachers and other nonresidents to pay a \$50 annual fee to borrow resources. A \$2 guest card at JPL enabled visitors to use our computers for one day, but the



Director Lon Dickerson observes repairs at the Wagner Library. Sheetrock on all the walls had to be replaced.

card wasn’t available to metro area residents. Now anyone, including relief and construction workers and visitors, can have a free, renewable, thirty-day “Katrina library card” at JPL that enables the person to borrow up to three items at a time and to use our computers and database subscriptions.

This reversal occurred, in part, because our staff had been welcomed as evacuees at libraries throughout the country. Once home, they couldn’t imagine people being without libraries, or imagine their own library not throwing its doors open. Hurricane Katrina closed some of our facilities indefinitely and destroyed 250,000 books and other materials. However, other communities are in even worse shape, and all but thirty-nine of New Orleans’s 215 library employees are laid off indefinitely because the library is a “low priority.” The decision to serve nonresidents was made unilaterally and unanimously by our library’s management team, and the decision has been universally acclaimed by the media, civic leaders, educators, and especially library users. Within three months we had issued 3,600 Katrina cards. The president of the library’s advisory board indi-

Lon Dickerson is former director of Timberland Regional Library. He now directs Jefferson Parish Library, Louisiana.

cated that JPL's action was the first genuine example of regionalism she had seen in her lifetime.

A month later JPL did the unthinkable: it adopted a reciprocal borrowing policy that could potentially extend full library privileges to anyone with a local library card in the eight-parish metropolitan statistical area and other neighboring parishes. The editorial page of the *Times-Picayune* lauded it as "an example of regional cooperation." When reciprocal borrowing was initiated with New Orleans Public Library (NOPL), the libraries also agreed to include the furloughed library employees from New Orleans in the group therapeutic sessions that Tulane-Lakeside Hospital would be providing for JPL's employees. They agreed to co-sponsor programs, too. NOPL is particularly strong in programming, and it suggested using JPL's central library in Metairie as the temporary venue for programs that would normally be staged in New Orleans.

Again, the reasons were altruistic, but also pragmatic. Regionalism is becoming a way of life in New Orleans, and Jefferson Parish is poised to become the region's economic engine. A new, mixed-income subdivision with 20,000 homes is already in the planning stages. Quality-of-life concerns like strong libraries will help attract additional residents and, more importantly, businesses to the parish. The faster that property valuations and the economy recover, the sooner the library will be able to recoup its lost revenues.

I came to Jefferson Parish Library because it's a good system that was ready to advance to the next level. Parish officials supported and incorporated new goals in its strategic plan to increase the library's visibility, bring the quality of library services up to the norm for comparable-size communities nationally, and secure the necessary financial resources through a mix of private and public support. Unfortunately, I had been with the parish less than a year when Katrina hit, and I hadn't yet hired the people needed for an aggressive marketing and development program. However, Katrina provided opportunities for making a start in that arena.

Within twenty-four hours of the storm, the library's maintenance workers and I were back in the parish assessing the damage and doing what we could to mitigate it. Luckily, I was able to hire an industrial hygienist and a disaster cleanup firm within ten days. Once Internet access became available, I was also able to focus on communicating with library staff and letting the library community and prospective donors know what was happening.



Muncie Public Library in Indiana loaned JPL this "cybermobile."



Orange County, California, raised more than \$20,000 for JPL's Live Oak Library

One of the first cash donations came from the Washington Library Association. More than 100 libraries around the country have adopted our branches and provided incredible support. Orange County (California) Public Library System and the Orange County Board of Supervisors raised over \$20,000. We have received contributions from numerous individuals, organizations, corporations, and publishers. All cash contributions are being made to our library Friends organization. These donations are critical to our recovery, and some of them have been targeted for assisting libraries and library users throughout greater New Orleans.

Most of Jefferson Parish is immediately adjacent to New Orleans. But it is 102 miles—or a two-and-a-half hour drive—from our central library to our "closed indefinitely" library in Grand Isle. Thanks to a computer-equipped cybermobile on loan from Muncie Public Library (Indiana) and a bookmobile donated by Waukegan Public Library (Illinois), we had temporary library services available for Grand Isle's 1,500 residents by early 2006.

When businesses in Jefferson Parish started reopening in early October, they had to contend with a critical shortage of workers and high salaries. So the handful of open restaurants and grocery stores closed by 5:00 or 6:00 PM. We stuck with our 9:00 PM closing time at six of the seven libraries we had open by mid-October. Nothing else was open at night for quite awhile.

The combination of Katrina library cards and evening hours drew people to the library. So did our decision to do a lot of evening programming. Louisiana State University's AgCenter cosponsored a series of programs on chainsaw safety, mold, personal finances, post-Katrina tree and garden care, etc. Another popular series of programs with Tulane-Lakeside Hospital focused on post-Katrina medical and psychological topics. The Counseling and Relationship Educational Institute cosponsored programs for parents of teenagers and held weekly discussion groups for teens.

A joint appearance by authors Rick Bragg and Sonny Brewer was the first major post-Katrina literary event in greater New Orleans, and it attracted droves of enthusiastic attendees. The library's bimonthly Reading to Rover program was highly successful when it resumed with new evening and Sunday time slots. So were Saturday classes on "Genealogy by Computer" and "Genealogy by Book and Microform" plus weekday classes on a variety of computer topics.

The politicians are keenly aware of the library's increased visibility and the number of cars in our parking lots. They are also in the library more often because of regional forums and other meetings being held in our central library's meeting room, which E-rate funds are being used to equip with state-of-the-art sound equipment to attract even more events and to support the media covering them. A video-conferencing center and another small meeting room are in the process of being established, and a new catering service agreement is being negotiated.

A major collaborative event with New Orleans Museum of Art was to have occurred last fall, but Katrina intervened. This partnership has subsequently been resumed and a new partnership with Tulane University Hospital initiated. Because of the damage to its New Orleans facility, Tulane plans to build a major children's hospital at Tulane-Lakeside Hospital, adjacent to our central library. The hospital also wants to create a parenting center at the library, and monthly pediatric workshops are already being held at the library on Saturday mornings.

I think libraries should be actively involved in raising the standard of education in communities, breaking the cycle of illiteracy, and fostering economic development by enhancing the work skills of adults. We created a youth services coordinator position last spring, and we launched an outreach program to schools a couple of weeks prior to Katrina.

I received a call in October from Clear Creek Friends (Quaker) Meeting in Hennepin, Illinois. Instead of sending money, they wanted to be actively engaged in a project to help one of our libraries. I paired them with a library in a multiracial, working class neighborhood. People will be here at the end of the school year to deliver commodities to enhance the children's section of that library and its summer reading program activities. They will also visit nearby elementary schools to promote the library and summer reading program.

