

The Washington Library
Association Journal

March 2017

Volume 33 | Number 1

Alki



Mistakes Were Made

Inside this Issue:

- What Happens in Storytime...Tales of Storytime Disasters.....p. 5
- Software Migration Gone Wrong; or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the
Finance Department.....p. 6
- Local Stage, Global Impact: Susan Hildreth and the Future of Public Libraries.....p. 19



Table of Contents

Alki The Washington Library Association Journal

PO Box 33808
Seattle, WA 98133
(206) 486-4367

EMAIL: info@wla.org
WEB: www.wla.org

ALKI Editorial Committee

Frank Brasile, Alki Editor
Sheri Boggs, Committee Chair
Molly Allen
Steven Bailey
Chanteal Craft
Sean Fullerton
Marcy Howells
Tami Echevarria Robinson
Anna Shelton
Tony Wilson

WLA Executive Director
Kate Laughlin

WLA Assistant Director
Emily Jones

"Alki," a Native American word meaning "by and by," was suggested by Nancy Pryor, Special Collections at Washington State Library, as the title for the Washington Library Association's journal. "Alki" is also the state motto, signifying a focus on the future.

Alki (ISSN: 8756-4173) is published online three times per year in March, July, and November.

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.

Direct your submission queries to:
Frank Brasile
EMAIL: alkieditor@wla.org

Cover attribution: Saul Herrera, iStock
Design: Sonya Kopetz, KB design



Up Front

Making a Mistake May Lead to Teflon!..... 3
By Brianna Hoffman

From the Editor

Failures, Foibles and Flops..... 4
By Frank Brasile

Feature: Mistakes Were Made

What Happens in Storytime...Tales of Storytime Disasters..... 5
By Sheri Boggs

Software Migration Gone Wrong; or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Finance Department..... 6
By Lola Estelle

Failing Together Draws Us Closer: A Social Service Agency Resource Fair..... 9
By Steven Bailey and Chanteal Craft

The Greatest Stories Never Told..... 11
By Kris Becker

Confessions of a Rookie Supervisor 12
By Anna Shelton

Mental Note: Even "Library" Is Too Much Library Terminology for Non-Librarians14
By Kathy Watts

A Bumpy Road to a Smooth Service for Readers 16
By Linda Johns

Failed Innovations 17
By Tony Wilson

A Few Things I've Learned..... 18
By Darcy Brixey and Brianna Hoffman

Articles

Local Stage, Global Impact: Susan Hildreth and the Future of Public Libraries.. 19
By Frank Brasile

Health Information for Older Adults 21
By Carolyn Martin

Library Science... Evolution..... 22
By Marcy Howells

Tales of an Unexpected Librarian..... 23
By Alpha DeLap

Read This Book! News and Opinions by Teacher-Librarians

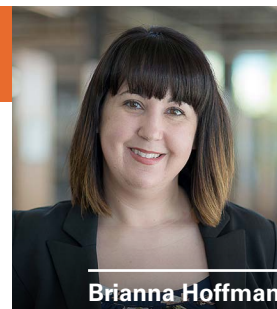
Buyer Beware..... 24
By Puget Sound Council for Review of Children's and Young Adult Literature

I'd Rather Be Reading

Mistakes Make Great Reads 26
By Robin Bradford

Dispatches from Swellville

New Programs for the New Year..... 28
By Darcy McMurtery



Brianna Hoffman

Making a Mistake May Lead to Teflon!

by Brianna Hoffman

One of the things I like to do to unwind is watch television. I am a sucker for anything on National Geographic and the Travel Channel. One of the shows I particularly enjoy is “Mysteries at the Museum” hosted by Don Wildman. I am fascinated by relics and their history, and I am especially intrigued if that history includes a mystery. I also like how the objects get described on the show. On a recent episode, an object was described as being “approximately nine inches, by five and a half inches. It is made of paper and cloth.

On its yellowed pages are hand-written notes.” You are probably thinking that same thing I was: “It’s a notebook.” It turns out it was not just any notebook. It was the notebook that belonged to chemist Roy Plunkett, now on display at the Hagley Museum in Wilmington, Delaware.

Plunkett was a chemist for the Dupont Company in the 1930s. He was attempting to produce a stable gas that could be used safely in refrigerators – an exciting new technology at the time. In his experiments, instead of discovering a safe gas, he

discovered a solid substance. The substance didn’t bend or break. It didn’t melt. It didn’t corrode. Plunkett tried, but he could not find use for the substance. Plunkett’s experiment is deemed a failure.

It wouldn’t be until 20 years later that a use would be found for Plunkett’s substance. Mark Gregoire, a French engineer, bonds the substance to his wife’s cooking pan. Fast forward to the 1960s, and Teflon is all the rage in the American kitchen.

One reason this particular episode caught my attention was the idea of how something so remarkable can come from what was initially considered a failure. It is so easy to get caught up in what “failed” or the mistakes we make that we cannot see the opportunity beyond. I have a history of looking back on my mistakes with the idea that

“hindsight is 20/20,” or “shoulda woulda coulda.”

I can also say that I have tried to consciously strike those thoughts down when I feel like I’ve made a mistake. Instead of thinking “I should not have stayed in that position as long as I did,” or “I should have approached that conversation differently,” I try to shift my thinking to “What experience can I take from that position into the next one?” and “How can I do a better job of communicating

next time?” I do my best to look forward and learn from the mistakes rather than dwell on them. Mistakes and failure are powerful teaching tools. Allowing yourself space to have those failures is also a powerful thing. What you may perceive as your mistakes are just the next steps to getting it right.

As WLA President, I know I have made my share of mistakes. I have under-communicated, and I have over-communicated. I have made assumptions that turned out to be way off-base. I have stayed

quiet when I should have spoken up (as well as the opposite). I have also owned these mistakes, faced them, and let them help me grow to better serve the Association. There is no manual for this position, but there are people much smarter than me who have been my mentors and support system. That’s the other thing about mistakes. You are never alone when you’ve made them, even if you feel like you are.

Roy Plunkett was eventually inducted into the National Inventor’s Hall of Fame. Don Wildman finished off the “Mysteries at the Museum” episode by saying “a wrong turn in the science lab made life in the kitchen a lot less sticky.” Next time you feel like you’ve made a mistake, or you’re in a sticky situation, just think. You could be on your way to inventing your own version of Teflon. 📖

“ Mistakes and failure are powerful teaching tools. Allowing yourself space to have those failures is also a powerful thing. What you may perceive as your mistakes are just the next steps to getting it right. ”

Brianna Hoffman is a Project Coordinator for OCLC/ WebJunction and serving as the current WLA President, 2016/2017.



Failures, Foibles and Flops

by Frank Brasile

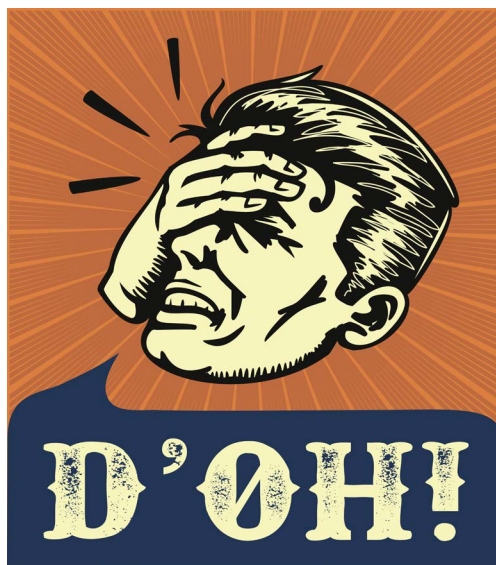
Each year, the Alki Editorial Board meets at the WLA annual conference to brainstorm themes for the next year's issues. When a board member proposed the topic "Mistakes Were Made," the entire board went "ooh, that's a good one!" I was convinced that I would be overwhelmed with stories of the comical, infuriating but always instructive failures we experience all the time. Instead, I mostly heard...crickets.

That was my mistake.

While I'm thrilled to present an array of articles about mistakes, messes and misjudgments, I must admit that I was surprised that the response was far less than I had expected. What was it about the theme that didn't resonate strongly with our members? Are we too afraid to admit our mistakes? Do we fear reprisals for fessing up to our failures? Or, as one member put it, do we not make significant errors because we don't take significant risks in our jobs? Whatever the case may be, I hope you find the stories from our colleagues to be as instructive as the authors themselves found them to be, since learning from mistakes leads to better planning, improved services and happier employees.

Public programs can be unpredictable, and Sheri Boggs shares stories of storytimes gone awry (p. 5) while Steven Bailey and Chanteal Craft describe an underwhelming program to promote social services (p. 9) and Kris Becker discusses the planning and expectations for a community storytelling series of events (p. 11). Technology is a familiar face where failure is concerned, and Lola Estelle revisits a software migration that didn't fly (p. 6) while Tony Wilson recalls some pre-computer innovations that died due to lack of support (p. 17). Linda Johns considers a failure of a different kind – when something is so successful it's unsustainable – in delivering a personalized reading service to readers (p. 16) while Kathy Watts revisits a conference presentation that didn't

connect with attendees (p. 14). And you can read lots of practical advice from Anna Shelton that she learned on the job as a rookie supervisor (p. 12) and words of wisdom from WLA President Brianna Hoffman and Past President Darcy Brixey (p. 18).



This issue doesn't stop at mistakes. Find out more about Susan Hildreth, who returns to Washington after a four-year stint in the "other" Washington as the University of Washington iSchool's first Professor of Practice (p. 19) while Marci Howells considers the challenges of teaching information literacy standards in the 21st century (p. 22). Carolyn Martin provides resources of health information for older adults (p. 21) and Alpha DeLap recalls her journey from aspiring poet to teacher-librarian (p. 23).

Be sure to check out Brianna Hoffman's eloquent essay on the value of mistakes in *Up Front* (p. 3), and the Puget Sound Council for the Review of Children's and Young Adult Literature turn a critical eye towards five books for children and young

adults that gave them pause (p. 24). Robin Bradford steps in to discuss how mistakes make for great reads in three books for adults in *I'd Rather Be Reading* (p. 27). And you'll have the last laugh with the latest installment in *Alki's* new humor column, *Dispatches from Swellville* (p. 30).

I hope that the mistakes and that are featured in this issue are thought-provoking and lead you to ponder your own mistakes. Look beyond the failure and discover the valuable lessons to be learned. 📖

See you next time,

Frank

Frank Brasile is a selection services librarian with The Seattle Public Library and editor of Alki.

What Happens in Storytime...Tales of Storytime Disasters

by Sheri Boggs

There's a strange and wondrous alchemy that happens when you throw together small children, picture books, a song or two, and good intentions. No, I'm not talking about a successful Storytime (although sometimes that's what happens), but the other kind of Storytime. I'm talking about Storytimes where kids cry, puppets betray you, parents give each other looks, and the book you're reading has a giant butt in it (but you didn't realize it because you didn't preview any of your selections). Gather around, friends, it's time to celebrate Storytime disasters.

But first, I must share my own tale. As a brand new youth services librarian charged with Toddler Time, I thought it would be fun to pair a "My Body" themed Storytime with a craft where the kids would lie down on big pieces of paper to be traced by a parent or caregiver. So out came the markers and craft paper and as the parents glanced at each other and rolled up their sleeves, I immediately realized my mistake. Toddlers are really, really wriggly. Not only that, there is nothing more attractive to them than an uncapped marker. As the parents tried to trace their rolling, giggling, thrashing young, the toddlers made uncoordinated lunges at the markers while I ineptly read another story. "I think they're too young," one mom helpfully offered when it was mercifully all over and she was carrying her bewildered, ink-striped child away. I decided that day to never again plan a toddler craft involving markers and/or stillness.

