The theme of intellectual freedom is never out of date in our profession. Each new state and federal legislative session seems to bring on a new tide of bills to curtail some kinds of content available over the Internet, and to force schools and libraries to keep some content out.

At this year’s Library Day in Olympia, we heard the WLA Legislative Liaison, Steve Duncan, tell us that he is concerned about our vulnerability as a profession to legislators’ cries for better safeguards. Even though many of the state’s largest library systems are employing some kind of filtering system on some, if not all, of their computers, Steve worries that libraries still aren’t making our commitment to help parents protect their children clear. He wonders how many of us have systems that require patrons to use their cards to get online, thereby allowing parents to have a filtering requirement on their child’s card that would be activated. Alternatively, Steve asked us if we routinely make contact with patrons before they get online, so that we can clarify their options, and so that children can be monitored. Steve’s concern, clearly, is that we be able to show the legislators that we care about patrons’ concerns, and that we are working to find solutions, so that the yearly barrage of threatening bills will subside.

The Washington Library Association is trying to respond to our perceived vulnerability on several fronts. I believe we may not be communicating enough about how we feel and what we are doing as library staff and library supporters to address fears about access to bomb-making information and pornography online. Our new Grassroots! Interest Group, under the leadership of John Sheller, Tom Moak, and Linda Fredericks, has worked closely with Patience Rogge and the Washington Library Friends and Trustees Association to invite legislators to our local libraries. It is important that the legislators see what we are doing and that we give them a chance to ask questions. I am grateful for the energy this group is putting into some real grassroots advocacy, and I urge you all to heed the call to get your local government officials into your library, for a reception, luncheon, or by special invitation to show off new materials or features (how about those wonderful new databases made possible by the state library?). We need to do our part locally to educate our lawmakers on this sensitive topic.

Mike Wessells, of the WLA Intellectual Freedom Committee, is spearheading the creation of a document to help frontline staff answer the challenging questions they get from patrons about Internet access. Mike is working with WALE, WLA’s library support staff group, to get their views about what questions are raised again and again that staff need to be prepared to answer. Cher Ravagni, chair of the Intellectual Freedom Committee, crafted the first draft of the new “Intellectual Freedom Statement” for our organization and shepherded it through to its current draft. I am very grateful for the help of Cher and the committee, the WLA Executive Board, and all WLA members who commented on this important document.

The new “Intellectual Freedom Statement” is intended to replace two separate, twenty-plus-year-old documents with a single succinct document to help guide us into the 21st century, and to help others outside the library world understand what we are all about. We ask that all WLA members look at the draft by March 30. The draft is available on page 6 of this issue, is available over the WLA listserv, and will also be sent to members by surface mail, to give everyone a chance to comment. Reactions, responses, and comments should be sent—by surface mail, email, or voice mail—to the WLA Office. Please make sure the WLA Office hears from you!

A vote on the new “Intellectual Freedom Statement” is scheduled for the WLA Annual Conference this May.

WLA wants to support all of you in your goals to give the best information to the most people, in formats and languages that all can use. Come join our interest groups, come to our conferences, and let us know what we can still do to help all of us get the word out about libraries and our key value of intellectual freedom.

Cindy Cunningham is Head of Catalog/Browse at Amazon.com. You can send her e-mail through the WLA listserv, or at her address: cindy@amazon.com.
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Cover by Dawn Holladay.
From the Editor
Carolynne Myall

Intellectual Freedom in the Year 2000

The 20th century saw U.S. libraries move from a stance of screening materials and protecting readers, to one of advocating intellectual freedom—freedom of opinion, freedom of expression, and freedom of access to a broad spectrum of information. With the American Library Association's adoption of the "Library Bill of Rights" in 1939 and its adoption of the "Freedom to Read" statement in 1953, support for principles of intellectual freedom became a core value of democratic librarianship. Fittingly, the theme of the very first issue of *Alki*—March 1985—was intellectual freedom; and articles on intellectual freedom and censorship have salted *Alki*'s contents throughout the journal's life.

The March 2000 issue of *Alki* continues that tradition, and considers intellectual freedom principles from many perspectives, in school, public, and academic libraries, with library colleagues sharing their expertise about video ratings, unimpeded access to government information, plagiarism vs. borrowing, and the Internet battles popping up around the state. —The battle-scarred among you say you don't believe that Internet filters have a funny side? Just check out Angelynn King's "At the Frog 'n' Filter."

This issue also fills the important role of documenting the Washington Library Association's current review of its intellectual freedom documents. WLA President Cindy Cunningham explains the purposes and process of the review, and expresses her hope for a new statement that will be meaningful to members of the library community and the public alike. *Alki*'s intellectual freedom columnist Tom Reynolds comments on the draft statement, and expresses his hope that the process will result in a recommitment by the Association to the principles of intellectual freedom. The draft "Intellectual Freedom Statement" itself appears for your consideration on page 6. The members of the *Alki* Committee and I hope that all WLA members will study the draft statement, and participate in this important organizational decision.

Carolyne Myall is Head of Collection Services, Eastern Washington University Libraries.

Send More Carnegie Information!

As promised, this issue of *Alki* features another Carnegie building of Washington, this one in Wenatchee.

Do you have photos of the Carnegie buildings in your community? If so, V. Louise Saylor, *Alki* Committee Chair, would like to hear from you. Please send pictures and information care of the editor, or contact Louise by email, at: AW_VL_SAYLOR@compuserve.com.

Oops!

I was very sorry to learn that there were a few errors in the last issue, involving contributors of pictures. Dale Goodvin took the handsome photograph of the University of Washington, Tacoma, Library. Mary Kelly supplied the photo of the Snohomish Library; Kitty Schiltz supplied the photo of the Chehalis Free Public Library. My apologies, and my thanks, to these contributors to "The Library as Place!"

Coming Issues


Since the annual conference is scheduled for mid-May, the deadline for the July issue is June 9, 2000. Please note that the delivery of this issue could be delayed until August, due to the extended deadline.

Following the spring meeting of the *Alki* Committee, I will post more themes of upcoming issues on the WLA listserv, to pique your interest and, I hope, spark your participation. As always, I look forward to hearing from you, and to talking with many of you at the 2000 Annual Conference.

Wenatchee Carnegie Library Building

In 1910, the Wenatchee City Council accepted a grant from the Carnegie Foundation to build a library. Opened in January 1912, with 1500 volumes, the Wenatchee Library soon needed larger facilities, and finally moved to another building in 1939. Since then, the Carnegie library building has been a public museum and has housed city departments. It is now the home of the Wenatchee Chamber of Commerce. Left photo courtesy of the North Central Washington Museum, Wenatchee, WA. Information and right photo courtesy Joy Neal, North Central Regional Library.
The Washington Library Association is seeking to rewrite its statements about intellectual freedom in light of the changes libraries are experiencing with Internet access. The two existing documents were adopted over 20 years ago, and are both quite lengthy. These texts do not allow a member of the public, or even a library staff member, library trustee or friend, to quickly grasp the essential elements. In deciding to craft a new document, we are seeking to create a simple, straightforward, more accessible one-page statement that will address several purposes. We want a statement to inspire and guide library supporters and staff, to remind them of the principles we are aspiring to reach and of the higher calling of defending every reader’s right to know.

We also want to create a document to help support those working with libraries, to help them explain why our principles are important, but also to demonstrate to a concerned public that we care about issues like children’s access to information and materials. We recognize that libraries are under a great deal of pressure from their local communities to demonstrate clearly their commitment to protecting library users from unintended exposure to “undesirable” materials. This is not a new issue for libraries; but the introduction of the Internet makes some of our former solutions, such as keeping some items behind the desk, no longer workable.

So the draft in this issue is a first cut at this effort. We are lucky to have had the hard work of the Intellectual Freedom Committee, led by Cher Ravagni. Other members of that committee are Mike Wessells, Candace Morgan, Elena Bianco, and Susan Veltfort.

There is no way we can get complete buy-in from everyone on such a controversial topic. On the other hand, it is imperative that libraries speak with a united, moderate voice on this topic, in order to keep citizens and legislators from dictating our policies about access.