As I was contacting prospective donors before staff returned, I made an appeal to Tutor.com for assistance. We had looked longingly at their online

Live Homework Help, but hadn't had time to identify a corporate sponsor to pay the hefty subscription price. Tutor.com graciously provided a gift subscription for our library and four others in the state. The combination of this gift and reciprocal borrowing means that students in New Orleans and other parts of the metro area can receive free tutoring and homework assistance at our libraries.

Although our budget is smaller, we maintained the projected \$180,000 allocation for database subscriptions versus \$42,000 last year because we want to provide stronger support for our schools and businesses. Faced with the threat of layoffs beyond sixty-two vacant/frozen positions at the end of 2005, JPL also decided to press ahead with the purchase of multiple self-checkout stations and audiovisual self-check units for our remaining eight highest circulating libraries.

Our Katrina card was responsible for a donation of fifty computers from VIA Technologies, Inc. Its executives in Taipei watched coverage of Hurricane Katrina with horror and contacted WWL-TV with an offer of computers to help people trapped at the Superdome get assistance and contact relatives. Staff at WWL-TV persuaded them to wait and eventually got back to them about our Katrina



Lon Dickerson (center) accepts a donation of fifty computers from VIA Technologies, Inc., during WWL-TV morning news broadcast. Timothy Chen of VIA Technologies is at left.

card. VIA Technologies jumped at the opportunity to enable people in greater New Orleans to use computers in our libraries to help rebuild their homes and lives. Corporate officials in California flew to New Orleans specifically to present the computers to me on our community's premier television morning news program.

Pre-Katrina, we had a woefully inadequate number of public access Internet computers. Now we're committed to serving not only our 455,000 residents but also anyone else with a library card in greater New Orleans (a total of 1.3 million pre-Katrina inhabitants). Thanks to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, VIA Technologies, and others, we expect to have 400 public access computers by mid-2006 in comparison to 120 a year ago. By then, we will also have Wi-Fi wireless Internet access at all of our libraries.

We have implemented a major restructuring of our staff, organizational chart, and operations. Once the hiring freeze is lifted, our


highest priority will be filling the new marketing and development positions. We hope to raise 20 percent of our funds from outside sources, and a library foundation will be established to spearhead those efforts. We expect to do more quality programming and to conduct literary festivals and spectacular summer reading programs. Filling the vacant librarian positions and increasing the number of professionals is another priority.

All but two of the twelve libraries that will reopen in the foreseeable future will require extensive repairs. The demolition and cleanup at these branches took three months. The rebuilding is ongoing and will take much longer, especially at five facilities that were heavily damaged or completely gutted. New carpet is being installed at nine libraries. These changes coupled with the influx of computers and self-checkout stations provided opportunities to reconfigure most of the facilities. They accelerated plans that were already in progress to implement a subject departmental configuration at our 135,000 sq. ft. central library.

With over 70,000 residents, Kenner is the sixth largest city in Louisiana. Less than a month after Katrina, on 24 September, Hurricane Rita caused extensive damage to our library there. Once the sheetrock was removed from the interior walls, we decided to eliminate the building's little-used meeting room. We physically reconfigured the entire library and dramatically increased the space and resources for children. When we reopened early in 2006, we had also added a large number of Spanish-language resources (already on order pre-Katrina) and Spanish-speaking staff, increased the number of public access Internet computers from seven to twenty-five, and provided Sunday hours.

I had done preliminary work on a master building program that would more than double the library system's total square footage and bring it into conformance with *Standards for Louisiana Public Libraries, 2003*. Revisions have subsequently been made to capitalize on Katrina's eradication of three strategically located facilities. The revised program provides for replacing these 3,000–7,718 sq. ft. libraries with 30,000–80,000 sq. ft. ones. Where the \$67 million will come from is an open question, but "a closed mouth won't get fed."

Hurricane Katrina has been labeled the worst natural disaster in our nation's history. "All the king's horses and all the king's men couldn't put Humpty together again." Neither can all the Mardi Gras krewes put New Orleans together again like it was before the storm. But, I'm confident we will eventually rebuild and recover despite the bungling efforts of government officials and others.

If my seven years on the Lacey Planning Commission in Washington didn't teach me anything else, they taught me the importance of advance planning and keeping an open mind. Yes, Katrina dumped almost insurmountable challenges on us, but it also gave us open-ended opportunities to build the libraries of our dreams and to make people in greater New Orleans more aware of the importance of libraries in today's society. As I tell my staff, we're never going to go back to doing business as usual. We're not building back, we're building better. 




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CINDY RICHARDSON

“Clustered” Libraries: Breaking Valued Connections

Clustering is such a cozy-sounding word, but for employees and patrons of King County Library System (KCLS), the term has become associated with a process that tears apart long-established and valued connections. At first it was hoped that clustering was simply an inadequately planned and clumsily implemented idea that would eventually be abandoned. However, over time it became clear that KCLS Director Bill Ptacek’s view of the benefits to be gained from this radical reorganization diverges markedly from staff and patron perceptions of its impact.

So, what exactly is clustering as implemented by KCLS? Its definition has evolved over time. Clustering first appeared at KCLS some four years ago, when a manager vacancy provided the opportunity to place a small library under the manager of a nearby larger library. Four of these configurations were in place by 1 May 2003, when two new clusters debuted in south King County, each formed by combining three libraries under a cluster manager. It was soon apparent that, from now on, staff in clustered libraries would experience disruptions going well beyond sharing a manager.

Clustering Dislocations

Library assistants, followed shortly by librarians, scrambled to rearrange their lives as they were presented with new schedules in which they were regularly assigned complete or partial work shifts at each of the other libraries in their cluster. Part-time staff, some of whom had long-standing schedules of three days per week, were now required to spread their twenty hours over a minimum of four days per week. The successful system of voluntary Sunday staffing was discontinued, and staff from libraries with no Sunday hours were now expected to be available for Sunday work. The increased mobility mandated by this scheme also had children’s and teen librarians struggling to keep their programming and school visit commitments on track.

Suddenly, employees had to factor in significantly more time behind the wheel and more money for increasingly expensive gasoline. Many soon learned that libraries only a few miles apart were not necessarily so quickly reached when traffic volumes were considered. For those who had formerly relied exclusively on public transportation or walking, the options were even less attractive.



The majority of KCLS staff are employed part-time, either by choice or by circumstance. A second part-time job, a home business, and/or hustling for additional hours as substitutes within the

KCLS: Clustering Means Flexibility

Director Bill Ptacek makes no apologies for the decision to rotate staff within groups of libraries in the same geographic area, a controversial King County Library System practice known as *clustering*.