Some Storytime elements, like my misguided Toddler Time craft, fall under the heading of "Know Your Audience." Nancy Schutz was a youth services librarian with Timberland Regional Library when she learned the hard way that preschool audiences are at an age where they take their puppet sidekicks very seriously.

"I'd go around and have the puppet taste their fingers and try to guess what they had for breakfast," says Schutz. "So there was this



one little girl, and I'm having the puppet taste her finger and I'm trying to guess every breakfast food I can think of. Finally I ask her mom and she tells me she had liverwurst."

"They were a German family. And I hate liverwurst so I bunched up the puppet's face and said, 'Yuck. Ptooey!' like it was spitting something out. I thought it was funny but the next week they come in and I'm doing the puppet thing again. I get to her and ask if her breakfast was liverwurst and her mom goes 'oh no, she won't eat it anymore.' Not only that, years later I was doing a Booktalk at the middle school and a young woman comes up to me and says, 'Do you remember me? I'm the liverwurst baby!'

Her family was still telling that story."

While doing Storytime for the Spokane County Library District, Kathryn Illback (now with Spokane Public Library) once filled in for a colleague without knowing anything about that Storytime's usual audience.

"I brought a birthday-themed selection of books and flannels with me," she says, "and three out of the five families in attendance were Jehovah's Witnesses." (For those not in the know, Jehovah's Witnesses do not celebrate religious holidays or birthdays).

Other times, well-meaning Storytime providers can be hamstrung by their texts. Treasure Samuel was a student librarian with the Seattle Public Library when she was asked to cover a sick colleague's Storytime with 20 minutes notice. "I grabbed some books sight unread and went for it," she writes. "But I was puzzled by why one of the books — *Where is Baby's Belly Button* by Karen Katz — seemed incomplete. I found out later that it was a lift-the-flap book, but since it was a new copy I found in the back, I couldn't tell that there were any flaps. No wonder the parents were giving each other confused side eye! SO embarrassing!"

If you think these kinds of things only happen to youth services folks, think again. It's even happened to David Wright, a seasoned

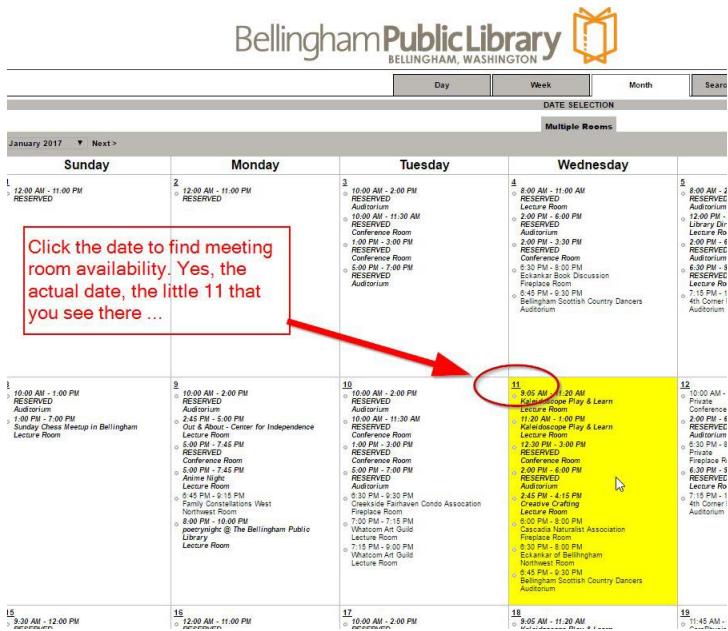
Sheri Boggs, a Spokane County Library youth collection development librarian, also blogs for the library. She is the chair of the Alki Editorial Committee.

continued on page 8

Software Migration Gone Wrong; or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Finance Department

by Lola Estelle

Last year I took a position with a mid-sized municipal public library, after working for ten years in the private sector for a vendor of library software. I came back to the public library world imbued with a sense of purpose — the mission of the public library is something I can fully support, while the corporate world isn't as known for fulfilling one's desire for 'right livelihood' — and with an inside perspective of how to work with vendors to get the maximum return-on-investment for their services and products. Outside of my professional goals, I came with a keen desire to prove myself and feel well-liked by my new colleagues, being "the new kid at school" in a library where the average job tenure was a decade or two and then some. This is a story of how my skills and enthusiasm got me off to a rocky start on a big project because I failed to first consider what makes the world go round ... money!



Screenshot from Bellingham Public Library's reservation software

As the person in charge of technology at my new library, I quickly learned that one of our systems was a legacy version that wouldn't be supported by the vendor much longer. The system in question, provided by Evanced Solutions, is a combined event calendar/room

Lola Estelle is Head of Information and Digital Resources for the Bellingham Public Library.

reservation solution that uses a year-2000-looking user interface and has an end-user experience that is clunky at best. Let's just say that if you have to provide documentation and follow-up phone calls to show patrons how to do a task as seemingly simple as reserving a meeting room, then your room reservation software isn't the greatest. ("Click on the date. No, the actual number of the date. That's right, the numeral itself, not just the square on the calendar.") However, Evanced's new event calendar/room reservation software offers a modern, intuitive user interface (optimized for mobile!), a wider range of customization options, easy-to-use reporting features, and all the other good stuff we expect in the year 2017. Best of all, the vendor confirmed that migration to the new platform was possible at any time and at no cost. All I had to do was say the word, and the vendor would migrate all of our current event and room reservation data to the new platform, then pull the plug on this old lemon that my co-workers and patrons had lived with for so long. I wanted to rescue them! To use a bit of corporate parlance, this was just the type of "low hanging fruit" that I was looking for to prove my mettle and start solving problems in my new job.

In my previous job as an implementation specialist for a discovery platform, I had often encountered client libraries that were eligible to upgrade to a new version, and yet would drag their feet and resist migration continuing to use an older, buggy version of a product until truly forced to migrate at the tail end of the product's lifecycle. "Why not be more agile?" I wondered about these client libraries. "Why not blast through the perceived bureaucracy and slow-moving nature of the public sector, and act now?" So I decided to be the change I wanted to see in the world. Even though there were other, bigger, technology projects coming up soon at my new library, I was sure that there was no reason not to get started on the Evanced migration immediately and begin happily working within the shiny new platform in, oh gosh, six weeks max.

So I shifted into full-on project management mode to plan and implement the migration. I wrote up a Project Charter, Project Plan, and a task list. I met individually with staff who regularly interacted with the software to document their workflows and pain points. I dove into the vendor's migration documentation and attended their migration webinars (then rewatched the recordings to make sure I understood everything). I set up a trial environment for the new software and user accounts for the staff members who

continued on next page

would be using it. I scheduled a kick-off meeting with all affected staff to demonstrate the new products and begin training staff on using the sleek-looking new platform. The initial feedback was positive as staff enthusiastically began exploring and testing the new software.

But as the staff's self-paced training progressed, we found a fatal flaw. The new version of the software lacks a functionality that is too trivial to be called out in the vendor's migration documentation, yet is key to our library's payment processing workflow for room reservations. How can I say "fatal flaw" and "trivial" about the same functionality? Well, the particular functionality is important to us, being a library that charges for meeting room use — but as I've since learned, there aren't many libraries who charge for that service, so it makes sense that the vendor doesn't call a lot of attention to this in their documentation.

Specifically — Evanced's legacy software generates a confirmation number when a patron makes a meeting room reservation. In my library's local workflow, the patron then refers to this confirmation number when submitting payment for the room, to accurately match the payment to the reservation. Simultaneously, when the patron pays for the reservation, our point-of-sale system (administered by the City's Finance department and shared by all city departments that accept payments) generates a transaction number. The confirmation number generated by our Evanced system is matched up with the transaction number generated by the City's Finance system, allowing us to provide the needed checks and balances required by the Finance auditors. Our Meeting Room Coordinator tracks these two numbers in a spreadsheet for auditors, who can (and do!) drop in at any time.

Well, we discovered through attempting to duplicate this workflow in the new software that unlike the legacy version, the new version does not generate a confirmation number for a room reservation. At first this didn't seem insurmountable to me, but when staff further

explained the implications of this, the sounds of squealing brakes reverberated throughout my cranium.

How was I going to solve this? Thinking there must be an elegant solution, I spoke with several library systems that both use the new version of Evanced's software and charge for meeting room use. They all achieve this by generating an invoice number at the time of booking. The invoice number that they create is then essentially the "confirmation number" that Evanced's legacy software creates — the identifier that their patrons use when making payments, and that their finance departments use in reconciling these payments with what shows up in the financial transaction logs. (Cold-calling

public libraries to ask about the minutia of their accounting practices is something everyone should try at least once.)

In our current practice, my library does not generate invoices for room reservations — we simply take the confirmation number generated by the software and use that for our internal identifier. Therefore, the new version of the software could not be used with our current payment processing/tracking workflow. So, we could either cancel the migration, or revise our workflow to begin generating our own confirmation numbers.

After already investing considerable time and energy into planning the migration, in addition to the time of a half dozen staff members who had already been training themselves on the new platform, I was hesitant to cancel the migration. On the other hand, I felt ill-prepared to lead library staff in coming up with an entirely

new workflow that would allow them to generate confirmation numbers — considering that I am not their direct supervisor, that the current workflow has been in place for a zillion years, and that staff are still adapting to several other recent organizational and system-related changes. And I definitely felt ill-prepared to take on the political work of approaching the City's Finance department and asking them to work with me in finding an alternate way to audit this revenue. I weighed the pros and cons and even tried my hand at "thinking outside of the box" ("Wait — can't we just stop

“ All I had to do was say the word, and the vendor would migrate all of our current event and room reservation data to the new platform, then pull the plug on this old lemon that my co-workers and patrons had lived with for so long. I wanted to rescue them! To use a bit of corporate parlance, this was just the type of 'low hanging fruit' that I was looking for to prove my mettle and start solving problems in my new job. ”

charging for meeting rooms?!) but I ultimately realized there was no way I could zig this zag within the very tight timeline that I'd so confidently laid out in the project plan.

Feeling embarrassed that I had flubbed my first big project and wasted the time of staff who had already jumped feet-first into the new system, I cancelled the migration. "Sorry, everyone!" I wrote in an email peppered equally with smiley and frowny emoticons. My implementation contact at Evanced played the role of therapist, validating my choice to cancel the migration by assuring me over email that it is "totally okay not to migrate at this time." The subtext of her email was not at all lost on me — other libraries have failed to consider some small but important piece of workflow when migrating, and both the client library and the Evanced support team have suffered for it later. (Librarians, be kind to your vendors' support teams.)

So! What's next? Since the legacy version of the software will only be supported until the end of 2017, we can't stay with the status quo for long. There are several options for how we can move forward, including a) moving to a different software solution that meets the requirements for our existing payment tracking workflow; b) moving to Evanced's new platform as planned, and revising our workflow to account for the lack of an auto-generated confirmation number; or c) or completely reconsidering our practice of charging for meeting room use, and then moving to either Evanced's new platform (or something else) without the complicating requirement of supporting a payment tracking workflow.

Or just maybe, d) Evanced will enhance their new software to generate a confirmation number for a room reservation, like their legacy system does now — but as they are now offering their own payment processing solution for an additional subscription rate, I think that's not likely to happen.

My library dodged a bullet by finding an unsupported workflow before, rather than after, a system migration and I'm thankful to the staff members who found the fatal flaw. The lesson learned for me is to immediately consider the impact to my city's finance department when planning any new technology initiative that involves taking payments. Another lesson is that I must practice radical acceptance around the fact that public organizations are not always as nimble as software companies — for those of us who work in public libraries, other government departments and agencies play a role in everything that we do, especially when it comes to money.

Anybody know a good event calendar/room reservation system that generates confirmation numbers for room reservations? Give me a call! 📞

adult reader's advisory pro whose Thrilling Tales program at Seattle Public Library regularly pulls in the downtown office lunch crowd.