A few years ago I would have never thought I’d see so many filtering options employed at our largest public libraries. Clearly, we all see how important it is to address citizens’ concerns so that we can guarantee the best access to the most people. Then we can give our time and energy to the important work of libraries—services, collection development, training, and computer access.

We invite all WLA members to let us know what they think about the draft statement, and to offer suggestions for change. We will need comments from you immediately upon your reading this document—we must have a completed draft by the beginning of May in time for presentation at the Tacoma conference. At the business meeting, we hope to have a quorum of members so that we can ratify this document and retire our former documents. The earlier documents can be viewed on our Web page, www.wla.org. If you cannot access the site, please contact Gail Willis at the WLA Office, (800) 704-1529, or at washla@wla.org.

Thank you for your participation in this important process.
A Passion for Freedom:
Does WLA's New Intellectual Freedom Statement Bring Intellectual Freedom as a Basic Library Value into the 21st Century?

by Tom Reynolds

As I was writing my fourth “Who’s on First?” intellectual freedom column for *Alki* in the fall of 1995, I came across a speech delivered by novelist Richard Ford to the American Book Association. It’s a speech I can never quite get out of my mind, and one I often come back to when writing my columns. The speech is called “Sanctuary for Ideas We Love—and Hate” (Ford). In this address, Ford recounts the important role the library played for him as a child growing up in Jackson, Mississippi, and he discusses how important libraries are to society in protecting those most fragile of freedoms: the freedom to read, speak, hear, and view ideas—particularly unpopular ideas.

Embedded in two short paragraphs of Ford’s speech is a definition of freedom of access to ideas and information that is so fundamental to libraries and yet so strong that I think many in the library community shy away from fully embracing its implications. In the first paragraph, Ford makes the point that freedom is an easy concept to fight for when it involves our own freedom or ideas and activities that we agree with. But he goes on to argue that freedom has moral force only when it is defined—as it is (or should be) in the library—by allowing others to do, read, like, profess, view, even act upon ideas and impulses that we don’t like. Intellectual freedom is a core value of American libraries. Championing intellectual freedom and increased access to information means championing access to unpopular ideas, access to controversial technologies, and access for groups that lack political power.

Early last year, WLA decided it was time to revisit and update its two most important intellectual freedom documents: the “Freedom to Read” statement originally passed in 1959, and the “Intellectual Freedom in Libraries” document passed in 1971. After listening to discussion at WLA’s Annual Conference in Pasco in April 1999, Intellectual Freedom Committee Chair Cher Ravagni said that the final document would be a one-page “affirmative statement” that would address all types of libraries and patrons in a jargon-free manner. A draft of the new document is included in this issue of *Alki* for your review, and will be formally considered at WLA Annual Conference in Tacoma this May.

While it was certainly time to update the language in WLA’s two intellectual freedom documents, this commentator was uncomfortable from the beginning with the idea that these two statements were going to be consolidated and condensated into a single-page document that would cover all the needed issues. I had hoped that WLA would use the revision of its IF documents as a process of recommitting the Association to work to maintain intellectual freedom and access to information in all Washington libraries. Hopefully, such a recommitment will indeed emerge from any dialogue that develops over the new intellectual freedom statement.

In the world of libraries, the term “intellectual freedom” translates into two concrete principles:

- Promoting access to information in all forms for all library users; and, conversely,
- Challenging all efforts to censor or restrict freedom of inquiry.

The strongest, and I think the purest, statement of libraries’ intellectual freedom principles and responsibilities is the American Library Association’s “Library Bill of Rights” and its various interpretations. (You can view these at ALA’s Website, at http://www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/lbr.html.) The “Library Bill of Rights” is a guide to action for libraries, a document that states clearly that libraries have a responsibility to challenge censorship and champion the exercise of intellectual freedom. Remember that as you read WLA’s draft “Intellectual Freedom Statement.”

In its draft intellectual freedom document, WLA has taken a different approach. The new IF statement is addressed to the larger community, not primarily to libraries, in much the way that ALA’s “Libraries, An American Value” statement is an attempt to create a dialogue with the larger society about library values. Unlike “Libraries, An American Value,” which ALA is careful to say does not replace the “Library Bill of Rights,” WLA’s draft statement is apparently intended to replace all older statements, and thus stand alone as our state library association’s only expression of its intellectual freedom principles. As such, it is a disappointment.

Upon first reading, it’s hard to disagree with the lofty sentiment of WLA’s draft statement or its call for community dialogue. Then why— I asked myself as I read it a second and third time—why does it seem so full of principle, but so lacking in passion? The answer is that in trying to address everybody’s issues and concerns in a one-page document, it has lost its way as a clear statement of our common intellectual freedom concerns. There is too much here, or possibly too little.

Of the statement’s eleven sections, only six deal specifically with the First Amendment, intellectual freedom, or access to information. If the intention was to keep the draft IF statement short, these could simply have been put together, leaving out other only marginally related material. But there is a bigger problem with this draft document: in their effort to be

Tom Reynolds is a librarian at the Edmonds Library. He is the author of *Alki’s* regular intellectual freedom column, “Who’s On First? Free Speech, Censorship and the Library.”

(Continued on next page)
Another Side of Intellectual Freedom and Library Trustees

by Patience Rogge

We usually think of intellectual freedom controversies as external challenges to library collections and policies. It is possible, however, that a question of the right to hold an unpopular opinion can arise within a library’s walls. What if, in their zeal to protect the free and open communication of ideas in the community at large, members of the library community themselves demand conformity, and thus become censors?

Case in point: Every two years, the XYZ Library Board of Trustees reviews, updates, and reaffirms its Operations Manual. During each review, the Board examines the Trustees’ Code of Ethics, which contains a promise to adhere to the American Library Association’s “Freedom to Read” statement and its intellectual freedom statement, the “Library Bill of Rights.”

But this year, a new Board member raised the question of the legality of requiring sitting trustees to make this promise, and of inquiring into potential trustees’ feelings about these documents during the interview process. After a lengthy discussion, it was clear that Board members were at an impasse. Two members objected to taking what they felt was a loyalty oath; and although they would certainly not break ranks in the event of a challenge, they believed that their intellectual freedom was compromised. Two Board members felt that anyone who was qualified to serve as a library trustee would gladly make the promise. The Board sent the question to its legal counsel, along with an invitation to speak at their next meeting.

The attorney found this a most challenging question, and after discussing it with his colleagues and searching case law, came back with his opinion. The answer was NO. A Board cannot make adherence to a previously adopted policy a condition for service; each new Board must decide to adopt or not adopt the Trustees’ Code of Ethics. When asked if “new” meant each time a vacancy was filled or if “new” meant each time the policy was reviewed, his reply was that it meant each time a new member is appointed to serve. Asking candidates for Board posts if they can support the Materials Selection Policy as developed by the Board (the Materials Selection Policy as well as the IF and “Freedom to Read” statements are supplied to applicants) is acceptable. The Board voted to reaffirm their adherence to the code at a subsequent meeting, but questions remain.

Perhaps the time has come to open a dialogue among library trustees throughout Washington on this dilemma.

A Passion for Freedom: (Continued from page 7) positive, descriptive, and non-controversial, and to provide “something for everyone,” the authors have written a document that is bland. Interestingly, the “Library Bill of Rights” contains only six short statements; but few would argue that it lacks power or misses the point.

Even in some of the sections that speak of the First Amendment or of providing access to information, library action feels equivocal or qualified. Libraries, for example, “offer” access to information and “represent” choices—while in Statement 2, libraries standing firm on the First Amendment seems to be predicated on the individuals acting “responsibly” in the exercise of these rights.

Nowhere in the IF statement is censorship mentioned. At a time when efforts to restrict access to library materials and change library policies are more organized and better financed than ever, this is a fundamental flaw. It is as though the statement were written without reference to the battles to expand and protect access to information that libraries and First Amendment champions have fought since the adoption of the “Library Bill of Rights” in 1948—battles that have shaped and expanded the definition of our First Amendment freedoms, battles that continue today.