The director says there’s not much he would have done differently, in spite of protests from patrons and employees. “I don’t think that what we’re asking them to do is unreasonable.”

What KCLS is asking is that staff members work on a two-week schedule, pulling shifts at two to four different libraries. “Look, when you take a job, you’re responsible to go to work, right?” says Ptacek, who got a legal opinion on the practice of rotating employees. “I’m not seeing this as a major upset. Everything we’re asking employees to do is allowed under the law.”

The administration also plotted diagrams to see where employees live in relation to the libraries where they are expected to work. Many live in Seattle, says Ptacek. Some are only rotated a couple times a month. “We didn’t really see this as being a major burden.”

Clustering evolved in response to a growing workload coupled with stagnant revenues, says Ptacek. With passage of a bond issue last year, the library system’s square footage is expected to increase 30 percent over the next ten years. Circulation is up 7 percent over last year. At the same time, property tax revenue to libraries has been capped by voter initiative. “We need to build in a system that gives us flexibility,” says Ptacek. “The library has a responsibility to schedule for the needs of the library.”

Cindy Richardson has been a catalog librarian at KCLS since 1990 and served as the first president of AFSCME Local 1857 (through December 2005). Photo courtesy of Cindy Richardson.

library system are commonplace, but these activities were much more difficult to accommodate in the more complex scheduling grid required for the clusters. Family obligations, legally mandated custody arrangements, and other personal commitments of both full- and part-time staff were often not compatible with their new schedules and multiple work locations.

Combining different sizes of libraries introduced other complications. Staff from smaller libraries felt swallowed up by the larger libraries in the cluster, whose needs seemed to take precedence and whose staff seemed to have a greater say. Library assistants from small libraries, accustomed to participating in a greater variety of tasks, were impatient with performing only circulation desk activities at the larger libraries. Library assistants from the larger libraries were flummoxed by having to field ready reference questions for the first time at small libraries. This known disparity in skills might have been addressed by training and mentoring, but the pace of implementation did not allow for that.

There were many missteps in the beginning. In some cases, schedules were changed so many times and on such short notice that staff despaired of ever again being able to plan anything outside their work lives. For some staff, the stress exacerbated ongoing medical conditions or brought on new ones. New positions with cluster-wide responsibilities were often filled with relative newcomers, reinforcing the widespread perception that experience counts for nothing, and resulting in thinly veiled power struggles. Confusion about the reporting structure or chain of command abounded.

Yet, with all the chaos that clustering introduced into their personal and work lives, staff were invariably even more distressed by the knowledge that service to patrons was being seriously compromised when they were forced to work in unfamiliar environments and were not regularly available to give personalized attention to patrons for whom they had been a trusted, familiar source of help for years. Management's notion that staff would eventually feel equally comfortable and competent at all libraries in their cluster is in sharp contrast to the perception of staff that they have all become, in effect, substitutes.

The Rationale for Clustering

From the start, the necessity for initiating these drastic changes was not readily apparent. Two months into the process of implementing the new cluster staffing model, KCLS management did finally distribute a one-page handout enumerating the reasons for clustering, with improved customer service cited as the driving force. Ironically, customer service has taken many hits from clustering, and, to this day, it remains unclear why imposing clustering was necessary to achieve any of the stated goals.

KCLS has never claimed that clustering was introduced to save money, and the retention of all the former

Nancy Smith, KCLS associate director of community libraries, acknowledges that more might have been done to explain the need for clustering. "It was a radical change. Not enough discussion happened up front that gave satisfactory answers," she says, adding that it would have been impossible to satisfy some critics. "I do believe it is the fear of the unknown."

Concerns about consistency of services and operations are also part of the rationale for clustering. Some small libraries, once staffed by library assistants, now see a steady rotation of "more highly trained staff," says Smith of the original clusters. "The public is getting better service."

Ptacek agrees results from the first clustered libraries showed promise, though he acknowledges a rough start. "We had some fits and stops with the whole thing, and it wasn't necessarily a straight line to success."

Success, he says, means opportunities for sharing resources—the same story hour program can travel to each library in the cluster, for example—and best practices in circulation. A survey conducted last summer showed no difference in customer satisfaction between libraries that were part of clusters and those that weren't, Ptacek points out.

There was no library system model for clustering at KCLS. Smith says she's heard that other library systems have tried variations of the idea, and that a Denver system recently abandoned clustering. She doesn't know why, but says she plans to find out.

Breaking new ground doesn't bother Ptacek, who says others are at least curious. Recently, he got a call from someone at a Houston library system who is interested in visiting to learn more about rotating staff among clustered libraries. Director since 1989, Ptacek has a reputation as an innovator, and has led KCLS to its position as the second busiest library system in the country. In 2000, the Public Library Association gave him the Charles Robinson Award for implementation of innovative change.

Since late last year, however, the KCLS Board of Trustees has been hearing from union representatives, Friends groups, and patrons who are strongly opposed or at least have questions about clustering. As a result, the board has asked the administration to come up with an evaluation plan. Ptacek said he has not decided yet how or when the administration will determine if clustering works.

Will staff morale factor into the evaluation? "Any review of this would be to determine what effect it has on what we are delivering to the public," says Smith. "In my time at KCLS, I haven't seen staff morale factored in to the degree that public service is factored in."

— Margaret Thomas

managers at the same salary level bears this out. These displaced managers now find themselves in clusters that may or may not include the library they formerly managed and in management team roles that are still being defined. We have been assured that reduction in the number of managing librarians from forty-three to sixteen through the clustering process will foster better communication and guarantee the implementation of “best practices” and standard operating procedures system-wide, but so far there has been little evidence that these objectives have been met.

More recently we have come to understand that the resource in short supply is staff. A \$172 million capital bond approved by voters in 2004 brought in money for building or expanding facilities, but not for staffing this new square footage. Clusters are seen as a means of redirecting staff resources to cover new and expanded libraries and meet increasing service expectations without increasing the number of staff. However, it appears that all that most staff can look forward to is an ever expanding workload and ever more stressful and counterproductive working conditions. We are told that clustering will provide staff with greater opportunities for professional growth, especially with a new emphasis on participation in system-wide projects, but this seems just plain unrealistic, especially for the part-time staff who are in the majority.

Three more clusters were already in place when it was announced on 2 September 2005 that all remaining libraries—with the exception of Bellevue—would soon be clustered, with some of the newest clusters eventually expanding to include four, or even five, libraries. Despite substantial accumulated experience, implementing these final clusters remains challenging. Making scheduling conform to the dictated parameters while keeping it equitable is still a nightmare, and the explanations for why clustering is necessary remain unconvincing.