"The most 'exciting' botch-up I ever had with my Thrilling Tales program was when I was reading a very cleverly-plotted suspense story by a writer named Jack Ritchie," Wright says, adding that Ritchie isn't very well known by today's standards, but in his own day was renowned for carefully constructed, "droll tales often involving husbands plotting to murder their wives, wives plotting to murder their husbands, or not infrequently, both at once."

"So I was reading this story - as per usual - some title along the lines of 'Anyone for Murder?' - and I turn the page, and ... the sentence doesn't scan. It fails to make sense. Then I realize that I've skipped a page, and so I turn back. Nope - no page skipped. I must have put them in my binder out of order (I read from a photocopy). Quickly riffling through the pages (all this in mid-sentence, mind you) reveals that no - I have simply left a page out. A page just a couple of pages from the ending, with lots and lots of details."

Wright says that there was no other choice but to confess to his audience and try to reconstruct the missing page from memory. He also says that ever since that day, he checks and rechecks his pages for every story he plans to read.

These tales of Storytime gone wrong all raise an important point — mistakes are often effective and memorable teachers. When things don't go as planned you inevitably learn such truisms as "know your audience," "know your material," and "have a back-up plan." But some Storytimes just won't go well no matter what you do. And those are the ones that become great stories in their own right.

"I've always had trouble with left and right, so of course I thought I'd do a "Left and Right" Storytime," says Schutz, adding that the Storytime was designed for a big daycare group. "Since I was facing them, I knew I'd have to I'd reverse everything I was doing. So I'm reading this book on left and right and doing all the motions and I see the teachers looking at each other, and their shoulders are shaking and I'm wondering what's going on. Afterwards I ask one of them if [reversing the motions] worked and she said to me, 'you didn't get a single one right. In fact we've been working on left and right for a year and you just undid a year's worth of work!' 📖

Failing Together Draws Us Closer: A Social Service Agency Resource Fair

by Steven Bailey and Chanteal Craft

One of the greatest areas of impact for public libraries is providing free, high-quality programming, for all age levels, on various topics and areas of interest. Often, these programs are offered in direct response to the needs of a library's community. We work in Auburn, a community in South King County where homelessness, joblessness, and substance abuse issues are at the forefront of evident community needs. We often have patrons ask our library staff about housing, community meals, shelters and discount bus passes. The needs are apparent.

Our community is also blessed with several agencies providing services in these "basic needs" categories. But the geographic realities of our community are such that service agencies are scattered across several miles, often far from the library, parks, low-income housing and makeshift campsites where our neediest community members congregate.

So how can the library help to bring local service agencies together with patrons in need?

In the fall of 2015 we set out to provide a monthly library-based resource fair where local service providers could come to the library and provide

their services to patrons. Great idea, right?! Auburn was the second library in our library system to provide this program, which we called Community Discovery Days. We gained valuable insight from the staff who started the program at our sister location in Redmond, and then we added some of our own variations to better suit our local needs. We chose our program dates to correspond our monthly Mobile Medical Van service in the library parking lot. We also scheduled the event in the hours before a nearby free community dinner.

Steven Bailey is a library services manager and Chanteal Craft is an adult services librarian. Both are with King County Library System.

To get the word out, we advertised by posting unique, eye-catching flyers around town; adding the event to the library's monthly print calendar; adding a listing on the city's online calendar, as well as the community events calendar of our local newspaper; providing publicity to our service agency partners to distribute through their networks; and letting our patrons know personally, encouraging them to spread the word.

“The day came for the first Community Discovery Days. We had representatives from nearly a dozen different service providers on hand. The tables looked amazing! Many providers brought tablecloths, displays, giveaways, and had pamphlets with their resources. But the kickoff event drew only a handful of patrons.”

We tried to think through all the program details as well, lining up library staffing and the meeting room reservations, of course, but also providing refreshments, optimizing the room setup for maximum "flow" from table to table, grouping similar agencies together, and even creating unique signage for each agency, listing a few bullet points of what the agency did, so that patrons could easily see what was available to them.

The day came for the first Community Discovery Days. We had representatives from nearly a dozen different service providers on hand. The tables looked amazing! Many providers brought tablecloths, displays, giveaways, and had

pamphlets with their resources. But the kickoff event drew only a handful of patrons.

What went wrong? Our meeting room is towards that back of our library, so visibility may have been an issue. We also noticed that as patrons approached they seemed intimidated by all attention they were getting. We tried one more Community Discovery Days event in the meeting room the following month, and again had low patron participation. For subsequent months, we moved the event to the main seating area of the library, to reduce the barrier of having to walk through a door into a room full of strangers. Patrons seemed less intimidated, but there was still little participation.

continued on next page

We took a break over the summer months to evaluate the program. Unfortunately, the low patron participation did not seem to warrant having upwards of 15 service providers (often two or three representatives from each agency) come to the library each month for the three-hour event. It was very disappointing that Community Discovery Days was not the success we were hoping it would be, especially because there seemed to be such a need for patrons to be able to learn about and access their community resources.

While Community Discovery Days didn't bring in crowds of patrons, there were several positive benefits that have lasted even now, nearly a year after our first event. Most notably, the program strengthened relationships between the library and area social service agencies. Months before our kickoff, we began contacting service providers, many of whom the library already had been in contact with before; a few of whom were contacted for the first time. For the service providers the library already had contact with, it was valuable to renew partnerships. Many service providers had new staff members, so while they knew that their organization had contacts with the library, it was that staff member's first time working with us, as it also was for us. We now have an updated list of local service providers with current staff names, emails, and phone numbers, which has been an invaluable resource for the library.

Community Discovery Days also increased relationship building and information sharing between the participating agencies. Many of the service agencies shared information about their services and initiatives while they were tabling at our monthly event. They shared pamphlets, talked about their services, and traded contact information. And they began sharing this information with their own clients, to better connect individuals with resources.

Finally, the program series gave us a better understanding of potential barriers with regards to our library's meeting room. While the meeting room is a comfortable and flexible meeting space for large groups, it was a bit cramped with tables from so many different organizations. For this type of program targeting marginalized or at-risk communities, the resource fair setup in a small space was likely a barrier to participation, as patrons would have to enter a closed room where all eyes faced the door. And the location of the meeting room in the rear corner of the building

“It’s never easy to accept a failed program. As librarians, we want so desperately to help our patrons improve their lives, and want them to have the easiest access to information.”

made the event less visible for walk-in patrons who had no prior knowledge of the program, lessening patron engagement despite program promotion via overhead public address announcements and a poster at the front of the building. These “physical space” barriers forced us to rethink our programming approach, keeping the perspective of the intended audience in the forefront.

It’s never easy to accept a failed program. As librarians, we want so desperately to help our patrons improve their lives, and want them to have the easiest access to information. For Community Discovery Days, we tried to bridge the gap between patrons and service providers. Despite not having Community Discovery Days, we now have a list of community resources for future programming or patron referrals. We gained new partnerships, and reestablished some old ties, with our local service providers. And we fostered information sharing between the agencies in our community. Those are notable successes, if not our original goals. On to the next great idea! 📖

Learn Local! Regional Days of Learning

Learn Local! is a new approach to conferences that WLA is offering in the form of three separate, one-day events:

- April 7, 2017 | Seattle Public Library, Seattle
- April 28, 2017 | Yakima Valley College, Yakima
- April 29, 2017 | Spokane Public Library, Spokane

Register online at wla.org

The Greatest Stories Never Told

by Kris Becker

This tale begins with my introduction and subsequent addiction to podcasts. I began my journey by downloading all kinds of recommended shows... *TED Radio Hour*, *Serial*, *This American Life*, *99% Invisible*, *What Should I Read Next?* and to round out my NPR showcase, *StoryCorps*. I ran through *Serial* like I didn't have work to do. *What Should I Read Next* is always great for making certain I've bought some of the popular and most recent books hitting the market. But it was *StoryCorps* that got my attention.

StoryCorps' mission is "to preserve and share humanity's stories in order to build connections between people and create a more just and compassionate world." I enjoyed listening to people's stories, and even more, I thought it was an incredible idea. When I looked at their website, I was amazed at how

many ways StoryCorps records stories. There were booths across the country where you could go to have a conversation with a mother, brother or friend and put it down in the history books. There were stories that made me laugh until I cried and there were stories that just made me cry. I learned to avoid listening to podcasts in the car.

My trouble began when I discovered the app that allows people to tell their stories, in their own locations and upload them to the StoryCorps website for inclusion in the American Folklife Center. The wheels in my mind began to turn. Storytelling is a popular form of entertainment in Jefferson County. Could there be a program that's more tailor-made for my community? Our program manager was looking to fill some gaps in the schedule in September, so I went to her with an idea. She told me to run with it and I did. September was going to be StoryCorps for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

I thought it would be fun to have our own "StoryCorps" booth set up with the app on a library tablet, a person to moderate the sessions, and a quiet space reserved for the stories to be told. I reserved our smaller meeting room for two full days and made a schedule, allowing for seven sessions each day. I excitedly put the sign-up sheet on a clipboard and placed it at the info desk,

“Storytelling is a popular form of entertainment in Jefferson County. Could there be a program that’s more tailor-made for my community?”

just in case people heard about it early (Wishful thinking on my part). And wouldn't it be great to have a program that introduced patrons to StoryCorps? I started putting together a multi-media presentation of stories from their podcasts, animated shorts and live performances by StoryCorps participants. I cruised through the StoryCorps website looking for just the right stories; it was hard to pick just a few that would be in the hour-long presentation. My supervisor suggested a theme and that made it easier, but there were

still so many!! I cultivated the perfect stories that would resonate with the community. There was one more idea percolating in my brain: what about using the StoryCorps app for one of our tech classes on Tuesdays?? It fit within the framework of the class and I would already know all there was from having sat in on some interviews and scouring

the StoryCorps website. Four programs from one idea; how could anything go wrong?

Did I mention our marketing did a fantastic job getting the word out? The flyers looked fabulous and explained all the pertinent information. We had called it "Community Stories." There were bookmarks, flyers around town and a great write up in the local paper. Because of this marvelous marketing, we were contacted by ALA to write up the Community Stories program. Wow!! Had I died and gone to librarian heaven?? I was ready for the phone to ring off the hook and fill up those reserved spaces for storytelling.

If you're anything like me, then you know I was constantly checking that clipboard to see if anyone new had signed up. Crickets. And then more crickets. Maybe I hadn't gotten the wording right, maybe I didn't convey how cool this was or maybe I assumed my community would be as excited about StoryCorps as I am... But I wasn't alone. Most everyone I worked with thought it would go over like gangbusters. Alright, maybe they didn't want to tell their stories, but they still wanted to hear stories about people from all over the world including our backyard. The multimedia event was first and I wasn't going to let the single (yes, one person) sign-up get me down. We practiced reading our stories, I then timed just right to fit in the time allotted. I thought maybe, just maybe after hearing the stories, it would spark some excitement and the reservations

Kris Becker is the Acquisitions Librarian at the Jefferson County Library.

continued on page 15

Confessions of a Rookie Supervisor

by Anna Shelton

About ten months ago, my whole life changed. I became a supervisor. I showed up to the first day of my new job with a heaping measure of humility. Going in, I knew there would be buckets to learn. What I couldn't have guessed was how many mistakes I would repeat from earlier in my life that I thought I only needed to learn once.

Riding a bike three miles with a 25-lb bag of carrots is a bad idea.

While grocery shopping by bicycle as a new college student, I once bought a giant bag of juicing carrots, confident that I could pedal them home if I just took my time. Carrots balanced on the handlebars, it took me a half-hour to wobble a half-mile. I realized how ridiculous it was and called a friend with a truck to rescue me. As a new supervisor, I

sometimes fall into a trap of thinking that I should deal with an issue on my own for expediency, rather than enlisting help from my busy staff. Attempting on my own tasks that by their nature require a team wastes precious time. Perhaps more importantly, it deprives my colleagues a meaningful opportunity to contribute, and unintentionally sends a message that my employees have only themselves to rely on. It's better to just ask for help.