Yes, libraries are about many things in today’s pluralistic, digital society. But one thing they cannot be about is censorship. A strong intellectual freedom statement will exhort libraries to challenge censorship, and to work with and support other groups that are resisting efforts to abridge free access to ideas. Community dialogue on freedom of expression is an important first step, but other actions will also be required. WLA needs to let friend and foe alike know exactly where Washington libraries stand on the issues of censorship and maximizing access. Any statement that is so innocuous that it ruffles not even the feathers of avowed censors is too mild to protect basic principles that we all cherish.

How might WLA rectify the problems I’ve identified? The best way to address these issues, I think, would be to refer specifically to the “Library Bill of Rights” in the text of WLA’s new IF Statement, much as the Association of College and Research Libraries has done in its newly adopted “Intellectual Freedom Principles for Academic Libraries.” The authors of WLA’s draft “Intelectual Freedom Statement” should take a page from Richard Ford and revisit this draft IF document. Give us a new statement with language that reflects our passion for free expression and inquiry, and that recognizes that our intellectual freedom principles are not grounded in some abstract philosophy, but rather are an essential part of our history, and are fundamental to everything we do. Finally, give us a statement that will challenge the censors and provide us with the moral force to carry our intellectual freedom principles into the 21st century.

Reference
Challenges to the Intellectual Freedom of Accessing Government Information

by Ann Roselle

Public access to U.S. government information has benefited from
1. federal legislation mandating that such information be printed and preserved,
2. the establishment of government depository libraries, and
3. having such information be exempt from copyright restrictions.

There is a level of openness to government information in the United States that is often not the case in other countries. With the advent of the Internet and the passing of the Electronic Freedom of Information Act (P.L. 104-231), the possibilities for broadening this openness would appear to be boundless. But, alas, the World Wide Web (WWW) has also created new challenges, along with variations on previous challenges, to providing unrestricted access to information and ideas from the government. This article discusses four challenges to the intellectual freedom of accessing government information in an electronic environment: National Security, Pace of Technological Change, Privatization of Governmental Services, and Permanent Public Access.

National Security

Anyone who spends time perusing the stacks of a depository collection is bound to come across a government publication with specific passages deleted by a thick black marker. In addition, many fascinating documents are never disseminated because of national security concerns. The Public Interest Declassification Act of 1999 (H.R. 3152), which is currently in committee, addresses the need to reevaluate the rules by which information becomes identified as “classified,” in response to the growing mounds of classified documents.

The Internet, with its ability to be accessed anonymously by anyone anywhere in the world, creates new national security concerns. Processes and computer programs for securing information available through the Internet are still being developed. Some federal agencies are particularly concerned that by connecting their servers to the Internet to share public domain information, they will inadvertently expose their departments to outside “hackers” capable of accessing sensitive materials that are in electronic format or capable of changing online public information. For example, the Chemical Safety Information and Site Security Act of 1999 (H.R. 1790), which is currently in committee, limits public access to risk management plans from the EPA because of concerns about terrorists.

Interestingly, in an effort to respond to concerns that the U.S. State Department may have about publishing information on its site, since Internet access may be exploited to access confidential information, the University of Illinois at Chicago Library suggested that it create and maintain the State Department’s official WWW site. Under the guidance of documents librarian John Shuler, the Library has over time also served as an “Internet reference desk” for the State Department, and answered questions via email. GPO has now established a formal “Partnership Program” encouraging other libraries and agencies to work together in an effort to improve electronic accessibility to government information. Still, despite this innovative project, restricting public electronic access because of overzealous concerns about national security may become a serious threat to the intellectual freedom of accessing government information.

Pace of Technological Change

The majority of government information available over the WWW is either in ASCII or HTML (version 3 or lower) format. These formats are generally easily accessible with a standard Internet browser. However, government agencies are increasingly developing more sophisticated and interactive ways in which to disseminate information over the WWW, thereby requiring more technological knowledge by the public and constant upgrading of software and equipment by depository libraries. Government agencies are now increasingly supplying information in alternative formats (i.e., XLS, PDF, TIF, or ZIP files), and assuming that the public will have and know how to use various software programs that extend the capabilities of their Internet browsers. Plug-ins for obtaining government information in video or audio formats are also becoming an expectation. Furthermore, the use of HTML 4, scripting, and interactive graphical software programs to improve the “look and feel” of government WWW pages requires public users and libraries to purchase faster and faster computers.

The technology industry will continue to develop the evolving WWW environment. The question is to what extent should the mechanisms in which the public accesses electronic government information

(Continued on next page)
simple. It’s against the law. Movie theaters and video stores can enforce ratings to their heart’s content, because they are private businesses complying voluntarily with the standards of a private organization. A public library is a government agency. For a government agency to enforce the standards of a private organization would by implication give those standards the weight of law. It would, to put it a little more dramatically, create a government-supported means of restricting public access to a protected form of expression. Technically, that’s a fairly blatant violation of the First Amendment. The MPAA has sued (and threatened to sue) libraries, cities, counties, and even states that have attempted through various means to enforce MPAA ratings by law.

I’m not claiming that this information will in any way placate the patron who is waving in your face that copy of Pulp Fiction they found in their child’s backpack. However, I hope it will make it a little easier for you to talk to patrons, confident that yes, you do know what the MPAA ratings mean, and yes, the library has a darn good reason for allowing little Billy to take Quentin Tarantino home: It’s the law.

Go ahead and practice saying this in front of the mirror. It’s fun!

References

1Much of my information about MPAA ratings comes from The Voluntary Movie Rating System: How It Began, Its Purpose, the Public Reaction, written by Jack Valenti, President and CEO of the MPAA, published in 1991 by the MPAA. The MPAA can be contacted at 14144 Ventura Boulevard, Sherman Oaks, CA 91423, phone (818) 995-3600.

2For a detailed definition of the various ratings, visit the MPAA Website at http://www.mpaa.org.
Before I began working for the Pierce County Public Library as Audio-Visual Collection Management Librarian, I probably knew as much about Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) ratings as your average moviegoer. Movie ratings annoyed me a great deal as a teenager; but once I passed the magic bar of 17, I rarely gave the subject a second thought. Who needs to think about these things? Aren’t they all just self-explanatory?

Once I began this job, however, I quickly found that when it comes to carrying MPAA-rated videos in public libraries, there is a lot to know. Movies, as well as music with Parental Advisory labels, are an interesting exception to library standards of never labeling materials for content. Obviously, these materials come pre-labeled by private organizations; but their existence in the library can raise certain expectations as to the role of the library in regard to “enforcing” those labels. I have found myself repeatedly faced with questions not only from the public, but also from staff members who found themselves facing patrons who were surprised not only to find an R-rated video on the shelf, but an R-rated video that their child could check out and take home.

In response to many of these questions, I wrote an article for our internal staff newsletter that discussed the various ratings—G through NC-17—as they are defined by the MPAA. I also gave a little background of the history and organization of the MPAA. The article was well received by PCL staff, and confirmed my sense that much of the information about ratings is hardly self-explanatory. I’d like to share with Alki readers some of that information, as well as an additional discussion of some of the legal obligations of libraries when it comes to MPAA ratings.

The Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) is the non-profit trade organization that represents the film, television, and video industries. Before the 1960s, movies and their content were heavily controlled by the studios that produced them. Just as society at large changed a great deal in the 1960s, movies began to change as well. Studios began to exercise less control over directors, and films began to be more frank and open both in subject and language.

The MPAA found itself facing two problems. How could the organization inform the public about the content of films released under its auspices, while not becoming a censoring institution that regulated what people could or could not put in their films, and what the public could see? The result was the Voluntary Ratings System. With some changes, this system is still in effect today.

The key word in discussing the ratings is the word “voluntary.” Everyone who participates in the ratings process does so voluntarily. Studios submit their films voluntarily to the MPAA for independent review. Movie theaters display and enforce the ratings voluntarily.

After the Columbine tragedy last year, the issue of movie ratings made the news again. Politicians demanded a crackdown on ratings’ enforcement. Movie theaters promised they would comply. The public felt relieved that our government had “done something.” In truth, neither the government nor movie theaters did anything radical or new. Movie theaters promised to do what they’ve always done, but with more vigilance—at least for a while. Government officials carefully avoided legislation that would somehow back MPAA ratings with the weight of law.