AFSCME Local 1857 has represented 560 KCLS employees since December 2002. The union has so far had limited success in mitigating the most pernicious effects of clustering on represented staff. A month after the south end clusters were announced in 2003, the union formally stated its position that moving employees among various libraries constituted a change in working conditions and was therefore a mandatory subject of bargaining. A year later, in the context of ongoing contract negotiations, KCLS and the union signed a memorandum of understanding

agreeing to address the impact of clustering separate from negotiating the contract. Since that time, there have been several union-initiated meetings with management in order to convey the problems identified by staff in the clusters. While management has addressed some individual accommodation issues, they have not been receptive to such suggestions as continuing to allow staff to volunteer for Sunday hours. The union is currently using the grievance process to address ongoing cluster-driven changes in working conditions.

Public Response

Only a few months prior to the announcement of the final round of clustering, KCLS conducted the Patron Experience Transformation Project, in which extensive data was collected to determine what constitutes “gold standard” experiences for library patrons and the extent to which KCLS has been meeting those expectations. The service provided by staff received exceptionally high marks, and it was evident that patrons particularly valued their interactions with individual, familiar staff. Patron responses to the survey also brought out the important role that libraries play as gathering places reinforcing community identity. The finding that KCLS has, for the most part, already achieved the desired “gold standard” in customer service has led many to ask why we need clusters to fix what does not appear to be broken.

It has not escaped the notice of patrons that clustering libraries does not contribute to community building; nor do patrons consider all libraries and the staff in those libraries to be interchangeable. Many of the Friends groups for individual KCLS libraries are now demanding answers about why neither the staff nor the public had any say in the process, and why the impacts of clustering on staff and patrons in the pilot clusters were not evaluated before proceeding further with such controversial changes. These Friends activists have scheduled public meetings with the director, and they have done their homework, disputing, for example, the director’s claim that clustering is a national trend.

At this writing, KCLS management is insisting on proceeding with restructuring the entire system into clusters instead of yielding to requests from the public to suspend the process until it can be thoroughly evaluated. The director maintains that only after all the clusters are in place (projected for 1 March 2006) can the merits of this reorganization be properly judged. He and the board of trustees have, however, felt sufficient public pressure that they have committed to an evaluation before the year is out.

In spite of some conscientious efforts to plan more thoroughly for implementing the final clusters and to make adjustments based on the lessons learned from earlier traumatic experiences, management’s current intractable stance on requirements for scheduling and rotating staff will continue to have a negative impact on staff and patrons alike. True to form, KCLS staff can be counted on to put on a smile for the public every day and provide the best service possible under these challenging conditions, but at what price? ■



LYNNE KING

How We Changed and Lived to Tell About It

Changing technology in the library has become so commonplace that we hardly register it as change. Another new database—that's nice. Change your password every thirty days? Annoying, but we are remarkably clever at finding (and remembering) another seven character code using numerals, upper case and no repeats. We've been on the cutting edge for so long that it doesn't feel sharp anymore.

But ... let me tell you what happens when your library director decides the media collection, those videos and DVDs and gasp, even the CDs, aren't being used to their full capacity. When she says that maybe the "closed stacks" are a barrier and the patrons would be better served if they could browse the whole collection.

In our academic library, we had two circulation departments. We had always had two. On the main level, the "circ" staff circulated the books and periodicals; managed the reserves; maintained the copy machines and fiche readers; answered phone calls; pointed out the restrooms; interacted with students, staff, and faculty; confiscated edible contraband; and met with their supervisor to discuss all of this.

On the sixth floor, the "media circ" staff circulated the media collection from a closed collection behind the desk; managed the media reserves; maintained the TVs, multimedia equipment, and language lab; answered phone calls; pointed out restrooms; interacted with students, staff, and faculty; confiscated edible contraband; and met with their supervisor to discuss all of this.

Scenario 1: A student has been using the OPAC to find materials for her term paper. She has an armful of books, which she brings to the circ desk (main level). The staff checks the books out for her and, afterwards, this student says she saw in the catalog a movie she thinks will give her some background for her paper. She had looked for this movie but could not find it. She is politely directed to the elevator or up the stairs to the media collection where she can repeat her question at the media circ desk.

Scenario 2: A faculty member wants his whole class to view a DVD and a video about volcanoes, so he places both on reserve for the term. He also wants the same class to read excerpts from three books, so he places them on reserve for the term. The class comes to the library to do the assignment and finds half of the reserves on the main level and the other half on the sixth floor.

When I write these scenarios, it seems obvious that we weren't giving our patrons optimum service. We had always done things that way, and we really couldn't see the obvious—that we were setting up hoops for patrons to jump through. Amazing! Our patrons put up with this arrangement, all of our materials circulated, and sometimes our nonprint materials circulation even outstripped print circulation! Our apparent success left us blind to the obvious.



I didn't say the new circulation services desk was tidy.

Our library director *did* see the obvious and said we could better serve our community if we combined some services. So we began to think about solutions. What would happen if we only had one circulation point? What would happen if all of the materials, including nonprint, were available in open stacks? What would happen if we combined two departments? What would happen if we changed?

We brainstormed. We debated. We did internal surveys. We surveyed other colleges. We measured the collections. We designed and redesigned areas. We spent five years on these preparations.

One of our surveys asked how to keep our collection secure. Could we put nonprint media in open stacks without the entire collection being stolen? Suggestions included putting empty boxes on the shelves with the contents kept securely behind the counter (the

Lynne King is Library Technician III in technical services at Highline Community College. Photos courtesy of the author.

Blockbuster model), putting everything out and trusting the patrons (the Pollyanna model), and placing the collection behind barbed wire (the Gulag model).

Placing empty boxes on the shelves was not an option because we were already facing space issues behind the counter. Although the barbed wire was tempting to some staff, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations were pretty clear this would be a violation. So we began to work with the Pollyanna model, modified. Our acquisitions department identified those items that we could not replace because they were either too expensive or simply unavailable. These would be placed in special secure lock boxes, which circulation staff would have to unlock at checkout. The rest of the collection, including those very popular new movies and music CDs, would be in open stacks.

Oh my God.

An equally frightening decision was to combine circ and media circ into one big department located on the main level, overseen by one supervisor. Everybody would circulate the books, periodicals, videos, DVDs, and CDs; manage the print and nonprint reserves; maintain the copy machines, fiche readers, TVs, and multimedia equipment; answer phone calls; point out the restrooms; interact with students, staff, and faculty; confiscate edible contraband; and meet with their (one) supervisor to discuss all of this. The area had to be redesigned to make room for more people, and the combined schedule had to accommodate everybody, because the library supervisor was determined not to lay off anyone.

Could we all get along? Could we manage this change?