Is it a cougar or is it a squirrel?

Sleeping out under the stars on a bluff near Cle Elum with no tent, my partner and I simultaneously felt the sudden, unmistakable presence of an animal we could not see, leaping high into a tree above us. Heart pounding, I whispered, "do you think it's a squirrel?" and tried to ignore a visceral sensation that we were prey. My partner convinced me otherwise, and we packed quickly and hiked back to the car. Upon reaching the road, our flashlight beam reflected off the eyes of a cougar that had tracked us silently and

invisibly for three-quarters of a mile. As a supervisor, I find that I must constantly determine, based on incomplete information, whether an issue is a top priority that needs to be addressed immediately (cougar); or just seems urgent but is more of a distraction (squirrel). It's dangerous to minimize a cougar, and it's exhausting to move camp for every squirrel. As a new supervisor,

everything can feel like an emergency. I'm working to pause and ask myself: is this something that must be dealt with now, or can I continue with what I was doing and deal with this later?

Spilled milk will only smell worse tomorrow.

When I worked for the Girl Scouts, I brought mobile programs to apartment complexes and community centers. One sweltering summer day, while driving

around the county making ice cream, a half-gallon of milk exploded inside the trunk of my car. Discovering this sad fact when hot and tired at the end of the day, I did the basics to clean it up and assumed the rest would just evaporate. Two days later, the stench was so bad that strangers walking within 50 feet of my car wondered aloud "what's that terrible smell?" When Jim Michalko retired from OCLC, his departing gift was a lifetime of professional advice distilled down to fit on the card from a library card catalogue. Among Jim's invaluable tips is "Do hard things first." I think about this every day as a supervisor. No matter how hard something may seem today, left unaddressed it will probably be just as hard or harder tomorrow.

Don't say no to live music.

Every time I see live music, I tell myself that I will go to more concerts, because live music makes me feel alive. I ask myself: why don't I do this more often? As a supervisor, I feel energized when I have opportunities to engage directly with the public we serve. Much of my work involves planning, schedules, and emails; I value these tasks and recognize their importance. But I am better at my

“ Seeing a child’s face when she programs her first bit of code; hearing an elder say books give him access to the world he can no longer get out of bed to visit — these moments provide inspiration that fuels me for months. ”

Anna Shelton is a senior librarian at the Pierce County Library System.

continued on next page

job when I am deeply inspired by the impact of libraries and our staff teams in action. Seeing a child's face when she programs her first bit of code; hearing an elder say books give him access to the world he can no longer get out of bed to visit – these moments provide inspiration that fuels me for months. Though it's hard to step away from deadlines, it's a mistake to go too long without interacting with the public my organization serves.

Stay in touch with your friends.

In college, I lived in rural Nicaragua for a year. I developed strong relationships with my host families and community members. Two years later, I went back to the same town. I was startled by how much had changed in my Nicaraguan friends' lives years: cell phones had arrived, friends had their first children, and community politics had shifted. I resolved to do a better job in the future at maintaining long-distance relationships. Starting out as a first-time supervisor is all-consuming. When I get home at the end of the day, it can be challenging to prioritize another hour on the computer to connect with former library colleagues now scattered around the world.

But when I look up after my first 10 months on the job, I realize that I must do more to deliberately nurture my broader professional network. Not tending to one's network is a mistake I should be particularly sensitive to making, since my focus for several years was building and strengthening peer networks for library learning. No matter how strong or creative one's own organization is, I have seen firsthand that taking time to cross-pollinate and connect with others in different organizations and geographic locations can lead to transformational breakthroughs and shared solutions.

Building a fire on the beach during a winter storm is hard enough; don't also plan to cook on it.

I once had a birthday party where I invited all my friends to a park on the ocean for a nighttime bonfire in February. It was raining sideways and it took forever to get the fire going. Shrimp and vegetable kabobs, roasted on the fire, were gritty in our teeth from sand flying in the wind. I sometimes ask my staff to do things that are as challenging as starting a fire in a windstorm. I am beginning

to learn that how well I scope a project at the beginning can make a huge difference in how pleasant or frustrating their experience is. It's tempting to try and tackle everything at once, but I'm finding that it's pretty much always better to keep things simple, even if that means arriving initially at only partial solutions.


Bring the right map.

On a backpacking trip to Mt. Rainier, my family brought three different maps with us. Each map showed part of our route, which we elected instead of buying a new map that showed the whole route all on one page.

Throughout the trip, we were constantly interpreting distance across three different map scales. Because of these difficulties, our last day ended up being 16 miles instead of the 6 miles we had calculated. As a supervisor, I recently realized I need to develop a better map for my team – a clear set of team goals to achieve in the year ahead. My organization already has a strong strategic framework. But it's my job to help my team understand where we need to get this year, and what that journey will require from each of us.

“There will be mistakes. Lots of them. Failure is how we find our way to success. If we as supervisors aren't gentle with ourselves when we make mistakes, if we as supervisors don't assume we will fail – and then learn and grow – how can we ask our staff to do the same?”

In talking with friends inside and outside of libraries, I've come to find that self-doubt is normal among supervisors, even for people who have been managers for a long time. Fellow newbies, don't allow your mistakes to pull you into thinking that you are not experienced enough or smart enough, a mindset referred to as imposter syndrome. Use your support network. Three things have been particularly helpful to me: 1) Making the most of dedicated one-on-one time with my supervisor each week to ensure I'm focusing on the right priorities; 2) Participating in my organization's innovative onboarding process for supervisors and managers, which helped me understand supervisor expectations and develop a shared vocabulary; and 3) Trusting my staff and myself.

There will be mistakes. Lots of them. Failure is how we find our way to success. If we as supervisors aren't gentle with ourselves when we make mistakes, if we as supervisors don't assume we will fail – and then learn and grow – how can we ask our staff to do the same? 

Mental Note: Sometimes Even “Library” Is Too Much Library Terminology for Non-Librarians

by Kathy Watts

“Information has value, and the right information has enormous value.”¹ So wrote author Neil Gaiman in a 2013 article affirming the importance of libraries and librarians. Like most librarians, I am thrilled when I hear someone outside the library profession expound on the virtues and significance of libraries. But my excitement at reading such support reveals an expectation that many outside the library community have a limited understanding of its worth. In the spirit of countering such unawareness of the value of libraries, last fall I presented a talk at a non-library academic conference. And it was a fail.

I was eager to share the many ways libraries can support diversity initiatives on college campuses, so I presented at a conference designed to help college administrators, faculty, and staff examine curricular and co-curricular ways to advance diversity and inclusion practices on campus. I framed my talk around select points from The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL's) Diversity Standards. I summarized research that demonstrates how libraries improve student retention and academic success, the ways implicit bias can creep into our instruction and our web sites, how our collections can engage students with the rich history of their own culture as well as uncover for them the contributions from other cultures. I prepared some interactivity and group discussions and... very few people came. So few, in fact, that my plan for several discussion groups quickly became a plan for a single discussion group, since there were just enough people there for just one. Small as it was, however, I enjoyed the more casual interaction allowed by a small group, and I tried not to feel awkward as I was videotaped presenting to a mostly empty room.

Afterward I wandered the halls and looked into some of the other presentation rooms. They were full. So much for my “No one comes to presentations right after lunch” rationale. It was time to examine why my talk missed the mark for the attendees. Why



didn't they come? I think it was because I used the word “library” in my talk title.

The campus roles of those who did attend my talk were revealing: they were faculty library liaisons, except for one attendee who was a publisher. In other words, most of the attendees already worked directly with the library on their campuses. Clearly, my title didn't communicate what I wished to communicate. My target audience were staff in student services, teaching faculty, diversity officers, anyone on a college campus concerned

about a student's whole college experience. Using the word “library” in the title was apparently the wrong hook to get people at a non-library conference to my talk. But that begs a few questions: Why did the attendees think the library wasn't relevant to them? Does this reveal a perceived library silo that still exists despite a library staff's best effort to eliminate it? Why would the library not be seen as an essential part of an important campus-wide issue?

My experience reinforced what I had discovered during my research preparing for the presentation: the majority of the research and writing on how libraries impact student retention and success, especially for underrepresented student groups, is found primarily in library literature. We librarians are presenting our important research to each other, and in so doing are providing ourselves with excellent evidence to present to stakeholders. However, the onus remains on us to disseminate that information – to university administrators, corporate boards, or local communities and voters. Librarians and library staff have made exceptional progress communicating our services, our stories, and our value to patrons. For some libraries, academic ones in particular, a challenge remains to communicate our essential and unique contribution to the campus environment, academic support, and individual student success.

Just last year ACRL developed a statement, with accompanying posters, on the value of academic libraries. The purpose of the

Kathy Watts is the Access Services Librarian at Whitworth University.

continued on next page

statement is telling: to assist librarians and library directors to develop the necessary “talking points,” based on research published in library literature, to communicate their value to academic leaders. Note that the statement is not aimed at potential patrons. It is aimed at academic librarians’ colleagues.² Similarly, ALA’s Libraries Transform campaign’s “main idea” is to focus “less about what they [libraries] have for people and more about what they do for and with people.”³ Both campaigns shift the description of the value of libraries from what we have to what we do, from “We have lots of information” to “We get you the right information.”

My conference talk would have been greatly improved if I’d thought through these two different advocacy campaigns. Part of my title was “making it personal,” attempting to communicate how our collections, service, signage, instruction, and web pages should, wherever possible, reflect the intellectual and cultural heritage of all our students. Where I failed was to make the presentation personal for the conference attendees: communicating to them how the library impacts their niche of campus. Even though I am conscious of limiting “library speak,” this experience brought home to me in a tangible way that, despite my best efforts, I am still often talking past those whom I most want to communicate with.

I’d love to make Mr. Gaiman’s statement my library’s motto, because it communicates succinctly a problem most people encounter – too much information of varying relevance – and immediately provides a solution – getting the right information the first time. Lots of information is something a library has; getting people the right information is something the library does for people. Communicating the difference is communicating the value, the importance, the impact of the library. 📖

Endnotes:

Gaiman, N. (2013, October 15). Why our future depends on libraries, reading and daydreaming. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2013/oct/15/neil-gaiman-future-libraries-reading-daydreaming>

Malenfant, K. (2016, August 1). ACRL issues statement for communicating library value to academic leaders. *ACRL Insider*. Retrieved from <http://www.acrl.ala.org/acrlinsider/archives/12257>

American Library Association. Libraries Transform Campaign. Retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/libraries-transform-campaign>

would come flying in.

The night of the multimedia event, I got the room set up and waited. A lot of people arrive fashionably late for programs, so I wasn’t nervous at the “15 minute to” mark. A couple showed up. Hooray!! We waited for a few minutes past the starting time and... that was the audience, two people. The show must go on, as they say. As the show went on, 3 more people showed up! The hard work paid off and the program went swimmingly, no technical difficulties, the audience was engaged and we had fun. There were three more programs and I still had high hopes.

After the big event, two people were signed up for interviews. I was looking forward to sitting down and listening to some stories. The day before the first interview, the patron cancelled. Now, with two programs done, I was starting to think this wasn’t a fit for the community I served, and I started to lose hope. The next program on the calendar was the tech program, showing patrons how to use the StoryCorps app. I wasn’t worried about the attendance at this program because we have faithful regulars who show up every week, sometimes not even knowing the topic. We had five people for the tech class. Had everyone in the county decided to take a vacation that week??? I was a bit distraught. With only one person signed up for an interview, I thought it would be my luck they would cancel. Or maybe I hoped for that instead, so this little mishap of a program would be over already.