In addition to the voluntary nature of ratings enforcement, no one is required to submit their film to the MPAA in order to release it to the public. Occasionally you will see films, often foreign or independent films, that are NR, or Not Rated. This statement indicates nothing regarding the content of the film. It is not the equivalent of a “G,” or for that matter an “X” or “NC-17.” It merely means that the film was never submitted to the MPAA for review.

In The Voluntary Movie Rating System, Jack Valenti clearly explains the intended purpose of MPAA ratings. First of all, “[t]he rating board does not rate movies on their quality or lack of quality. That is a role left to film critics and audiences.” Second, “[t]he basic mission of the rating system is a simple one: to offer to parents some advance information about movies so that parents can decide what movies they want their children to see or not to see. The entire rostrum of the rating program rests on the assumption of responsibility by parents. If parents don’t care, or if they are lan-guid in guiding their children’s movie going, the rating system becomes useless. Indeed, if you are 17 or over, or if you have no children, the rating system has no meaning for you. Ratings are meant for parents, no one else.”

This statement clearly and effectively sums up the policies of many libraries when it comes to checking out videos. As with all materials, we place the responsibility for restricting the materials a child can check out upon the parent, no matter what the rating. From the point of view of someone working in a library, it seems quite clear. Videos are no different from books or magazines or music. We don’t demand identification for someone to check out books from the adult book section. We don’t do so for videos, either.

From a patron’s point of view, however, the distinction is not as clear. The fact is, movies do have ratings on them, right there on the spine. Movie theaters make kids show ID before they buy a ticket to an R-rated film. Most video stores enforce age restrictions for rentals. If they have to do it, what possible excuse could a library have for not enforcing these ratings?

The short answer to this question is pretty

Kati Irons is Audio-Visual Collection Management Librarian for the Pierce County Library System.
“Net” or “Nyet”: Tales from the Internet Trenches

by Anne E. Haley

We know that public libraries are changing. The library of the 21st century is not the same as the library of the past. The Internet offers the opportunity for public libraries to be comprehensive in their holdings, without regard to space constraints, budgetary constraints, or geographic location. Like the universe, the Internet is expanding at a mind-boggling rate. However, this new fabulous information technology has one small drawback: About 1% of the 288,220,000 Websites (a total of 5,000,500,000 files) have sexual images that may be offensive.

The U.S. Supreme Court, in the 1997 case of Reno v. ACLU, ruled that the Internet is a free speech zone, deserving of at least as much First Amendment protection as that which is afforded to books, newspapers, and magazines. The Internet is “the most participatory form of mass speech yet developed,” “a vast library including millions of readily available and indexed publications,” and “is as diverse as human thought.”

So this is the bottom line:
WHO is going to tell YOU what you can read, see, and view? Or tell you what YOUR kids can read, see and view? Should it be the mayor, the government, the public librarian, Dr. Laura, the Coventry Church pastor, or who?

Censorship wars over the Internet have become the rite of passage into the electronic information age for public libraries. With the distance of time, it is becoming easier to be philosophical about this acute political emergency, than it was when we were in the middle of the conflict, with young, female, twenty-something Mike-Wallace-wannabes thrusting microphones into our faces.

The most sobering experience was discovering the number of high-ranking civic authorities and public officials, who take an oath of office to uphold the laws of this country, who said, “Don’t tell me you are going to stand behind all this First Amendment bunk! Do the politically expedient thing. The ACLU is not very strong here anyway.”

The dilemma was how to comply with the law and also acknowledge people’s concerns for the possibility—not always the fact—that someone might see something on the Internet that they disapproved of. The decision facing the Yakima Valley Regional Library Board was to find the knife-edge between these competing needs.

The Yakima Valley Regional Library faced demands to
- Protect children from viewing sexual images;
- Protect parental rights and responsibilities;
- Prevent access to sexual images of any kind by anyone, adult or minor;
- Uphold the community’s moral values;
- Maintain access of the citizenry to the entire robustness of the Internet; and
- Do it all within the provisions of the U.S. Constitution, specifically the First Amendment and the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

Totally satisfying any particular faction’s demand would violate the demand of another.

The Internet arrived at the Yakima Valley Regional Library in spring 1998, through two grant projects. The Off the Shelf Project of the Washington State Library’s Connectivity Initiative installed Internet access at all nineteen community libraries. A grant from the Gates Library Foundation installed computer training labs at four community libraries where poverty levels exceeded 40% or where the number of students eligible for the federal school lunch program exceeded 90%. At the outset, 4,000 uses of the Internet were anticipated in twelve months. The actual count for the first six months of 1999 was 25,000 uses. We received about 10 complaints for sexual images that could be offensive.

Young people used the Internet for Dragonball Z, animorphs, Nintendo, Pokemon, World Wrestling Federation, e-mail, music, movies, coloring sheets, cartoons, bikes—the same things that interest kids outside the Internet.

Adults used the Internet for e-mail, jobs, stock quotes, recipes, weather, which of the Dionne quints is still living, real estate, cancers, grocery store coupons, climatic data in Arizona, chess game between Kasparoff and the world, medical information, an Eddie Bauer contest, directory assistance, business information, Kachina dolls, song lyrics, model steam engines, recipes, laws of different states, IRS tax forms, census data, government information—the same things that interest adults outside the Internet.

Little did we know at the time that we, too, would be involved in a maelstrom over the Internet.

Beginning in June 1999, we redesigned our home page, added filtered and unfiltered search engines and preselected sites for kids and teens to the Regional Library’s home page, created an “Internet Guide for Parents,” distributed the “Child Safety on the Information Highway” pamphlet by the gross, conducted classes for kids and parents, and bought lots of books on how to use the Internet responsibly.

Even so, the clamor has been to filter the Internet. It’s the SILVER BULLET to protect our children and maintain the moral values of our community.

But the silver bullet has some rust. A filter is blocking software that blocks access to certain Websites on the Internet. Blocks by
The standard varies from individual to individual. That which is materials that cause displeasure or resentment, or are obnoxious. scene” and who is to decide. That which is prurient telling people what Internet sites they can or cannot access. AIDS. Do we want the government through a commercial enter-
teen suicide, gambling addiction, date rape, teen violence, and specific filtered by their school’s filter, including topics such as Internet access for research on school-assigned subjects that are selected sites for kids and teens on the Regional Library’s home page. High school students are using the Regional Library’s Internet access for research on school-assigned subjects that are specifically filtered by their school’s filter, including topics such as teen suicide, gambling addiction, date rape, teen violence, and AIDS. Do we want the government through a commercial enterprise telling people what Internet sites they can or cannot access from a public library?

There is confusion over what is “offensive” and what is “obscene” and who is to decide. That which is offensive are acts or materials that cause displeasure or resentment, or are obnoxious. The standard varies from individual to individual. That which is obscene must meet the criteria set by the U.S. Supreme Court in the 1973 case of Miller v. California. Material could be considered legally obscene only if:

1. the average person, applying contemporary community standards, would find that the material, taken as a whole, appeals to the prurient (sexually arousing) interest;
2. the material shows, in a clearly offensive way, sexual conduct specifically described in the applicable law; and
3. the material lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value, when evaluated in accordance with national standards.

Or as Justice Hugo Black stated: “I know it when I see it.” It’s a pretty vague standard to implement consistently.

In 1974, in the case of Jenkins v. Georgia, the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously determined that local standards play a very limited role in the determination of what is to be considered obscene. Subsequently, many states have adopted laws only against the sale of obscene pictorial material to minors. Pornographic materials that involve photography of children are not legal anywhere for anyone.