After all of the planning, all of the debating, and all of the kicking and screaming, it only took a week to do. Periodicals from the main level were moved to another floor and media materials replaced them. Viewing equipment was moved into place on the main level. The staff desks were rearranged. Schedules were posted. The new combined circ staff met with their (one) supervisor and came up with a new name for themselves—Circulation Services! We had *changed*.

As I write this, we have had open media stacks for one term. On review, the positives far outweigh the negatives. The patrons enjoy coordinated reserves and one central circulation point. Our circulation statistics have gone up for both nonprint and print—go figure. Anecdotally the staff feels the media materials are used much, much more. Comments from the campus community have been 100 percent positive. They love to be able to browse the entire collection. Our staff finds it easier to cover staff absences for illness or training.

We do have some challenges. The circulation services staff has a crowded workspace. Yes, we have had some theft, which has prompted a complete inventory of the media materials to give us some loss statistics. Staff feeling is that the loss is minimal, comparable over time with the loss of print materials.

What's next? Our director hopes to find the resources to make the workspace more efficient for the staff by getting better shelving, more wiring, better connectivity and better security. We will continue to refine our policies and procedures to better serve our patrons. We have changed, and we'll no doubt change some more.

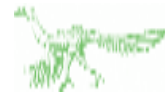
Well, how about allowing food in the library?

Oh no—that would never work...



INSTRUCTIONS TO CONTRIBUTORS

Alki: The Washington Library Association Journal is published three times per year (March, July, and December). Each issue centers on a theme selected by the *Alki* Editorial Committee. **Themes** of upcoming issues are announced on the WLA website and in the editor's columns. Articles should be in-depth examinations of issues of importance to Washington libraries. All works should be original. Unsolicited contributions and off-theme articles are encouraged but will be published based on the needs of specific issues. Submissions are edited. The editor and the *Alki* committee make the final decision on any submitted material. **Deadlines** for submission are January 15 for the March issue, May 15 for the July issue, and October 15 for the December issue. We prefer article text to be submitted as digital files in .doc or .rtf format. Also, we prefer that artwork be well-composed glossy black and white 35mm prints. However, we can accept some alternatives: ASCII text transmitted as an email message, in email attachments, or on a PC-formatted 3.5-inch diskette, Zip disk, or CD-ROM; and artwork transmitted as .tiff or .jpeg files of adequate resolution. Please include informative captions with artwork. We recommend that you contact the editor before submitting artwork. Artwork will be returned on request; otherwise it will not be returned. **Typical article lengths** range from one to three *Alki* pages, including artwork. A three-page article with no artwork contains about 2800 words. News items about personnel changes, professional organizations, awards, grants, elections, and facility moves or construction are included in the "Communiqué" column as space permits. **Columns** are regular features about library service or operations. Columns are typically pre-assigned to a designated person. Anyone interested in submitting material for a specific column should contact the editor. *Alki* retains electronic representation and distribution rights to its contents. *Alki* reserves the right to re-use text, photos, and artwork in subsequent issues, with notification to the submitters, if possible. Otherwise, all rights revert to the authors.



SCOTT CONDON

Adapt or Die?

Upon hearing of the theme for this *Alki*, I began to anticipate the types of adaptation that might be suggested: renewed emphasis on and vigor in the pursuit of newer technologies; the marketing of libraries; possibly even suggestions that libraries forge stronger relationships with the private sector. It irritated me that this “adapt or die” ultimatum, this imperative dictum, would be enshrined as the organizing construct for our thinking and discussion. Indeed, to accept it at face value is to fail to recognize the either/or fallacy upon which it is built.

But before we adopt this fatalistic dichotomy, we need to ask: Have libraries failed? Are our patrons unhappy with libraries? Are there serious problems with our historic missions and values and guiding documents? Has the egalitarian nurturing of knowledge become passé? Many library visionaries, vendors, and pundits are quick to fan the flames of panic and fear, but I believe they can do little to demonstrate a fundamental failure on the part of libraries.

Are Libraries Dying?

The cultivation of fear or crisis through an appeal to emotions is nothing new in the library field. One book I recently read traces this crisis-mongering back thirty years; (1, p.3) another identifies these tendencies in even earlier decades. (2, p.17) It is important to keep an eye on developments that may impact or change library operations or practices, but an exaggerated focus on forecasting might cause us to lose sight of the weather right outside our windows. And though forecasts are sometimes—even often—wrong, we know the sun still rises each day and certain expectations will continue to exist.

I will not deny the usefulness of the many technological tools that have come into being since the advent of the online catalog. The variety of networked technologies can most definitely assist us librarians in finding information and helping our patrons. In the past, libraries have responded to advances in computing by providing online databases for in-library or remote use, and by making room in library buildings and budgets for Internet workstations. Librarians have also taught patrons how to search the Web and evaluate the accuracy of Web information. All of this is fine and appropriate and in keeping with our purposes. But now, we are hearing about such things as university libraries’ removing books and converting the book-free space into high-tech lounges (for example at the University of Texas undergraduate library in Austin).

Adapting?

Technological change over the past decade has affected communications at least as much as it has access to information. Demands for email in libraries are constant. People want to transfer files, transact business, take online classes or tests, chat online with friends, update their blogs, or whatever. Though I understand the desire to accommodate these demands, the introduction of interactive electronic communication signaled a radical departure from the roles libraries have historically fulfilled. Where library patrons rightly expect from us quality materials and authoritative information, netizens visiting the library bring new expectations, perhaps more appropriately met by Internet service providers, cable companies, or even the post office or telephone companies. I have mixed feelings about this new emphasis, and I have strong reservations about removing books to make room for a general Internet café or arcade. Change can mean evolution; it can also mean mutation, deformity and degeneration.

Seeking a secure niche by providing Internet access doesn’t seem extraordinary at a time when whole cities are going wireless. But if libraries are talking about ways to survive, then we need to identify and emphasize those services and functions that are essential, unique, and central to our libraries. Public libraries in Washington serve diverse communities: from sprawling multi-county metropolitan areas to small rural towns. Accordingly, there is some variety in what each library chooses to—or can afford to—emphasize. The Public Library Association has been publishing and revising documents on planning and role-setting for the past twenty-five years. These documents are designed to help libraries choose roles and services that best meet the needs of their particular communities—recognizing that no single library can do all of them well and must, instead, prioritize. (3) But even this variety of roles is a dilution or diminution of what, to me, is the most powerful image of the library: the individual reader reflecting on meritorious works for discovery, knowledge, pleasure, and personal growth.