The last day of interviews, the patron called up and asked to bump the time to accommodate the bus schedules. Ok, it’s still on, no worries. Five minutes past the appointment, no one. Ten minutes past, still no one. Fifteen minutes... she’s here. Woohoo!! I sat down with her and we began the interview. We laughed, we came close to tears and we swapped stories. It was amazing to connect with this stranger on so many levels. It was like listening to the podcast episodes, but so much better. This made it all worth it -- 40 minutes of communicating with someone about what was important to them and being willing to share their story with me and then the world.

After some months in the rear-view mirror, it’s still hard to tell what could have been done better, differently, or if it was just a dud. I’d like to try it again at some point, swap out stories, find a new location, build up the idea in the community more beforehand or form partnerships with other groups in the community. I grew by having this program and have a building block for even better programs next time. 📖

A Bumpy Road to a Smooth Service for Readers

by Linda Johns

For the past six years, The Seattle Public Library (SPL) has offered a thriving online readers advisory service providing readers five suggested books to try, hand-picked by a librarian just for them. Your Next 5 Books is powered by a team of real-life librarians (no algorithms here) delivering personalized reading suggestions to more than 8,000 people. But the road getting to an inviting online form for readers and a sustainable process for staff was a bit bumpy – because of success. And success, it turns out, can run a project into the ground.

Here's a brief look at what we did wrong, despite best intentions, and how we truly did learn from the mistakes we made.

Back in 2008, librarians in the Fiction Department at SPL quietly launched an online Personalized Reading List form on the library's website. Patrons would provide information on what they liked to read via a rather lengthy form, much of which was optional but still allowed people to talk as much as they wanted about what books and authors they liked, answering questions that were crafted to reveal appeal factors to readers advisory librarians. A few days later, that lucky patron would receive an email with an incredibly personalized reading list of at least twelve suggestions, complete with original annotations and a narrative explaining why each book was selected. Responses from readers were effusive and full of gratitude. Happy readers. Fulfilled librarians. Coworkers collaborating on helping readers and stretching their readers advisory skills every day.

Here's the downside: Each list took a librarian one to two hours. (To be honest, it always took me at least two hours to craft a list.) We had six librarians; 229 requests in five months. Internal work flow was impeded by our website structure and cumbersome internal processes. We couldn't market the service because we feared being too popular. We talk a lot about library secrets and how we all could do a better job marketing our services, yet here was a case where we purposefully buried a fantastic free library program. There simply wasn't enough staff to deliver quality service if there was an increased demand.

Linda Johns is a reader services librarian with The Seattle Public Library.

Just as quietly as we launched the program, we had to discontinue it after only five months.

Three years later, we were back. Here's what we did right in round two, building on mistakes of the past:



The Next 5 Books for a reader looking for character-driven "solid mysteries" with a strong setting, a mix of historical and contemporary, and perhaps a bit of humor.

Short form: We ask an open-ended question inviting patrons to tell us what they like to read, giving them the freedom to write as little or as much as they want. Much less intimidating than the original form.

Finite five: We advertise that we'll give you five books, and that's what we do. A list called Your Next 5 Books that contains 20 books doesn't fly. We hit on the sweet spot of offering five book suggestions, piggybacking on SPL's teen services librarians' successful "Take Five."

Better delivery system: Each list is created right in the catalog (SPL uses

Bibliocommons) making it easier for a patron to look at a book and decide whether to place a hold. The list is visible only if you have a direct link, ensuring patron confidentiality.

Shared workload: A team of librarians throughout the system work on lists for adults, teens and children.

Refine as we go: Aspects to the delivery and approach are continually being tweaked. Patron comments and feedback help shape the future of the service.

Six years later we're averaging more than 100 personalized reading lists per month, substantially more than we did in the first round, but this time it's a sustainable service that we're able to promote.

Would we have come up with Your Next 5 Books if we hadn't first tried the personalized reading list service that we had to abandon? Possibly. In fact, probably. But the information we garnered from the first effort proved that there was demand for such a service and gave us confidence that even if we limited book suggestions to five we'd still have happy readers who would come back for more. 📖

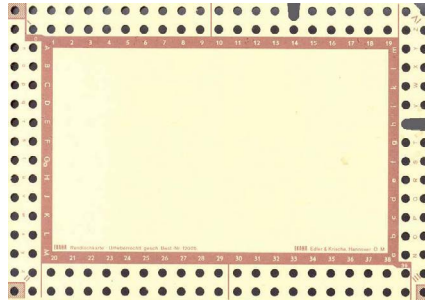
Failed Innovations

by Tony Wilson

Looking back at 40 years (50 if you count advisory and volunteer groups) of professional involvement in libraries, I can think of several mistakes that are no longer so painful as to preclude discussion. Many of those early mistakes, long before the internet, were attempts to improve access to information; they have now been transcended by technology. But even those from the days of the card catalog can be instructive today.

One of those mistakes was an attempt to provide coordinate indexing for a collection of several thousand slides, then housed in the audio-visual department at Highline Community College. Art instructors would assemble temporary groupings of slides for specific lectures. Before databases were widely available electronically, a key sort system was the best way to manually store and access data. Here's how it worked: an edge-notched card, or a McBee card, is a regular 5 x 8" card, except for the holes that make up its border. Each card represents a work of art, and each hole represents what we today call a facet – it can represent a creator (e.g., Monet), a subject (e.g., bridges), a location (e.g., France), a medium (e.g., oil), and so on. Using a special tool, notches are made in each hole that corresponds to that facet, indicating that the card for that art slide (in this case, Monet's *Bridge Over a Pond of Water Lilies*). To discover all the art slides that contain French paintings of bridges, the cards are stacked and a needle is threaded through the two relevant facets (location and subject); when the needles are lifted, the cards that were notched in the medium and subject facets fall away from the rest of the pile; the rest of the cards remain threaded through the needles. The cards that fell away are your results.

Since the department lacked the funds for a key sort system, I set up a system of ten-columned 5 x 8 cards. The slides were to be numbered, and a card would be created for each relevant facet. The number of the slide would be entered on each appropriate facet card filed in the column that matched the slide number's last digit. An instructor preparing a lecture on French bridges could pull those two facet cards and visually scan the columns for matching numbers, yielding a list of appropriate slides for the lecture. The idea was that



*A notched card showing two levels of notching.
By PeterFrankfurt at German Wikipedia
[Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons.*

we would use a Repronar¹ machine to duplicate the needed slides which the professor would then keep. See? I beat Google to it.

The project failed for two reasons: First, the college was uneasy about copyright violations with duplicating slides because many of the slides were from commercial sets. Second, by autumn I'd left the audio-visual department and gone back to the library, and was not there to help anyone use the system. The most influential users stated they couldn't understand the system and it

was discarded, leaving the slides grouped in whatever sequences they had arrived in.

Even when computers were widely available, I had great confidence in the beauty and functionality of the system, and set up something similar to catalog historic and current negatives for Highline's public relations department — commencements, building dedications, classrooms, students, etc. This time around, I used Microsoft Access to catalog the negatives. Facets included environment (e.g., outdoor), location (e.g. library), speakers (e.g. dignitaries), athletics (soccer), etc. But due to external factors, the project never saw the light of day, and I was never asked about the system again.

Other attempts to innovate failed as well. An attempt to catalog permanent vertical file items, in which student-assigned Library of Congress Subject Headings were used to color-code entries in the card catalog. So far as I can remember, no one ever found anything useful to themselves via those cards (although the early pamphlet on gold mining in the Swauk area of Central Washington did disappear). Another innovation that flopped involved color-coding in the catalog itself. We had colors for the various media; green for vertical file, orange and blue for other things (phono disks and films, probably), yellow for something. The effect was only to confuse the users who would come and ask us what a color meant, only to turn away in disappointment when they were given the meaning.

Why did these innovations, as creative as they were, fail? Was it a lack of support from users of the systems? Were the benefits not communicated strongly enough? Was the solution too complex to answer the questions at hand? Perhaps the beauty of these systems was, simply, in the eye of the beholder. 📖

Tony Wilson is retired from Highline Community College where he trained prospective library employees for forty years. He was WLA president 1981–1983. Currently he is president of the Des Moines/Woodmont Library Advisory Board (KCLS) and an emeritus member of WLA. He is currently working with the South King Tool Library.

¹These were made by Honeywell and can still be found on eBay. http://www.butkus.org/chinon/honeywell_repronar_805/honeywell_repronar.htm gets you to a user manual.

Things We've Learned

by Darcy Brixey and Brianna Hoffman

Things I've learned as WLA President: Darcy Brixey Edition

Some days you're the bird, and some days you're the statue

Knitting is a good stress reliever

Sometimes I'm wrong

Every complaint comes from a valid concern

People mean well

The road to hell is paved with good intentions

Don't believe everything you hear

Money ruins everything

Not everything is an emergency

Wait a full 24 hours, if you can, to send out an email

Write, rewrite, rewrite once more before sending anything

A different perspective is not wrong

Sometimes we inherit terrible problems

Always say thank you

Buy the shoes

Nothing is ever accomplished by blaming others

Don't trust everyone

Everything is a teachable moment

You can learn something from everyone

Sometimes rumors are true

Sometimes rumors are false

Chocolate is good for meetings

When your kids lose library books, their school librarians know exactly who you are

Always mentor the people who come after you

Darcy Brixey is a Teen Services Librarian at King County Library System and is WLA immediate Past President, having served her term in 2015/2016. Brianna Hoffman is a Project Coordinator for OCLC/WebJunction and serving as the current WLA President, 2016/2017. Darcy and Brianna continue to learn from their WLA experiences and from each other.

Things I'm Learning as WLA President: Brianna Hoffman Edition

Read everything

Don't be afraid to ask questions, even if you are afraid of the answer

Sometimes I'm wrong

Listen to the ones that came before you

Every concern is a valid one

I am not alone

Venting is a good thing to do, and to listen to

Chocolate truffles make things better

Always say thank you

Communication, communication, communication

Embrace the learning experiences

It's okay to take a break from email

You can learn something from everyone

Not everything is an emergency

Everyone has a story to tell


Give credit where credit is due

Hindsight is 20/20, but looking backwards doesn't help anyone

Say yes

It's also okay to say no

The Arby's in North Bend is the best (from experience driving to Western Washington events)

The good of the entire organization is always paramount 

Local Stage, Global Impact: Susan Hildreth and the Future of Public Libraries

by Frank Brasile



The news of late has showed witness to the progressive and forward-thinking nature that Washington state is now playing on the world stage. Susan Hildreth, the former director for the federal IMLS appreciates that stance now that she has been lured here from “the other Washington” by way of California.

San Francisco Public Library and was appointed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to the post of California State Librarian before coming to Washington state as the City Librarian for The Seattle Public Library in 2009. Her stint in Seattle was cut short when an offer came that she couldn’t refuse — as the Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). Appointed by President Obama and unanimously approved by the Senate, she served in the role from 2011 to 2015. At the IMLS, Hildreth administered grants to state libraries and museums, advised the administration and Congress on information policy, and worked with other federal agencies to strengthen digital literacy and weaken the digital divide.

“Washington—and the Seattle area in particular —is such a homeland for progressive thinkers. I consider myself to be one and, even if it is challenging right now, it is great to be in Seattle where we are willing to stand up for and live progressive values.”

While she believes today’s library and information science students receive the necessary groundwork in library principles and practices, she believes a certain skillset is needed to meet the challenges facing libraries of the future.

The iSchool at the University of Washington has been a nationwide leader in the study and practice of library and information science. With their newest endeavor, Hildreth is back in Washington state following a successful four-year stint in Washington D.C. to ensure that libraries remain vital in the 21st century. Hildreth is serving as the iSchool’s first Professor of Practice in a new position funded by the Gates Foundation that studies the future of public libraries.