The federal courts were again involved in the 1998 case of Mainstream Loudoun v. Board of Trustees of the Loudoun County Library, in the U.S. District Court in eastern Virginia. In this case, three Website operators, an artist, and a newspaper columnist had been blocked by the software the county library used to enforce its Internet policy restricting access to sexually explicit material, even though these sites did not contain such material. The court ruled that the plaintiffs had standing to challenge the library Internet policy on First Amendment free speech grounds. In addition, the court ruled that:

- The public library is a “limited public forum” and is bound by the same First Amendment standards that apply in a traditional public forum.
- Restricting what adults may read to a level appropriate for minors is a violation of the free speech guarantee of the First Amendment and the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.
- Requiring adults to request library staff to unblock non-offensive blocked sites constitutes unconstitutional prior restraint of speech, an essential component of the First Amendment. Prior restraint is any scheme that gives public officials the power to deny use of a forum in advance of its actual expression. The government carries a heavy burden of showing justification for imposition of such a restraint.
- The court also pointed out other less restrictive means of limiting access to materials, such as installation of privacy screens or using filtering software only on terminals used by minors.

The court ordered the county library to pay $100,000 of the $480,000 requested by the plaintiff for attorney fees.

**Examples of Websites and Newsgroups Blocked by Filters**

- MIT Student Association for Freedom of Expression
- Planned Parenthood
- a Holocaust remembrance page
- Ontario Center for Religious Tolerance
- a clearinghouse of environmental information
- HIV/AIDS Information Center of the Journal of the American Medical Association
- Mother Jones Magazine
- Boston Coalition for Freedom of Expression
- Jewish Bulletin
- Banned Books page at Carnegie Mellon
- National Organization for Women
- Illinois Federation for Human Rights
- Stop Prisoner Rape
- Breast Cancer Legislation
- Eating Disorders Awareness and Prevention
- Understanding Islam and Muslims
- American Friends Service Committee
- American Family Association
- Religious Society of Friends (known as the Quakers)
- San Francisco Examiner

In our conversations with people who protested free Internet access, we found that there was a lot of confusion between selection of library materials and filtering. Selection is the process of acquiring the very best materials in accordance with the collection development policy, limited by fiscal constraints. Censorship is the removal of any of those resources for content-based reasons. Filtering the Internet is different altogether. It’s a completely new and different situation with the Internet, because no site is “selected.” The Internet comes as a package. To bar access to Internet sites that are not legally obscene is censorship.

The Regional Library Board was faced with

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- Threats from mayors to cut funding, to withdraw from the Regional Library system, or to appoint sympathetic people to the Regional Library Board;
- Accusations that library employees were selling pornography on the job and that the Regional Library was employing known pedophiles;
- Arm-twisting techniques from various public officials;
- Disinformation broadcast by local talk radio;
- Threats from a school superintendent to run the Library Director out of the county;
- Many letters to the editor;
- Board meetings packed with angry people;
- A different news story slant on the issue every week for months;
- Too often, finding the library the top story on the 6 p.m. nightly TV news.

It couldn’t have happened to a nicer library.

The Library’s Internet Policy already stated that “library customers access the Internet at their own discretion. As with other library materials, parents/legal guardians of children are responsible for monitoring and restricting their children’s use of this resource.” The Internet Policy also noted that “[p]arents are encouraged to use information contained in two pamphlets widely available in our community libraries: ‘Child Safety on the Information Highway’ and ‘The Internet, a Parent’s Guide.’” Placing responsibility on parents, but with free access by minors, and adults, to disputed sites, wasn’t satisfying the critics.

The common solution among public libraries in Washington is to place one filtered terminal in the children’s area of each branch, with access by minors to both filtered and unfiltered terminals. Every Internet terminal in the Regional Library already had a filtering choice on the home page, but that didn’t satisfy the mayors.

The Regional Library Board took public testimony at two regular meetings. They reviewed the legal, technical, staffing, and fiscal issues of ten alternatives, ranging from totally unfiltered access to removing the Internet altogether. The Board started with two tenets:

- We will not flout the law.
- We will hold parents responsible, and accountable, for their minor’s use of the Internet.

The Regional Library Board revised the Internet policy:

- “Knowingly viewing, printing, downloading or exhibiting of obscene materials in violation of city, state or federal laws” was added to the list of prohibited behaviors.
- “Internet access with and without software-blocking software (filters) will be available in all community libraries. All customers using the Internet must sign an Internet Use Agreement. An adult must sign a Yakima Valley Regional Library Internet Use Agreement indicating they have read this Internet Policy and agree to abide by it and any future version of the Policy as a condition of using the Regional Library’s Internet access. A minor’s parent or legal guardian must sign a Yakima Valley Regional Library Minor Internet Use Agreement, indicating they have read this Internet Policy and agree that the minor may use the Regional Library’s Internet access and that the minor will abide by the Internet Policy and any future version of the Policy as a condition of the minor using the Regional Library’s Internet access, and elect filtered or unfiltered access for the minor. A minor will not be allowed to use the Internet without this completed form.”

The Internet policy of Yakima Valley Regional Library is one of the most restrictive policies in Washington State.

Between September 1 and December 31, 1999, there were 29 news stories on the Regional Library and the Internet, 38 letters to the editor, and 7 editorials in the daily and weekly newspapers in Yakima County. The Yakima Herald-Republic listed this issue as no. 3 of the 10 top stories in 1999 for Yakima County. Only the arson fire that destroyed 95-year-old St. Joseph’s Church and the November elections ranked higher!

Since violation of the policy may involve criminal behavior, we sought guidance from the Yakima Police Department. On one hand, the police do not want to spend time with complaints about people looking at offensive pictures on the Internet at the Regional Library. On the other hand, the mayor wants an Internet police to monitor and remove Internet users from offensive sites. To add to the confusion, the city attorney is very reluctant to propose a definition of obscenity by ordinance.

Will this solution satisfy everyone? No. Only compromise can result in situations as complex as these. We anticipate that most people will see the common sense in this solution. A few people will continue to be dissatisfied.

What have we learned from all this?

- It takes very little to start a witch-hunt.
- Few people know, understand, or care about the freedom of speech provision of the First Amendment.
- Bad publicity is better than no publicity at all. Our libraries are packed! Seventy-five people a day were using the Internet at the Yakima and Sunnyside Libraries.
- People who complain about public libraries and want Internet filters are NOT the people who use them.
- Filtered Internet access can be frustrating, in preventing access to non-offensive material, including e-mail.
- Older teens refuse to involve their parents and are not using the Internet at community libraries.
- As University of Washington School of Library and Information Science Director Mike Eisenberg says, managing public libraries is not rocket science. It is infinitely more difficult.

If Grimm had rewritten Sleeping Beauty for today’s youth, it would be called “The Old King and the Spindles.” In this modern version, the old King did not ban all the spindles in the kingdom. Instead, he taught his daughter what spindles were and how to use them safely. She did not prick her finger on a spindle, or fall into a 100-year sleep, or cause a love-sick prince to risk life and limb hacking through a thistle thicket to rescue her and the sleeping kingdom, or be storied by Grimm.

In the end, the very best filter is the human mind.
I want to return this filtering software.

Right. You want to upgrade your filtering software.

No, I want to RETURN the filtering software.

Right. Not the right type o’ software, then?

It doesn’t work.

Doesn’t work? O’ course it works. Wrote it meself.

I have here a list, containing the 1,298 sites my family has been barred from viewing in this past week ALONE.

Lessee ... well, that’s all right. Don’t want the kiddies to get ‘old of this. “Girls, girls, girls,” it says.

That’s the GIRL SCOUTS.

Can’t be too careful, can you?

My youngest son was also locked out of “Old McDonald’s Point’n’Quack” because of what Mr. Rooster says.

I’ll make a note o’ that. I can offer you a lovely deal on an upgrade. What would you like? We got a special on the one what excludes opposin’ political views.

I don’t want any more filtering software. My children cannot do their homework.

It ain’t guaranteed to make ‘em any SMARTER, sir. I’ve got a package over ‘ere, though, that...

What I mean is, the vast majority of Western history has been obliterated. There is no opium trade with the East. The American colonies did not grow tobacco; Prohibition did not occur—or stop occurring; it’s hard to tell. There are no wars, no weapons, and no battles. Gunpowder itself is most conspicuous by its absence.

Don’t want ‘em gettin’ ideas. Little moppets.

On the literary front, we seem to have lost not only Anna Laetitia Barbauld and Mary Wollstonecraft (both Shelley and non-) but also Charles Dickens, Max Beerbohm, Bishop Asser, Richard Hooker, Johns Bunyan and Gay, and anyone at all named Roger. My eldest is writing a research paper on Fanny Trollope, and this software has stopped her in her tracks.