What many people continue to like most about libraries is our extensive collections of books, music, and films that include today’s popular works alongside the best of the historical and cultural record. These

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materials have enriched my own life beyond my ability to describe, and they provide relief to me from the many hours each week that I peer into a computer monitor. The book is the most traditional of library materials and it has, so far, presented the greatest challenges in the digital environment, largely because book readers prefer the print format. Our print collections offer depth and historical perspective not easily found elsewhere in our communities; and the avid reader turns to libraries, where she might gamble on an author who would not otherwise have made it into her bookstore cart, but who, once encountered, may provide deep and unexpected pleasures.

For the most part, libraries have been free from advertising and the forces of the marketplace—books are one of the few media that come without advertising. In recent years, however, libraries have engaged in marketing and in partnering with the private sector. These activities seem to have arisen in libraries out of an unexamined adoption of standard business practices, which now threaten to become conventional library wisdom. But I believe that libraries have more to gain by providing an alternative to, and refuge from, ubiquitous marketplace pressures and practices. It is important to remember that when we serve our local communities well, word gets around—quality collections, services, and experiences are likely to be our best advertisements.

On the other hand, precarious funding has made library advocacy a necessity. The Washington Library Association emphasizes advocacy and promotion in its mission statement, in its recent strategic plan, and in its organization of the annual Library Legislative Day. The Washington State Library also has an ongoing statewide campaign to promote the awareness and use of libraries. We can do other things to improve our visibility, such as: make presentations to library funding bodies; speak at schools and community events; create email newsletters for those who wish to receive them; organize drives to increase library card registration; and maintain blogs on our library websites. But too cavalier a pursuit of promotional activities can lead to a diversion of energy—in libraries that are already short staffed—away from critical roles, collections, and services. While we have acquiesced to the realm of public relations, we should not see this as a substantive reinvention or progressive evolution of what the library does.

Themes like the one we are entertaining here encourage creative visualization about what the future could bring. These exercises often result not so much in focusing our attention on core and essential purposes, but rather in the identification and adoption

of short-lived or ill-suited business and technology trends. And yet, ironically, it is the soothsayers in our field who frequently charge library “traditionalists” with irrelevance—statements to this effect can be found by the “gigaload” in the recent library literature. But if by relevance we mean the “close logical relationship with, and importance to, the matter under consideration,” (4) then we must demonstrate that our new initiatives are central to the historic and ongoing missions of libraries. This relationship is never concretely established for many of our newfangled enthusiasms. Instead, there is the temptation and tendency, in the spirit of our adapt-or-die mindset, to react to outside forces and allow them to reshape our purposes.

Evolving?

Libraries are relevant to our communities: We have a long tradition of principled values, goals, and objectives, as set forth in documents such as the American Library Association’s *Library Bill of Rights* and its *Freedom to Read Statement*. In his book *Our Enduring Values*, ALA president Michael Gorman has elaborated on eight essential values of librarianship for the 21st Century. They are: stewardship; service; intellectual freedom; rationalism; literacy and learning; equity of access to recorded knowledge and information; privacy; and democracy. I think these provide a solid basis for planning for the future. (Elsewhere, Gorman has been notoriously berated by library bloggers, who have yet failed to address meaningfully his assertions regarding the unique experiences and knowledge that come from the reading of books.) (5)

Despite talk from the pundits who attempt to forecast the needs of library patrons, the people we serve generally understand the things that are central to a library. A recent report from the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) indicates that people strongly associate libraries with our most traditional roles regarding books, information, and learning. (6) People see libraries as the place for reading, contemplation, and reflection; for lifelong learning; and for personal engagement with ideas and knowledge. It seems to me that our most reliable guide to the future should be our already vetted, historic values and practices. As libraries adapt and evolve, let’s make sure we do so in accord with our values and principles, rather than from fear, expediency, or speculative zeal.

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The 2006 WLA Conference

The 2006 Washington Library Association Conference, 19-22 April 2006 in Tacoma, will feature several full-day preconferences, a special opening reception at the Washington History Museum, and your choice of thirty-six different and interesting sessions.



Michael Gorman

Several keynote speakers will also be on hand to inspire, motivate, and inform:

- Creators of the comic strip *Unshelved*, **Bill Barnes** and **Gene Ambaum** (Thursday breakfast)
- Noted cultural critic, feminist theorist, and writer **bell hooks** (Thursday banquet)
- American Library Association (ALA) President **Michael Gorman** (Friday ALA breakfast)
- Children's book illustrator and writer **Steven Kellogg** (Friday CAYAS Breakfast)



bell hooks

In addition, several renowned individuals will be presenting workshops:

- **Eric Liu**, who serves on the Washington Learns Steering Committee, will speak about the current education system and its relation to libraries.
- **John N. Berry**, editor-in-chief of *Library Journal*, will discuss workplace rights in libraries.
- **Joe Matthews**, an experienced consultant and author, will talk about the value and utility of using a "balanced scorecard" in libraries.

You can still register and get additional information regarding preconferences, workshops, and special events at www.wla.org/conferences/wla2006

Please join us!



Steven Kellogg and friend



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Washington Library Association Conference
April 19-22, 2006 • Tacoma



Bill Barnes



Gene Ambaum



Library supporters from the 45th Legislative District meet with Sen. Bill Finkbeiner outside the Senate chambers. From left to right: Marcia Seip (Woodinville Friends of the Library) Maida Ingalls (Carnation Friends of the Library), Sen. Finkbeiner, Laura Boyes (King County Library System), and Charlene Noto (Carnation Friends of the Library).

Library Legislative Day 2006

On Thursday, 9 February, more than 100 library supporters from all corners of the state and from all types of libraries descended on Olympia to participate in WLA's annual Library Legislative Day. Constituents from forty-seven of Washington's forty-nine legislative districts attended.

Participants met with state senators, representatives, and their staff to present a strong case in support of issues developed by WLA's Legislative Committee and its lobbyist Steve Duncan. This year's briefing packet contained information about bills promoting extending levy lid lifts for libraries from one to six years; preserving electronic state publications; seeking pre-design funding for a new Washington State Heritage Building; providing digital resources for community/technical

college libraries; bolstering school library media centers; and spotlighting early literacy.

Both houses of the legislature were in session most of the day, so attendees delivered the packets to legislators' offices, then went to the entrance of the House and Senate chambers and requested (by sending a note in via the sergeant-at-arms) a brief

conversation with their senator or representative. Attendees enjoyed observing the legislature, and were gratified that many of our legislators were receptive to visits, with or without an appointment.

The WLA leadership hopes that the event raised legislators' awareness about libraries, and that the positive impressions made by WLA library advocates will ensure long-term relationships with key elected officials.