“Washington—and the Seattle area in particular—is such a homeland for progressive thinkers. I consider myself to be one and, even if it is challenging right now, it is great to be in Seattle where we are willing to stand up for and live progressive values.”

“Design thinking, project management, digital preservation and curation, and approaches needed for authentic community engagement are just some of the skills our graduating students must have to be successful in 21st century organizations” to address new and emerging technologies, increasingly diverse communities and to solve problems that are unique to each institution.

The position “ensures that the education being provided in our information and library programs around the country is relevant and preparing graduate students for the challenges they are going to face in 21st century libraries” says Hildreth. Funded for 10 years, she is the first of several future library leaders to hold the position.

“The Gates Foundation’s support of public libraries has been amazing and extremely helpful” says Hildreth. “Its investment in libraries began before the Foundation was organized! Its level of investment has been extraordinary and not necessarily a typical public-private partnership.”

Hildreth previously served as the City Librarian for the San

The Gates Foundation is winding down its Global Libraries

Frank Brasile is the editor of ALKI.

continued on next page

initiative, whose goal is “to improve the lives of 1 billion ‘information-poor’ people by 2030 while positioning the world’s 320,000 public libraries as critical community assets and providers of information through relevant technologies.” To ensure that this goal is met, it has identified three “legacy partners” to carry the work forward — the Public Library Association (PLA), the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) and TASCCHA – the Technology and Social Change Group at the iSchool. TASCCHA, which has done work in Africa around digital literacy, has worked with PLA and IFLA on several initiatives. Together, the three organizations are developing “a research agenda and library program metrics that can be used nationally and globally.”

“The research and evaluation expertise that TASCCHA provides supports the work of the Gates’ legacy partners in many subject areas, including social justice” says Hildreth. And at the federal level, “IMLS and ALA represent a vast network of libraries and can make connections for federal agencies.”

But Hildreth cautions that we should not see the Gates Foundation as the only partnership valuable to libraries.

“I think the most valuable partnerships are on the local level where a library identifies a local foundation, non-profit or other partner and develops a win-win relationship with that partner. These partnerships may involve actual funding, leveraging assets or increasing the visibility of the partners with their communities.

“Collective impact is an important approach to community building and philanthropy in the 21st century. The focus of collective impact is coordination of a variety of assets to address community problems. The library has many resources to strengthen our communities and can serve as community convener.”

During her tenure at the IMLS, Hildreth developed “a national and global view of what is happening in libraries today, their successes and challenges as well as programs that are able to be scaled” on both fronts.

“I am able to share this background with our students and helps me to provide them the ‘big picture’ on library services both nationally and globally.”

With a Trump administration, many are anxious about federal support for libraries, and fear a sea change from what occurred under the Obama administration. While Hildreth says there is widespread concern and “we must be prepared for future battles,” she is cautiously optimistic.

“The largest IMLS program, ‘Grants to States’, is the funding

that is provided to states and territories based primarily on their population. These funds are administered by each state library agency. Congress is particularly supportive of these funds because they are distributed to each state by population, similar to a block grant, and are not competitive at the federal level.

“Congress has historically been very supportive of this, the largest IMLS program, and I hope they will continue to show that support in this administration.”

After leaving the IMLS in 2015, Hildreth made a brief return to California as the Executive Director of the Peninsula Library System in San Mateo, but the offer to join the faculty at the University of Washington brought her back to the Evergreen State, and her connection to its progressive nature, returned to Washington.

And Hildreth is glad she’s back. 📖

2017 Library Legislative Day

Join us in Olympia, WA
on March 16 for
Library Legislative Day

This is a great opportunity to network
with library supporters from around the state
and meet with State Legislators and their
staff to discuss the value of libraries and the
impact laws have on them.

LOCATION

The United Churches
110 11th Ave SE
Olympia, WA 98501

Health Information for Older Adults

by Carolyn Martin

In 1963, after a meeting between President Kennedy and the National Council of Senior Citizens, May was designated as Senior Citizens Month, eventually becoming known as Older Americans Month. Originally, it was a time to acknowledge the contributions of older Americans, especially those who had defended the United States. Older Americans Month is a time to pay tribute the invaluable services and contributions of past and present senior citizens to our communities. It is also a time to be aware of the unique health issues older Americans face.

Americans are living longer and many are living healthier than previous generations. Our number of seniors is growing and so too do the chronic health conditions many are experiencing. We are living in the age of information and many, including older adults, want to learn more about their health. According to the Pew Research Center report Older Adults and Technology Use, 59% of adults 65 or older use the internet and are more likely to look up information about their own health than other age groups. Our health care system is also requiring that we become more involved in our healthcare, which can be very confusing and frustrating for older generations who grew up in an era where doctors were given complete trust and decision making.

Perhaps your libraries have been interested or are providing health information programs to your older patrons. If you are unsure of where to begin, your National Network of Libraries of Medicine Pacific Northwest Region (NN/LM PNR) office can connect you to the information your patrons may find useful.

To start with, [NIH Senior Health](#) is a website created specifically for older adults to use. Here you will find the website easy to navigate with the ability to enlarge the font size and to change the contrast when viewing. Often audio is provided for those who may prefer it. The information is specifically geared to the interest of older adults whether it is to learn about exercises, a health condition, or to face such difficult topics as end of life.


Another resource is [Go4Life](#). This resource is an exercise campaign from the National Institute on Aging. Your library can become a partner and receive free Go4Life resources. Becoming a partner is

not required to use the videos and tools provided. Your library can offer exercise classes using the videos or send the links to patrons to follow along at home. Tools to inspire your older adults to set goals, track their programs and celebrate their achievements is a great way to take steps towards a healthier community.



Here are two other resources of interest, especially for caregivers. [NLM4Caregivers](#) provides links to information caregivers will find useful when caring for a family member or friend. [Eldercare Locator](#) is a government website to assist where to find information or services located nearby such as transportation and in home services. Caregivers will also find tools about how to deal with in-home improvement scams and giving up the car keys.

Many older adults are limited by their technology use due to physical conditions or health issues. Others are skeptical about the need for technology or need assistance learning how to use the various devices or programs. Many older adults may find that once they learn how to use technology and where to find quality health information. Your library may wish to provide a program on how to search for quality information online. NIH Senior Health provides a toolkit for trainers to use complete with an introductory video, lesson plans, and a marketing flyer. Everything is there that you need but you can also use it as a starting place and customize it to your needs. Providing a safe environment for adult learning will help your older patrons feel more confident and empowered about their health.

NN/LM offers a class called Healthy Aging in the Library which is free. Check to see when an upcoming class is scheduled or if your library is a member, request our office to provide a session and provide brochures. Even if you aren't a member and you would like to know more about the resources please contact us and we would be happy to assist. Whether or not your library is observing Older Americans Month this May, we hope you find these resources helpful towards promoting a healthier community. 

Carolyn Martin is the Consumer Health Coordinator for the National Network of Libraries of Medicine Pacific Northwest Region (NN/LM PNR).

Library Science...Evolution?

by Marci Howells

The AASL (American Association of School Libraries), a division of the American Library Association (ALA), has curriculum standards for teaching and learning information literacy; in the fall of 2017 new standards will be launched to meet the needs of 21st century learners. However, it appears that there are many schools who are either not aware of the standards or are not staffed with certified teacher-librarians who know how to teach the standards. So where does this leave the students?

We now live in a transient world; we have students that transfer schools many times throughout the school year. Not just in the same city or state, but across the country and from foreign countries. As a certificated teacher-librarian working in a high poverty school, those transitions occur numerous times throughout the school year. Often students transfer in who do not have any basic library science skills knowledge.

Who is Melville Dewey? Why do students need to know about Melville Dewey and the Dewey Decimal System? One might hear: "well, all they have to do is search the internet!" Why do we need to teach information literacy?

The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) issued a position statement establishing a framework for 21st Century Curriculum and Assessment. Summarized nicely by P21: Partnership for 21st Century Learning, they state "The 21st Century Literacies Curriculum presents the process and essential skills for embedding information literacy strategies across all areas of the curriculum. The curriculum seeks to promote the skills, knowledge and attitudes to help students develop information literacy" including effective lifelong information awareness, seeking, management and presentation strategies.

Our students need to be able to understand and use problem-solving strategies which our 21st century standards include. They need to be able to understand the variety of unlimited resources of information available and how to interpret those resources to select those most appropriate for their needs. This is part of Bloom's taxonomy, which includes analysis and synthesis skills.

Learners Use Skills, Resources & Tools To:

1. Inquire, think critically, and gain knowledge.
2. Draw conclusions, make informed decisions, apply knowledge to new situations, and create new knowledge.
3. Share knowledge and participate ethically and productively as members of our democratic society.
4. Pursue personal and aesthetic growth.

From AASL's Standards for the 21st Century Learner

At the elementary school level, we are usually faced with only 15 minutes to teach a library science or technology infused lesson, a challenge when trying to impart a valid and reliable information literacy program. Adding the constraints imposed by state and district curriculum requirements, testing, accountability standards and inadequate staffing, it becomes very restrictive. Then add the transient student who has moved from school to school, even state to state or country to country within one school year.

In addressing these challenges, I incorporate project-based learning, as do most teacher-librarians. I have found this methodology effective, for the most part, when I have my classroom student laptops available. Then, come testing time in our school, my library student laptops are hijacked, without any notice (and I know I am not the only teacher-librarian that this has happened to). When this happens, I've been left with hustling to incorporate a totally different methodology or lesson. To turn this into an 'opportunity' I have incorporated STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, math) into my library science curriculum. We had the opportunity to write an innovative grant in our school district last year, and I was able to create a Maker Space in my library incorporating Legos and robotic kits. Students will be directed to create something that connects to their project. Then they will photograph their creation and upload the photo into their computer-based project the next time we have the student laptops available. It becomes a "win win" situation! 📖

Marci Howells is a teacher-librarian at Blix Elementary School in the Tacoma School District.

The Tale of an Unexpected Librarian

by Alpha DeLap

I remember when I told my mother that I had gotten into graduate school to study comparative literature. She paused, moved the phone away from her mouth, and said, “Oh sweetheart, don’t give up on your dream of being a poet.” I laughed and told her, “You are probably one of the only mothers in the world to be upset that their child got into graduate school!” As our conversation went on it was clear that for her, academia was a space for


critics and not creators. She wanted me to be able to express my creativity fully and not spend time “finding flaws in other peoples’ work.” I tabled her concern and dove into seven years of graduate work. After getting my master’s in comparative literature, I moved institutions and disciplines and focused on getting my doctorate in Communications. My master’s thesis had dealt with literary depictions of domestic violence and how the home for many was not a space of safety but a kind of incarceration. I used Dorothy Allison’s *Bastard Out of Carolina* as my grounding narrative. When I switched to the social sciences it was because I was now interested in looking closely at how individual women told their own experiences of domestic violence and through shared storytelling developed a sense of self. I spent more than two years listening to stories in support groups, telling my own story and gleaning ethnographic insights related to how stories create landscapes of what is possible, what is translatable and what is knowable.

I finished my doctorate and I set about finding a teaching job. I had been working as an adjunct for different institutions in Massachusetts and Colorado and I was hopeful that in Seattle, where my husband began working on his own doctorate, I would find it. It was harder than I expected and I expected it to be difficult. The only open position at the University of Washington in the Women’s Studies department was a part-time, temporary appointment with a PhD required. I remember walking up the stairs, opening the door, talking with the receptionist and looking at the three-foot stack of applications. “Just put it on top of that pile,” I was told. I sighed deeply. It was then I realized that finding an academic job that would support my husband and me would be more than difficult, it would be almost impossible in Seattle, home

“ I failed at becoming the academic that I dreamed of when I was 25 but now 20-plus years later, I know that all my training and experience has led me here, to a profession that gives me great hope and a sense of satisfaction each day.”

to one of the most educated adult populations in the United States. I found an administrative job instead. It was at the University of Washington’s Information School working for the Associate Dean for Research. Formerly the Department of Library and Information Science, the UW iSchool was then in its nascent days of existence. It was there at the iSchool that I started to meet librarians from a range of domains. Who knew that librarians worked at Microsoft

or in hospitals? The more partnerships I helped develop and the more librarians I met the more that I began to think about librarianship.