Decent woman wouldn’t ‘ave a name like that, would she?

It’s not as if they are actually being protected.

Ooooh... what’s all this, then?

THIS is a list of all the sites that were in fact accessed, during a nine-year-old’s slumber party. Starting with “Daffy Pornograffy.”

Well, I’ll be. Didn’t know ducks was built like that. Not that I’ve ever looked all that close, mind you. An’ there ain’t never been two effs...

That is precisely the point. The words are intentionally misspelled to avoid the filter.

Well, it’s not a spell-checker, is it? Was you wantin’ a spell-checker, then? This week we got a special on...

There is nothing wrong with my SPELLING. There is something wrong with my COMPUTER. We can’t even carry on the activities of our daily lives. I can no longer buy antiques because too many of the items have drawers. We have to plan entire party menus without recipes for cheesecake, fruit bombes, asparagus spears, shrimp cocktail, poultry breasts OR thighs, button mushrooms, or anything at all containing alcohol or, for some reason, oysters. My daughter spent all of Saturday afternoon trying to find a SADDLE.

You don’t know what them leather goods places is like. Better safe than sorry, I always say.

You can’t get anything at all in French.

Tell you what. Take the upgrade, an’ I’ll throw in this ‘ere universal translator.

I don’t think you understand—never mind. The thing is, it doesn’t just block entire sites. Some of them are just... appallingly censored.

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Giving Credit Where Credit Is Due: Confusing Plagiarism with Copyright Infringement Undermines Principles of Intellectual Freedom

by Laura McCarty

Librarians are so conditioned into thinking of any intellectual property claim as inviolate that they do not see when it conflicts with rights to intellectual freedom. This article invites librarians to transcend their traditionally prescribed role as property police and adopt an ethical stance skeptical of the commercial ethos of our times.

A sociology student at the University of Washington has procrastinated all quarter and has a paper due tomorrow. He connects to the UW library web site, opens a sociology database, identifies three articles that look related to the topic he has selected, then copies them into his word-processing program, bibliographies, abstracts, and all. He interleaves related paragraphs from each article into his own paper, being careful to write brief but plausible-sounding transitions between sections. He copies the related bibliographic information and adds it to the end of the paper. He puts his name on it and turns it in the next day. Elapsed time, three hours (Johnson).

Knowledge of how to use the cut-and-paste functions of computers, combined with convenient access to the vast body of content on the Internet, and backed by perennial social acceptance of claims of ignorance regarding research and citation practices yields a low-risk opportunity for the individual inclined to assemble a paper instead of writing it. The electronic opportunism exhibited in the above scenario has, in fact, attained the status of legend.

In his article “Cybercheating: Dishonesty Goes Digital,” Scott Stebelman wrote, “Plagiarism has always been a problem and is often associated with younger students who don’t fully understand the behaviors that constitute cheating, or who lack the ethical standards to refrain from committing it.” The main recommendation in the article seems to be that we should outwit the young scoundrels by taking on their traditionally prescribed role as property police (Stebelman).

In addition to these devices and genres, there are many processes in which there is great utility in borrowing ideas and expression. Published works are translated into other languages to give broader access to those works. Web pages and software code are adapted to one’s own purposes. A speaking style is imitated by a student learning how to make effective oral presentations. In all these cases and many others, society constructs rules that define the extent or limits of acceptable creative borrowing and the penalties and rewards, if any, when the rules are not observed.

Given that a lot of borrowing is indeed “good,” there are some
useful and practical distinctions still to be made. The first line we need to draw is one that separates acceptable from unacceptable borrowing. The second one we must draw distinguishes legal infringement (theft of intellectual property) from plagiarism.

As we are all aware, privilege has its rewards, and might makes right. Brian Martin points out the existence of “institutionalized plagiarism” where credit for intellectual work is taken as a consequence of unequal status or power. Ghost writing, political speech writing, honorary authorship, and contributing authorship done by junior workers in bureaucracies are examples of this kind of plagiarism, which is widely accepted. In cases of “competitive plagiarism,” it is just the other way around: through claiming credit for intellectual work, we strive to acquire more status and power, but not necessarily more wealth (Martin).

James Zebroski sheds further light on acceptability by identifying four categories of plagiarism: 1) truly accidental occurrences of plagiarism that spring from simultaneously occurring, individual creative processes; 2) those that arise from acts of collaboration; 3) those involving disputes about what knowledge belongs in the cultural commons and what knowledge does not; and 4) “policed plagiarism when sanctions are in effect, authorities are in place, and the machinery of enforcement ready” (Zebroski, p. 36).

All but the fourth category correspond to at least some cases of acceptable borrowing, although we could reasonably expect some serious disputes to arise in situations where creative collaboration or threats to the cultural commons (cases 2 and 3) are involved.

Standards of acceptability change. So, whereas during the early development of the Web, it was acceptable to copy Web pages in their entirety for use or adaptation, increasingly this is becoming less acceptable as the “machinery of enforcement” of ownership rights is constructed and put into place.

Is It Copyright Infringement?

Intellectual property is created by copyright law. Only the products of intellectual labor—fixed expressions—are the objects of the law’s attention. Ideas cannot be copyrighted, but they can be plagiarized.

Despite the mass media’s frequent use of the “theft” metaphor to allude interchangeably to acts of plagiarism and copyright infringement, a quick look at a legal encyclopedia shows that plagiarism is legally invisible (almost). Thus, Boston University had to base its recent legal case against term paper mills (research paper plagiarism) on charges of federal racketeering. In contrast, the music publisher Acuff-Rose was able to base its early-1990s case against 2 Live Crew’s parody of a 1960s hit song on a charge of copyright infringement because it owned rights to the song. The facts of the case were better represented by the extra-legal concept of plagiarism than by the legal concepts of copyright, and the case eventually foundered.

If James Boyle is right, and today’s social and political environment increasingly enables certain moral rights to be recast as legal rights of ownership, we might soon begin to observe an increase in legal challenges aimed at expression involving borrowings that we had heretofore considered acceptable. In general, this also means an increased possibility of greater control by private commercial interests over the flows of information within our society (Boyle).

The difference between copyright infringement and plagiarism probably confuses anybody who has taken the time to think about actual situations in which these might occur. The following examples are intended to assist the reader who is just beginning to differentiate the two.

Hypothetically, if I were to paraphrase or quote an idea proposed and developed at a cocktail party (or paraphrase or quote a page from a published work that was undeniably in the public domain) and subsequently imply in a memo to my boss that I had originated the idea, I would probably be plagiarizing. But I would probably not be infringing the law. In this situation, I might be able to escape the penalties due a plagiarist if, as is common in some technical cultures, ownership of ideas mattered less to the people involved than efforts to improve on and apply the ideas. In any case, it might be possible to fully redeem myself by giving credit where credit was due, although Senator Joseph Biden learned that such an option is normally unavailable to a politician accused of plagiarizing.

However, if as a music instructor I were to copy sheet music that had been published rather recently and distributed it to all of my 8th grade band class without paying royalties to the holder of reproduction and performance rights on that music, I would most likely be infringing the copyright on that work. The offense would be considered to be a legal one. I would be sure to make no claim that this music was a result of my own intellectual effort, of course.

Where’s the Harm?

Focusing on technical solutions to plagiarism hides a multitude of sins. Comparator programs, like pornography filters on Internet access terminals, rely on a technological definition of plagiarism unable to respond with adequate flexibility and sensitivity to a changing social environment. (For information about comparator programs, see www.plagiarism.org and www.plagiarism.com.) I predict that any efforts undertaken to fix the problem of plagiarism in university environments by filtering all student papers through a comparator will ultimately fail.

Librarians have a professional responsibility to promote clarity on issues—like plagiarism—that have a potential impact on public perceptions about the rights we associate with intellectual freedom.

...
Margaret E. Chisholm made exceptional contributions as a library leader, educator, administrator, and author. She was a mentor and role model to countless students and young professionals, an engaging speaker who relished every opportunity to meet people and to promote librarians and librarianship, and an effective spokesperson on the many boards, commissions, and committees on which she served.