NOTICE TO ALKI CONTRIBUTORS, 1985-1998

THE WASHINGTON LIBRARY ASSOCIATION WOULD LIKE TO DIGITIZE AND MAKE AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET THE FULL RUN OF ITS AWARD-WINNING JOURNAL, *ALKI*. ISSUES FROM DECEMBER 1998 ONWARD ARE ALREADY AVAILABLE ON THE WLA WEBSITE. DIGITIZATION OF THE REMAINING BACK ISSUES WILL BRING WELCOME ATTENTION TO THE ASSOCIATION AND ITS FLAGSHIP JOURNAL, AND SERVE AS A RESOURCE FOR MEMBERS AND THE PUBLIC.

DIGITIZING BACK ISSUES OF *ALKI* REQUIRES THE WLA BOARD TO SEEK PERMISSION FROM THE CONTRIBUTORS TO EXTEND THE PRESENT AUTHORIAL COPYRIGHT AGREEMENT, WHICH WAS ESTABLISHED IN DECEMBER 1998. THE PRESENT COPYRIGHT AGREEMENT IN ITS ENTIRETY READS AS FOLLOWS:

ALKI RETAINS ELECTRONIC REPRESENTATION AND DISTRIBUTION RIGHTS TO CONTENTS. *ALKI* RESERVES THE RIGHT TO RE-USE TEXT, PHOTOS, AND ARTWORK IN SUBSEQUENT EDITIONS, WITH NOTIFICATION TO THE SUBMITTER IF POSSIBLE. OTHERWISE, ALL RIGHTS REVERT TO THE CREATOR/AUTHOR OF THE WORK.

IF YOU CONTRIBUTED TO *ALKI* BEFORE DECEMBER 1998, AND IF YOU OBJECT TO YOUR SUBMISSIONS BEING DIGITIZED AND MADE AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET, OR IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT US:

CAMERON JOHNSON, *ALKI* EDITOR, AT alkieditor@wla.org
MARY WISE, *ALKI* COMMITTEE CHAIR, AT wisem@cwu.edu

WLA Dues Are Due

Unpaid WLA dues are now overdue, as dues apply to a calendar year. Please check the mailing label on the back of this issue. If the WLA office had not received your dues by 15 February, your label says 2005. If you have sent in your dues since February 15, great, but if not—this is your wake-up call! Please renew your WLA membership, by mail or online. To make a strong association, we need all of us to participate.



PATIENCE ROGGE

A Textbook Case of Advocacy

Reams of research reports demonstrate how school libraries and school librarians contribute to students' academic success, yet all across North America school media centers are closing and school library media specialist positions are being eliminated. If members of the library community neglect to advocate for adequate funding to equip and staff school libraries, how can we expect administrators and school boards to see their value?

As a two-term library trustee and a member of Grassroots! and WLFFTA, I felt it incumbent on me to act when a small item in the *Port Townsend Leader* caught my attention. The article stated that four citizens had spoken at a school board meeting decrying the elimina-

If members of the library community neglect to advocate for adequate funding to equip and staff school libraries, how can we expect administrators and school boards to see their value?

tion of the last remaining school librarian position in Port Townsend School District No. 50. I checked the school board minutes online and could find no mention of how this was decided. I then wrote a letter to the editor, based on the January 2004 WLA board resolution in support of school libraries and librarians, which I had introduced as the Pacific Northwest Library Association's representative.

The letter emphasized the importance of retaining a certified library media specialist, and asked other interested citizens to contact the school board with their concerns. I emailed Jennifer Maydole and Kay Evey of the Washington Library Media Association, asking for information on the newly revised Washington Administrative Code (WAC 180-46-005, WAC 180-46-009, WAC 180-46-020) standards pertaining to school libraries and the pertinent section of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW 28A.410.010, RCW 42.17 et seq).

I also sent a version of my letter to the school board, and gave William Maxwell of the Port Townsend Library (PTL) board copies of the relevant sections of the WAC and RCW, which he brought

before his board. After approval by City Manager David Timmons, the PTL board drafted a letter to be sent to the school board and the newspaper. Meanwhile, library supporters' letters began to appear in the *Leader* emphasizing the importance of a certified librarian to students' progress. Judith Gunter, former director of the Jefferson County Library (JCL), and Ray Steinberg, retired school librarian and former JCL trustee, added their support.

To keep the issue on the school board's and administration's radar screen, I wrote a request to the school district to examine the records on this matter, citing Washington's Public Disclosure Act. Examination of the records showed that this decision to eliminate the school librarian position was the work of the administration, and that the school board had given its implied consent by simply rubber-stamping the personnel schedule for the 2005–2006 school year. No vote had been taken by the school board on this specific position.

At this point, circumstances changed. The superintendent of schools retired, and on 1 July the school board hired Tom Opstad, former superintendent of the Lynden schools, to replace her. Opstad was auditing a distance-learning program from Mansfield University on the subject of school libraries and was familiar with the research conducted by Keith Curry Lance on the relation of student achievement to the presence of a school library staffed by a certified media specialist. He had requested further information from the Lynden Library branch manager and received a stack of material to peruse. I met with Opstad to discuss the situation, then followed up that meeting with a thank-you note. I then sent another letter to the editor noting Opstad's thoughtful concern and urging supporters to keep up their interest.

In August, Beverly Goldberg of the American Library Association journal, *American Libraries*, interviewed me by phone about the effort. A portion of the interview appeared in the September 2005 issue of the journal as part of the issue's lead article on nationwide campaigns in support of school libraries and librarians.

When I learned that the school board was planning a retreat later that month, I phoned a member of

Patience Rogge, former trustee at Jefferson County Library, was named to the American Library Trustees and Advocates Honor Roll in 2005.

the school board who assured me that “they are working on it.” To emphasize the importance of restoring the position, I sent another letter to the school board citing the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools Standard IV, which requires the employment of library media specialists in schools with enrollment of 500 or more students.

Upon returning from vacation in October, I received an email from Jody Glaubman, former Port Townsend Public Library trustee who had been among the citizens who had spoken to the school board in April. The email stated that Superintendent Opstad

had rehired Mary Stolaas, the library media specialist whose position had previously been eliminated. At a follow-up meeting, Opstad explained that enrollment had exceeded the numbers projected in the budget, so funds were available to reinstate the school librarian as a 0.8 full time equivalent. Stolaas’s schedule includes one day per week at each of the schools, where she is assessing media resources and working with teachers. Opstad assured me that employing a certified school library media specialist and strengthening and updating the school libraries’ collections would be high priorities of the Port Townsend School District for the current school year and in the future.

Moral of the story: Advocacy works.



Join WLA.

The Washington Library Association includes some of the best and brightest members of the Washington library community. In our numbers we have classified staff, trustees, Friends, librarians, techies, students, book-people, cybrarians, artistic types, literary types, creative types and even library directors! We come from college and university libraries, from public libraries, from special libraries, from school libraries. Some even come from no library at all.