Jump cut backwards to 1976 when I got my first library card at the Amherst Memorial Library in Western Massachusetts at age six. A few months later we moved to Provincetown on Cape Cod and the library was my second home. Starting in September of 1978, I checked out nine books each week at the Jefferson Market Branch in Greenwich Village. My overstuffed backpack jostled back and forth as I rode the bus home down Broadway. The library remained a sanctuary for more than thirty years until I decided to get a degree in Library Science and work with my friend and mentor, Eliza Dresang. Eliza knew my professional journey and was convinced that I would make a terrific children’s librarian. At first I laughed quietly when she suggested it. I had taught college students, graduate seminars and written research grants. Wouldn’t being a children’s librarian be a strange and awkward fit at best? At the same time, I was a new mother — my beloved sons were two and five. When I wasn’t studying, reading or writing, I was taking them to the library and the park, sipping tall cups of coffee as we read and played and read and played. Then I took Eliza’s Children’s Literature course and I had the moment of professional reckoning that I was waiting for, everything about it made me happy, the assignments thrilled me, I couldn’t wait to get to work, reading, discussing and presenting. And after I took Nancy Pearl’s class on Reader’s Advisory it was settled. I was finally home professionally. I failed at becoming the academic that I dreamed of when I was 25 but now 20-plus years later, I know that all my training and experience has led me here, to a profession that gives me great hope and a sense of satisfaction each day. When my students ask me, “if you won the lottery what would you do?” I say without a hint of hesitation: “Exactly what I am doing now. I absolutely love being your librarian!” 

Alpha DeLap is a teacher-librarian with the St. Thomas School in Medina.

Read This Book

Reviews and Opinions by Teacher-Librarians

by the Puget Sound Council for the Review of Children's and Young Adult Literature

Buyer Beware

I'm sure that we've all said, "It seemed like a good idea at the time. I wonder if the folks in the publishing industry have that same experience? It seems that from the consumer/reviewer side mistakes are happening quite often, especially in nonfiction writing for students. Maybe it just seems more noticeable there since there are well-known standards for evaluating reliable sources and teacher-librarians are involved in teaching those lessons every day.

harder to accomplish when it is avoided by careful editing or asking timely questions like: "What's the age group you intend to reach? Do the illustrations reflect that age group?" We are concerned with thinness of information in relationship to the cost of the resource. Many teacher-librarians have a limited budget, in some cases no budget other than book fair monies, to provide the best possible resources for the students in our schools. We are required not only

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Credibility | Who is the author? Are any credentials given? Who is the publisher? |
| Currency | What is the date of publication? Have there been revisions and or new editions? For websites, when was the site last updated? |
| Point of View or Bias | Was the information intended to persuade, inform, entertain or sell? For websites, what does the address end with- .com, .edu, .org, .gov? Is it easy to make out the author's opinions or point of view? If there a point of view, investigate the other sides of the issue. |
| Accuracy | Are the sources for any factual information clearly listed so they can be verified? Is the information free of grammatical, spelling, and typographical errors? Are any research studies and/or statistics discussed, if so are they listed in a works cited? |
| Coverage | Is the work a primary or secondary source? |

Teacher-librarians are concerned when we can't find documentation about where information comes from. We look for works cited, picture credits, chapter notes, bibliographies, and notes in captions and sidebars. We are concerned when terms are used in definitions or to clarify information but are not included in the glossary or in a list of resources to extend student learning, especially when this involves younger readers. They don't yet have the tools to make well-reasoned decisions about merit. We are concerned when cultural insensitivity is passed over. We're concerned when illustrations/photographs do not match the text because graphics have great power and can give the wrong impression or fix a mistaken idea that is hard to overcome. Re-education is a much

to support the curriculum, but also students' personal interests so we need resources that are rich, hearty, with accurate and verifiable information; not the thin gruel of "looks good, has great pictures, there's something in there that kids can use/will like." This also applies to formula writing in fiction, especially historical fiction or fiction that relies on historical deeds/beliefs for plot.

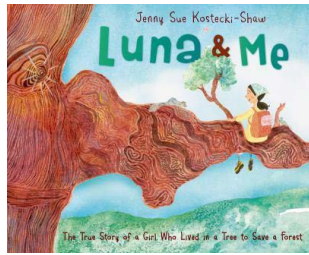
We want the best for our and your kids. So here's why we are saying, **BUYER BEWARE!**

Reviewers are members of the Puget Sound Council for the Review of Children's and Young Adult Literature.

continued on next page

Primary:

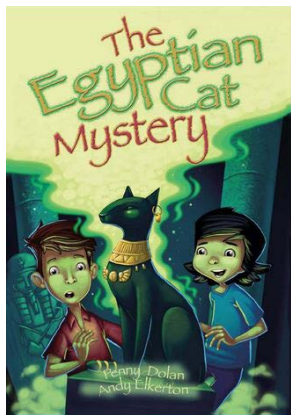
Luna & Me: The True Story Of A Girl Who Lived In a Tree To Save a Forest by Kostecki-Shaw, Jenny Sue, ©2015, Henry Holt & Company, ISBN: 9780805099768. Reviewed by Teresa Wittmann, teacher-librarian, Westgate Elementary, Edmonds



Luna is an ancient redwood tree. Julia, nicknamed Butterfly, loves nature and feels a great affinity to Luna when she first sees her. Luna is selected to be cut down; when Butterfly finds out, she decides to live in on a platform built in the tree to protect it. She stays in the tree for two years with help of her friends; she comes down when Luna became part of a preserve. The story is a charming one with a powerful message about conservation, but the subtitle claims that it is a true story and it is cataloged as a biography even when, according to the afterword, it does not follow what really happened. The tree is anthropomorphized with feelings -- branches like arms to hug Butterfly, sometimes a face in her bark. Butterfly is a girl in the beginning of the story and continues to look just as young throughout the two years she lives in the redwood despite that fact that the afterword it says that Julia "Butterfly" Hill was twenty-three at the time. Important facts are left out of the story so it doesn't match the actual event in several ways. This book belongs in the fiction section and the subtitle should be changed to say it was inspired by a true story.

Elementary:

Egyptian Cat Mystery by Dolan, Penny, © 2016, Crabtree Publishing Company, ISBN: 9780778720607. Reviewed by Sarah Threlkeld, teacher-librarian at Scenic Hill Elementary, Kent

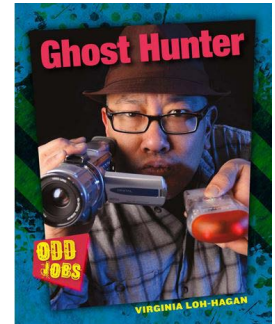


Blurb from the publisher: "There is something very strange about the Egyptian cat that Jed and Ruby spot in the museum, hidden among the Ancient Egyptian artifacts. Later on they come across a real cat that follows them home. But this is no ordinary cat, as they are about to find out." Each paperback title in the Race Further with Reading series contains five short chapters, color illustrations on every page, and a list of discussion questions in the back. The stories are intended to be a mix of humor and adventure starring kids who save the day or solve a problem. Unfortunately, the plot lines are not particularly interesting, the

narrative feels forced, and the sentences are choppy. This title was particularly difficult to get through. There are far more superior titles available to students who are transitioning from picture books to chapter books.

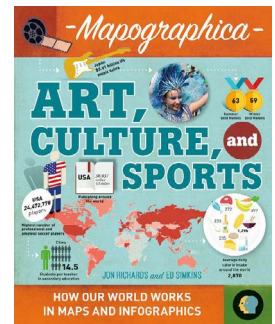
Middle:

Ghost Hunter by Loh-Hagan, Virginia, ©2016, 45th Parallel Press, ISBN: 9781634700283. Reviewed by Thom Garrard, Teacher-Librarian, Hilltop Elementary, Edmonds



Ghost Hunter, part of the Odd Jobs series from 45th Parallel Press, addresses a number of occupational questions, such as what they do, what equipment they use, and how they help people. The high-interest topic and short chapters with photos and sidebars will appeal to reluctant readers. Unfortunately, choppy writing, a poorly organized text, and confusing explanations might make the reading struggle bigger rather than smaller. For example, the author tells us, "Ghost hunters are detectives. They solve mysteries. They look for clues. They ask questions." Readers who can handle phrases like electromagnetic field readings and electronic voice phenomena should be able to deal with smoother and more complex sentences. Curiously, a full-page sidebar of ghost hunter "lingo" and definitions pops up in the middle of the book, even though a glossary is included at the end. And confusion reigns in the final chapter which states, "Skeptics don't believe in ghosts... Ghost hunters work to prove skeptics wrong... Ghost hunters are also skeptical." If ghost hunters don't believe in ghosts, then they should probably have avoided this job.

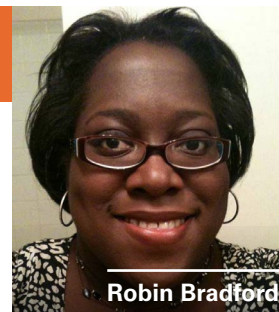
Art, Culture and Sports by Jon Richards; Illustrated by Ed Simkins, © 2017, Crabtree Publishing Company. ISBN: 9780778726555. Reviewed by Paula Wittmann, Teacher-Librarian, West Woodland Elementary, Seattle



This book is aimed at middle and upper grades and has a lot of standard nonfiction features like a glossary, an index, and trendy infographics that are situated in maps. BUT it doesn't have any way to check the sources information for anything written as fact. It says there are bibliographic resources, but they are much like the bibliographies produced by folks wishing to pad their research and throw in resources that are related to the topic but can't be traced directly to any one entry so that it is hoped that the person

I'd Rather Be Reading

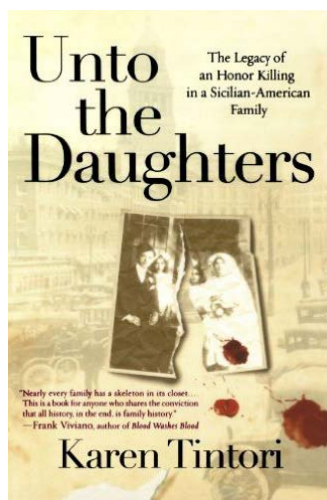
by Robin Bradford



Mistakes Make Great Reads

Mistakes were made! I'm not sure there is a book out there that doesn't have a mistake/misunderstanding/misconception either as a plot point, or the overall theme. The books that I picked for this column couldn't have been more different, and yet they all come back to the central point that mistakes of some kind were made, either directly by the subjects in the book, or by the social circumstances that give rise to the subject of the book.