Though Washingtonians now claim her as our own, Dr. Chisholm was a native of Minnesota. Like many librarians, she launched her career somewhat late in life; but her path was more difficult than many. While a single parent, she received her B.A. in 1957, her M.L.S. in 1958, and went on to earn a Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration in 1966, all from the University of Washington. It is, perhaps, equally remarkable that both of Margaret’s daughters, Nancy and Jan, became librarians!

Margaret served on the faculty of the University of Oregon School of Librarianship and as Dean of the Library School at the University of Maryland. She returned to her alma mater in 1975 as Vice-President for University Relations and Development (the University of Washington’s first woman V.P.) and Professor of Librarianship. From 1981 until her retirement in 1992, she was Director of the Graduate School of Library and Information Science. Margaret’s distinguished career included election as president of the American Library Association for the 1987-88 term; and her presidential theme “Motivate, Inspire and Lead” was a wonderful slogan that matched her persona and passion. Remembering her presidential theme, Janice Bonnet and Nancy Lane have established the Margaret E. Chisholm Motivate, Inspire and Lead Fund at the University of Washington School of Library and Information Science. The fund will be used to bring important leaders in the field to the School to inspire the next generation of librarians.

Of all the awards and honors that were bestowed on Margaret, I know that none was more cherished than the WLA 1991 President’s Award. The citation is a fitting valediction:

Leadership was the catchword during Margaret’s reign as President of the American Library Association. But Washington State knows that leadership is more than a catchword to Margaret. Margaret lives and breathes leadership. She inspires the best in her students and her colleagues.

As Director of the Library School, she has struggled to bring the curriculum into the twenty-first century. She has forged partnerships within the field to provide the elements necessary to prepare students for a changing world. She has been a dominant presence in the state and nation, calling out what libraries and librarians can be.

Under her direction, an active continuing education program was established, an active summer program tapping the best in the field was developed, a computer lab was furnished, and additional scholarship resources were fostered.

But the delightful side of Margaret’s leadership is her sense of humor and her sense of style. Everything she does speaks volumes. “We’re good and we’re proud of it.” She has a wonderful balance, knowing when to have fun and when to be serious. We are proud to call Margaret friend and colleague.

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Good Books, Appropriate Books: Making Age-Appropriate Selections

by Eve G. Datisman

“We have met the enemy and he is us.” Pogo—Walt Kelly.

Librarians know about materials selection policies. We live by them. In school libraries, everything we purchase for our collections has to meet the criteria of enrichment and support of the curriculum, to support the diverse needs of the student population, to stimulate critical thinking, to supply opposing viewpoints, to be reputable, unbiased, etc. Often, we are called in when departments are looking for new materials. We are consulted because we know about accuracy, readability, age appropriateness, reviews, and listings in standard “You ought to have this in your Social Studies, Language Arts, Science Program” selection tools. We are consulted because we know about ties to the EALRs (Essential Academic Learning Requirements), which used to be ties to the Scope and Sequence and SLOs (Student Learning Objectives), etc., etc.

These are our daily tools. We consult them when we are thinking about materials that we wish to include in the library collection. We know that there are bound to be materials, which, if we are running the kind of library that will address the broad mission of libraries everywhere, will offend someone. So we check the review sources, formal and informal, look at the grade level for which the material is appropriate. We look at the whole curriculum and make our case for books like Catcher in the Rye; Our Bodies, Ourselves; and Of Mice and Men at the high school level; for Judy Blume’s books and several copies of What’s Happening to My Body at the middle school level, and for Grimm’s fairy tales at every level. In my district, classroom materials go through the Materials Selection Steering Committee before approval, while the library materials pass through the administrative offices for a “heads up.” Public libraries aren’t worried about curriculum, but there are similar concerns in meeting the needs of a diverse population, stimulating critical thinking (folks of all ages need to be able to think critically), making sure that the materials are reputable and unbiased. Regardless of the type of library, selection policies serve the same purposes.

Materials selection policies are a lot of work and take a lot of time. But it’s worth it when the censors come to call. If a clear, current materials selection policy is in place with a sound mission statement at its head, and if there is a clear procedure for dealing with challenges, nine times out of ten, the materials will stand the test, and will remain in the collection for patrons and staff to use.

With all of this said and in position, why in the world do we become our own worst enemies and open ourselves up to challenge in classrooms or in storytimes in public libraries? If you’ve been paying attention to the hoopla surrounding Harry Potter and his adventures at the Hogwarts School, you’ll have a clue. Harry has been in trouble with the censors for more than one reason. Most of us had figured that the reasons would be the mentions of witches and witchcraft and spell-casting. And there have been a few of those complaints. But the one that came zinging out of that area where we were staring at the sun and trying to see the Golden Snitch was read-aloud time in classrooms. In an open letter to LM_NET, Gary Joseph, Coordinator Library Services Department, South-Western City Schools, Grove City, Ohio, called us all to task. He said, I just can’t stand it any longer. I am having trouble understanding why educators want to use Harry Potter books with students who are in early elementary grades.

I think people are making decisions based on New York Times Best Sellers Lists and what is perceived as the popularity of these titles. What ever happened to the idea of a book being age appropriate?

What ever happened to reading a book yourself first before recommending it to teachers to use. I have read all three Harry Potter books, and the length of each book, particularly book three is over 400 pages, would not allow for my recommending it to elementary teachers. And the vocabulary in these books is not meant for first, second and third graders who are reading at grade level.

Finally, if you look at the reviews of these titles, you will notice they are not listed as an elementary level book. The October issue of VOYA lists book three as a middle or junior high book, which are grades 6 through 9.

Now we are hearing about challenges to these titles. Is it any wonder when we as professionals use these books with an audience that they were not intended for? Promote these books for 1st and 2nd grade teachers indeed.

I will get down from my soapbox now!

Eve G. Datisman is Resourceress at Forks High School, Quillayute Valley School District No. 402. She is Intellectual Freedom Chair of the Washington Library Media Association.
He’s right, you know. We are doing our students and ourselves a great disservice when we select materials based upon best seller lists and upon our personal likes and loves, rather than on sound principles that govern other materials selection, especially the section that says we know the students for whom we buy. The selection policy may not specifically say “and is age appropriate,” but we know that this is an important criterion, and we should pay attention to it.

We know that authors like Byrd Baylor, R.L. Stine, Tomie DePaola, Roald Dahl, and the Stinky Cheese Guy—who’s name I will never spell correctly but who everyone knows when one says “Stinky Cheese Guy”—all have an audience in mind when they write. Dahl was never under the illusion that his Revolting Rhymes were to be used with grades 1 or 2. Just because the rhymes deal with the characters that many of those students know and love doesn’t mean that Dahl’s treatment is right for them. Developmentally, children can’t discern satire or parody until age 10 or 12; witness the number of Mad Magazine copies that are carried around by kids of that age. Still, 10 or 12 year-olds may not be ready for Dahl. Dahl’s adult themes make high school a better choice. This has nothing to do with the fact that age. Still, 10 or 12 year-olds may not be ready for Dahl. Dahl’s adult themes make high school a better choice. This has nothing to do with the fact that 10 and 12 year-olds may dress to emulate 19 and 20 year-olds, are worried about girlfriends and boyfriends, may try sneaking into PG-13 movies, or may be watching the late-night HBO and Cinemax offerings. Just because they have been exposed doesn’t mean they understand; and it certainly doesn’t mean that just because I love Dahl’s Revolting Rhymes, I will share them with 5th or 6th graders. Why waste a good thing by using it up too fast? And worse, why call my professional judgment into question? Why set myself up for the censors? Mr. Joseph is right: popularity by itself isn’t a good criterion for selecting.

The elementary level, in particular, has a plethora of wonderful materials for any grade and reading level. Best of all, more are being printed and reviewed each day. The same is true for the middle and high school grades. As a part of the myriad services that we offer to our staff in conjunction with reading specialists, let’s talk about sound selection policies in mini-lessons, during grade level meetings, and at faculty meetings. For librarians in the public sector, use those meetings with the school folks who are tapping into your services for children.