What unites us is our care for the well-being of Washington libraries. WLA offers an annual conference, specialized training, legislative support for libraries, a journal, and a variety of leadership and creative opportunities. WLA makes a difference in how Washington libraries see themselves and their work. For more information, visit our website at wla.org. Explore the site, and make our business your business. Download a membership application from wla.org/memberap.pdf, or join online at wla.org/registration.html.

WLA : Building partnerships in the Washington library community.



Wright (Continued from page 31)

Indecision, by Benjamin Kunkel

When a young writer is touted as “the voice of his generation,” it is worth checking him out, if only to find out what the rest of us think his generation’s voice might sound like. In Kunkel’s case, it is a wry, intelligent, sweetly neurotic voice staggering with millennial ennui in the face of too many illusory choices, and one which wonders, “Isn’t there a pill I can take for this?” Bildungsromans—coming-of-age novels—are the proper prescription for readers of any age seeking to construct, or deconstruct, a self. See also: Marc Acito’s *How I Paid for College: A Novel of Sex, Theft, Friendship & Musical Theater*; Arthur Nersesian’s *The Fuck-Up*; Eric Bogosian’s *Mall*; Jay McInerney’s *Bright Lights, Big City*.

Magic for Beginners, by Kelly Link

Jaded young readers in search of something different, something wonderful and strange, need look no further. Link’s pages teem with aliens, zombies, cheerleaders, ghost dogs, and guardian rabbits. So much for the strange: what’s wonderful is how beguiling, amusing and affecting she makes all this. See also: Aimee Bender (above).

Cloud Atlas, by David Mitchell

Beginning, middle, end? How passé! Mitchell refracts his theme into six seemingly unrelated narratives that pursue their strikingly independent courses, only to rush back together in a miraculous coda—a remarkable trick that fulfills every promise that postmodern meta-fiction refuses to make. See also: Vladimir Nabokov’s *Pale Fire*; Danielewski’s *Mark Z. Danielewski’s House of Leaves*; David Foster Wallace’s *Infinite Jest*; D.M. Thomas’s *The White Hotel*; John Barth’s *Lost in the Funhouse*.



I'd Rather Be Reading

DAVID WRIGHT

Twenty-something Books That Will Make You Cooler (Part 1)



Librarians could do a much better job serving our twenty-something readers. We focus hard on the teenage years with devoted collections, programming, and staff, and then it seems we send the kids off to college or a job and hope they come back to us when they have kids of their own, or when their car breaks down. As for adult programming and book promotion, we tend to focus on what we enjoy, and most of us are pushing 40 (or better).

Yet, often it is readers in their twenties who seem to have the most fervent belief in—or hope for—what literature provides. They come to us from fluoresced office cubicles, from the autocratic reading demands of college, and from the streets, looking for something real, something new and different, something meaningful and true. We Baby Boomers, Generation Jonesers, Pre-Lunar-Space-Agers, and early Gen-Xers owe it to ourselves and our patrons to keep in step with their needs and interests. The good news is that no piercing, hair-dying, or body-modification is required; in order to be cool, all you have to do is read.

Here is the first of two columns containing twenty-odd authors—old and new—now popular with twenty-something readers. And don't miss the program called "Keep Your Cool: The ABCs of Gen XYZ" at the 2006 WLA conference in Washington's hands-down coolest city, Tacoma. (As Neko Case sings: "God bless California, make way for the Wal-Mart. I hope they don't find you, Tacoma.")

Willful Creatures, by Aimee Bender

Like any good fairytale, these surreal stories do not offer the reader an escape from real life, but rather plunge us into the primal reality of our dreams and nightmares. Put away childish things and venture into the forest of life with Aimee. See also: Amy Hempel's *Reasons to Live*; Angela Carter's *Nights at the Circus*; Jorge Luis Borges's *Ficciones*.

Post Office, by Charles Bukowski

Love him or hate him, this magnificent bastard will not be ignored, and his jaw-dropping frankness continues to attract new legions of fans sick to death of words, words, mere words. A library with no Bukowski can't be trusted. See also: John Fante's *Ask the Dust*; Henry Miller's *Tropic of Cancer*; Jack Black's *You Can't Win*.

Down and Out in the Magic Kingdom, by Cory Doctorow

Intellectual freedom fighter Doctorow is on our side, and liberty-loving librarians should check out his website (www.craphound.com) where they can download free copies of his novels and sto-

ries, taking one small step towards the property-less ad-hocracy found in this futuristic vision of a Disney World where respect is the only currency. Sure, you can buy his books on paper as well. See also: www.boingboing.net; Matthew Derby's *Super Flat Times*.

Notes from Underground, by Fyodor Dostoyevsky

The quintessential anti-social anti-novel has enervated and inspired underground writers and readers for over a century. See also: Knut Hamsun's *Hunger*; Albert Camus' *The Fall and The Stranger*; Bret Easton Ellis's *American Psycho*.

Best American Nonrequired Reading 2005

There's always something interesting, arresting, and amusing going on in these annual mélanges of stories and sketches culled by the irreverent Dave Eggers and his rotating crop of high school helpers. For readers who feel totally lost in today's literary scene, this is a great way to get found fast. See also: *The Anchor Book of New American Short Stories*, Ben Marcus, ed; the latest issue of *McSweeney's Quarterly*; *The Best American New Voices 2006*, Jane Smiley, ed.

Another Bullshit Night in Suck City, by Nick Flynn

Memoirs are it right now, especially if they bear a passing resemblance to Dante's *Inferno*. Flynn works excoriating and wildly inventive prose out of quality time spent with his drunken ex-con father while working at a homeless shelter. See also: Jim Carroll's *Basketball Diaries*; Frank Conroy's *Stop-Time*; Tobias Wolff's *This Boy's Life*; Mary Karr's *Liar's Club*; Augusten Burroughs's *Running With Scissors*; Dave Eggers's *Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius*; Sean Wilentz's *Ob the Glory of It All*; Bee Lavender's *Lessons in Taxidermy*; James Frey's *A Million Little Pieces*.

No Logo, by Naomi Klein

Boomers (Make Love Not War!) and Busters (No Nukes!) who wonder where the materialistic Generation Y's idealism is stashed should check out this influential rallying cry against what passes for culture in a world dominated by soulless corporate conglomerates. See also: Alissa Quart's *Branded: The Buying and Selling of Teenagers*; Maxx Barry's *Jennifer Government*; Howard Zinn's ever-popular *A People's History of the United States*.

(Continued on previous page)

David Wright is a readers' services librarian with the Seattle Public Library and chair of the Readers' Advisors of Puget Sound. He can be reached at dwright@spl.org.

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