Karen Tintori, *Unto the Daughters: The Legacy of an Honor Killing in a Sicilian-American Family* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007)

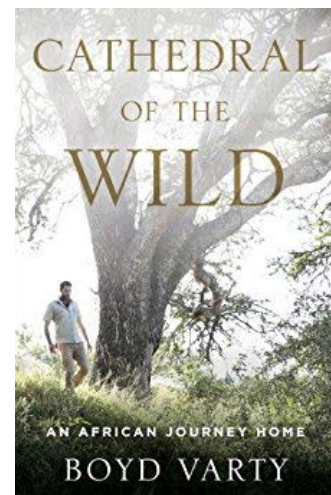


When I picked up this book eight years ago, I thought I knew what I was going to get. The subtitle tells you what happened in the book. I went into it thinking it was going to be a real-life tale much like the dramatized mafia tales so common in our popular culture, but Tintori expertly pivoted away from what we thought we knew based on *The Godfather*. Away from the Corleones and into this family, her family, that was more compelling than any movie. The "mistake" in this book could be the mistake of a young woman falling in love with one man, when her father had plans to marry her to someone else. When she came home, a married woman, her brothers were so incensed that they erased her from the family. Physically, she was brutally murdered. Figuratively, she was a secret that was never spoken of, even decades later. Tintori discovered the name and worked doggedly to uncover the secret of her forgotten great aunt. Tintori also recreates the world of turn of the century immigrant Detroit. The more pages you turn, the more life as a Sicilian immigrant envelops you in its grasp. I can't say you'll ever understand how it happened, because understanding the circumstances of a brutal murder isn't something to which we should aspire, but you become familiar with life in 1919: the

Robin Bradford has worked in both academic and public libraries. Since 2001, she has been responsible for ordering fiction for public libraries, with the occasional bonus forays into nonfiction collection development. Currently, she is a Collection Development Librarian at Timberland Regional Library, where she orders adult fiction, feature films (and TV!), and music CDs. She was chosen the 2016 Romance Writers of America Cathie Linz Librarian of the Year.

situations that women found themselves in; the rights they didn't have, even as women were being granted the right to vote; and how insular immigrant communities were.

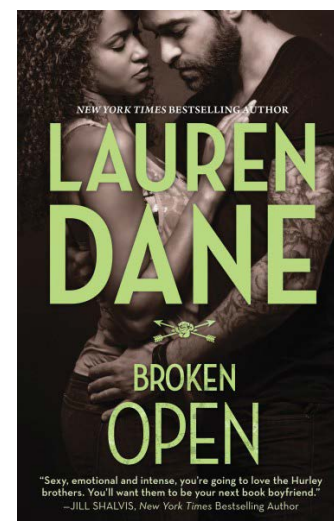
Boyd Varty, *Cathedral of the Wild: an African Journey Home* (New York: Random House, 2014)



I'm not sure how to categorize this book — maybe half family memoir, half environmental memoir? However you describe it, it's a book about the power to correct mistakes, and starting over. Boyd Varty talks about his family history and how the Londolzi Game Reserve transformed from a hunting ground in his grandfather's time into a nature reserve when it was taken over by his father and uncle. It was a place of refuge for many people, including Nelson Mandela at one time. It was also a place to hear how Varty's grandfather, and those that came before him, had celebrated the custom of the hunt and safari. When his father took it over, and going forward, the entire culture of Londolzi changed, we would probably say for the better. The mistakes of the past, both on Londolzi and in South Africa as a whole, gave way to progress and renewal, which are big themes in the book. The stories of how Varty's upbringing on the reserve and the situations he and his sister found themselves in caused me to wince, and maybe even cover my eyes more than a few times. Perhaps parenting/guardian mistakes are also a hallmark of this book!

Lauren Dane, *Broken Open* (New York: HQN Books, 2014)

In selecting one fiction book for this list, my choice is *Broken Open* by Seattle author Lauren Dane. This is book two in the Hurley Brothers series, and deals



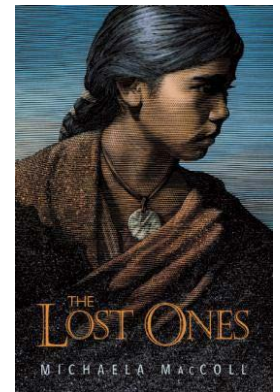
continued on next page

with recovering heroin addict, Ezra Hurley, and widow Tuesday Eastwood. What I loved most about this book was that it wasn't typical in its tale of conquering addiction. Hurley wasn't newly clean and sober, so the immediacy of his addiction wasn't front and center. Instead, the book's focus was the rebuilding of a life after the crisis has passed. Rebuilding trust and respect with family and friends after the cheating, stealing and other bad behaviors that come with addiction. But also, the ability to move forward and forge new relationships as well. Ultimately, it is the affirmation that life does go on, better than before, even if you've dropped beyond the lowest point you could imagine. Ezra and Tuesday's story is as much about rebuilding after tragedy as it is acknowledging and accepting mistakes of the past.

The most important lesson from all three books is that no matter the disastrous, man-made mistake, life goes on. You can try to hide the mistake as in *Unto the Daughters*, but they always come to light sooner or later. When that happens, you can rebuild from your worst mistake, as in *Broken Open*, or you can rebuild something beautiful from a mistake as in *Cathedral of the Wild*. 📖

editing (or grading in schools) will simply take the sheer volume of resources as proof of credibility and not bother to check further. It's not a poor book; it's entertaining but it doesn't measure up. Good idea, poor execution.

The Lost Ones, MacColl, Michaela, ©2016, Calkins Creek, ISBN: 9781620916254. Reviewed by Eve Datisman, Teacher-Librarian, Port Angeles High School, Retired, not dead.



In 1877 the 4th U.S. Cavalry is ordered to "handle the Indian problem" in Texas. Casita, a member of the Lipan Apache tribe and her brother, Jack, witness the death of their mother and most of the members of their tribe and are forcibly removed to Fort Clark in Texas. Casita hides that she has learned English while traveling with her father until a white Quaker nurse, Mollie Smith, earns her trust. Jack becomes a mascot for the Fort, but in the eyes of the Army they are POWs. When the founder of the Carlisle Indian School, a former army man, wants students to turn into "good Americans," they are put on the train to Pennsylvania. Jack excels and is adopted by a white teacher; but Casita with her Apache girlfriends, defiantly re-enact the Ndé Changing Woman ceremony to honor lost traditions. MacColl's calling the Changing Woman a deity forces the book into Western cultural norms as just as Jack's mascot status diminishes who he is as a person and subtly repudiates his nation and culture. Moreover, MacColl downplays the Carlisle School experience, a well-documented, infamous ordeal and in general misses the cultural mark in spite of apparent endorsement by members of the Lipan band. Debbie Reese, a Pueblo Indian and researcher of Native American representation in children's and young adult literature, does not recommend this book — and neither can I. 📖

SAVE THE DATE

2017 WLA Fall Conference

The Hotel Murano, Tacoma, WA

Wednesday, November 1
through
Saturday, November 4, 2017

Dispatches from Swellville

by Darcy McMurtery



Patricia Popplewell

From: popplewell.patricia@swellvillelibrary.org

Sent: Monday, February 27, 10:42 am

To: librarians@swellvillelibrary.org

Subject: New Programs for the New Year

Dear Programming Librarians,

The planning committee has met and we are excited to unroll a new catalog of performers for this year. Before we reveal the list of future performers and programs, we'd like to let you know how we measured last year's programs.

We took a look at the statistics you sent per branch and collectively measured them against the patron feedback and insurance claims. We realize that Intro to Lion Taming was very popular, but due to its proximity to the Klingon Language Camp for Toddlers we will not be able to offer it again this year. The same goes with the ever popular Snake and Food Handlers Permit Class.

Our insurance company and legal team have also recommended that we make some drastic changes to our Extreme Chess and Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu Club for teens. As a result, on early release days we will now be offering our Extreme Life Skills Programs. These will be programs such as Knitting with Dog Hair, Creating Tissue Paper Raincoats and Cooking with Durian Fruit. We feel the teens will benefit greatly from these programs.

As a committee we recognize that we have sometimes created programs that aren't as successful as they could be. We can now admit that the Shakespeare Reader's Theater: Preschool Edition didn't bring in the numbers we had hoped. Also, the Mystery Book Group debacle has been recognized. It was a mystery indeed when the flyers omitted a date and a time.

Naming is everything, so we've realized that some programs failed due to their titles. In our Genealogy series Find Your Poor and Boring Relatives will now become Are You Royal? and Yodeling has been rebranded Rapid Change Pitch: A Musical Odyssey. The committee felt these programs were worth a second try.

Finally, after a lengthy discussion with our advisory board and legal team, we've recognized that we can no longer offer Winter Story Time: Krampus Edition. I think we can all agree that character driven story times have the potential to terrorize our patrons.

Happy Programming!

Patti Popplewell

Patti Popplewell
Library Programming Committee Chair
Swellville Library

JOIN US FOR THE LEADING EDUCATOR CONFERENCE IN THE NORTHWEST



Join us as we bridge the technology gap for three days at NCCCE 2017. The 46th annual event brings together educators who want to advance their role in education technology, collaborate, and share resources. Check out the technology experts that will be featured at the largest ed-tech event in the Northwest:

Don't miss this three-day professional development event

with over 1900 attendees and 150 corporate partners to help you scale your ed-tech goals. Let NCCCE assist you in achieving new heights in your career.

Opportunities at NCCCE 2017 include:

- Blended/Flipped/On-line Learning
- Coding/Drones/Gaming Makerspace
- CTE
- EduBreak
- Emerging Trends
- E-Rate
- Google
- Leadership
- Robotics
- STEM/STEAM
- Technology Infrastructure
- Tool Showcase

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



JAIME CASAP
Education Evangelist at Google



KEVIN CARROLL
Author and Founder of Kevin Carroll Catalyst, LLC

FEATURED SPEAKERS

PAUL ANDERSON
@paulandersen

COLETTE CASSNELLI
@ccassinelli

JEFF CREWS
@crewsertech

SHANNON DAVENPORT
@sdavenport931

JEREMY MACDONALD
@MrMacnology

SHANNON MILLER
@Shannonmmiller

DEAN PHILLIPS
@DeanPhillipsMT

BRAD WAID
@Techbradwaid

MIKE AGOSTINELLI
@mikegusto

JASON NEIFFER
@techsavvyteach

For speaker bios visit nccce.org/conference

Certificate of attendance, clock hours and college credit available.
For more information and details about NCCCE 2017 visit nccce.org/conference



NCCCE is a professional learning organization for educators and hosts the largest education conference in the Northwest. With a membership base from Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington, NCCCE provides resources and professional learning opportunities to our members throughout the year.

WLA Thanks Our Institutional & Business Members

Business & Sales Members

BERK Consulting
Bound to Stay Bound Books
Follett
Mackin
PEMCO Insurance

Primary Source
Scholastic
Seattle Times: Newspapers in Education
Winking Cat Books

Friends, Foundations, & Non-Profit

Denise Gudwin Consulting, Seattle Reading Council,
Washington State Literacy Association
Friends of the Jefferson County Library
Friends of Whitman County Library
Holocaust Center for Humanity
Humanities Washington

Lake Stevens School District
Mount Vernon School District
Orbis Cascade Alliance
Puyallup School District
Spokane Public Library Foundation
Sustainable NE Seattle

Institutional Members

Asotin County Library
Bellingham Public Library
Big Bend CC Bonaudi Library
Central Skagit Rural Partial County Library District
City of Richland Library
Clark College Library
Clover Park Technical College Library
Columbia County Rural Library District
Eastern Washington University Libraries
Ellensburg Public Library
Everett Public Library
Foley Center Library, Gonzaga University
Fort Vancouver Regional Library District
Grandview Library
Green River Community College
Highline Community College Library
James Brooks Library, Central WA University
Jefferson County Library
King County Library System
Kitsap Regional Library
La Conner Regional Library District
Liberty Lake Municipal Library
Libraries of Stevens County
Longview Public Library
Lopez Island Library

Lower Columbia College Library
Mount Vernon City Library
Neill Public Library
Orcas Island Library District
Pierce County Library System
Ritzville Library District #2
San Juan Island Library
Seattle Public Library
Sedro-Woolley City Library
Skagit Valley College/Norwood
Sno-Isle Libraries
Spokane County Library District
Spokane Public Library
Tacoma Public Library
Timberland Regional Library
University of Washington Libraries
Upper Skagit Library
Walla Walla Community College Library
Washington State Library
Whatcom County Library System
Whitman County Library
Yakima Valley Community College
Yakima Valley Libraries
Walla Walla County Rural Library District



Alki

The Washington Library Association Journal

EMAIL: info@wla.org WEB: www.wla.org