Let’s pass on our knowledge, and highlight the age appropriate information about books that we know will be popular with the staff. Let’s make a point of being proactive and be our own friends, not the friend of the censor. Let’s not use up the resources that we have too soon. The appeal of any book or film or CD begins to pale if a child sees it in every class. Even though we love the item, let’s remember that if we love something too much, we probably won’t be making sound judgments as to its use; and let’s call in someone else to talk it over. If we are going to put our professional reputations on the line, let’s do it for something worthwhile … something sound … something truly well researched and implemented at the correct level. Then it’s worth the fight to keep it in the collection because it will meet the materials selection criteria and the needs of our students. And, best of all, when we meet the enemy, it won’t be us.

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INSTRUCTIONS TO CONTRIBUTORS

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

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

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

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

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

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The public library on the front page of the paper again? The local high school makes the nightly news? Or agenda items for your next college faculty meeting? Although incidents of censorship and denial of information access at academic libraries rarely make the headlines, librarians at these institutions are affected by intellectual freedom issues, just as their counterparts at public and school libraries are.

As part of a larger universe, colleges and universities feel the same impact of change and conflict as other institutions. Access vs. control, ethics vs. economics, individual rights vs. the common good, privileges vs. responsibilities—these are common issues within all publicly funded libraries. In principle, all librarians look to their professional code of ethics. The "Library Bill of Rights", to assist them when questions about collections, resources, and records arise. Various interpretations of this document also serve as ethical guidelines.

Academic institutions also exist as worlds of their own. Populations served, mission statements, funding and reviewing bodies are specific to educational organizations. Some issues, such as academic freedom and tenure, are unique to academic institutions. In practice, disagreements over open access take place on college campuses around the state. Every bit as acrimonious as those affecting their colleagues in school and public libraries, these debates are most often arbitrated within individual academic institutions, not in the public arena.

Censorship

Take a highly educated population. Add a controversial topic about which one or more in that group has a personal or professional stake. Substitute books on the public library shelf such as Daddy's Roommate, Madonna's Sex or The Anarchist's Cookbook for those dealing with holocaust denial, racial theory, or feminist scholarship. The result can be volatile.

At academic libraries, challenges may come from students. A 1995 study of censorship in academic libraries found that students at private, religious four-year college libraries had the greatest number of objections to shelf materials. At public universities and colleges, objections are also made to titles that have sexual, political, racist, and religious themes. Not limited to books alone, journals such as The Advocate, Soldier of Fortune, and Animals' Agenda are often stolen or mutilated to prevent further access (Bukoff).

Complaints may come also from faculty members who have done extensive research, writing, and teaching in specialized fields. Science professors may object to the cataloging and placement on the shelves of history or philosophy of science materials. As part of the "hate speech" debate taking place on many campuses, feminist and racial theory scholars may argue that outdated, incorrect, or inaccurate historical material should be removed from the shelves or relocated to other areas of the library to prevent general access.

Disputes over materials are most often resolved within the library. Academic libraries, whether private or public, have collection development policies that clearly state the objective of providing information on a variety of subjects, from diverse viewpoints, to support the educational mission and curriculum of the institution. The principle of academic freedom also gives faculty librarians the right “to build broad and varied collections unrestricted by prejudice, bigotry, or special pressures” (DeVinney, p. 31). In this environment, book challenges are usually seen by college and university administrators as internal library matters, requiring no interference.

Information Access

Challenges to materials, although difficult, fall within a well-defined area. Books and journals are added to library collections based on certain criteria; disputed materials are dealt with using established policies and procedures. Under the umbrella of both academic and intellectual freedom principles, the role of the librarian as protector of First Amendment rights is fairly secure.

Electronic access to information is another matter. Open access has become an ethical battlefield for most librarians, academic librarians being no exception. While information technology staff try to secure campus networks against hackers, librarians work to provide access to library resources by creating comfortable, inviting spaces and easy-to-use Web interfaces. At the same time that elected officials campaign for filtering controls in public institutions, administrators call for a broadened service philosophy. The principles embraced by our profession are not shared by all departments on campus or even by some of our own employees.

If information is an essential ingredient to acquiring and producing new knowledge, and if education and research are our stated priorities, then where do sexually explicit graphics, personal email, chat rooms, and games fit in? Procedures may be inconsistent, guidelines vague, and policies unclear, contradictory, or nonexistent. Rather than serving as intermediaries in the technology-driven environments they worked hard to develop, rather than protecting freedom of information rights in an electronic environment, librarians may be vexed to find themselves also acting as hall monitors.

The academic librarian’s ideological commitment to freedom of information and the First Amend-
Site-based management—a management system in which many decisions are made at the individual school level, rather than at the district level—holds both opportunities and pitfalls for school librarians. For a clear understanding of the issues, we need to look at site-based management in relationship to regional accrediting bodies and their standards, state administrative codes, state law, district policies, and union contracts.

The Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges (NASC) used to have firm guidelines for school library staffing, periodical and newspaper subscriptions, equipment, collection and per-pupil funding amounts. The accreditation standards were respected; they established a solid foundation for school libraries.

In December 1997, many of those standards were watered down. School librarians from Utah to Alaska lobbied and were allowed to establish an ad hoc committee to revise the standards once again. While the product that was finally approved was not all that librarians desired, it was an improvement over the original 1997 changes. (For more about the standards, see the NASC Website at www.awsp.org/nasc.htm.) One of the most important omissions, though, was a formula for staffing that ensures sufficient library staffing for larger schools.

The State of Washington requires school librarians to be certificated teachers first and then asks that they meet requirements for subject-area endorsements. Teachers are certified by grade level (K-8 or high school). For initial placement, school librarians should have a library endorsement. Once teachers and librarians are initially placed, however, state regulations are weak. Washington Administrative Codes, known as the WACs, do not have the power of law. Current State Board of Education codes for library media specialists are found at http://www.wlma.org/walibs/endorsdraft.htm and at http://www.wlma.org/walibs/wacs.htm.

District and union contracts are weak in their support of school libraries. Some union contracts call for half-time librarians if the school enrollment is under 300, but are silent about adding librarians or clerical staff when enrollment is greater. Other union contracts specify how much clerical support should be provided, per hundred students. Some district and union contracts call for the librarian to provide teachers with a specified amount of preparation time. While this guarantees a library position in the school, it is not considered the most effective way to teach information skills. Librarians are often not given “prep time” themselves; neither, in “real life,” are they often given a 30-minute duty-free lunch period. Cataloging support, as well as attendance at the annual conference of the Washington Library Media Association (WLMA), can be a matter for union negotiations, also.

A recent WLMA Supervisors’ survey of seventeen reporting districts showed wide ranges of practice. Seven districts have a union catalog, and eight have cataloging done centrally by a cataloger. A full-time librarian with a library media endorsement runs most school libraries, but there are some libraries that have only a part-time librarian or parent volunteers. Sometimes a librarian serves two schools. In the same district, one librarian may serve 300 or 1600 students. High school staffing ranges from one full-time librarian to two full-time librarians and contract-mandated clerical help. Budgets range from a low of no allocation to a high of $15 per pupil at an elementary school. At the secondary level, funding varies from $4.50 to $17.50 per pupil. Budgets can also fluctuate radically from school to school, even within the same school district.

Site-based management in Washington has moved many former district-level decisions to the individual school level. Site-based management in Washington has moved many former district-level decisions to the individual school level. I asked WLMA members to tell about site-based management in their districts and promised to keep their names, schools, and districts confidential. The results are anecdotal, not a scientific survey. They tend to tell the worst-case scenarios.

Sometimes personnel at the building level are given the responsibility but not the funds necessary to accomplish what was formerly a district task. In one district, the personnel director hired certified full-time library media specialists in every school. The next year, under site-based management, the principal replaced the certificated librarian with a classroom aide.

Consider the impact of site-based management on the WLMA annual conference during the State Inservice Day, the second Friday in October. WLMA signs a contract with a hotel or conference site five years in advance, and signs with authors and major speakers six to ten months in advance. Under site-based management, some librarians were required to be in their buildings. Other school librarians were told only the week before that they would be allowed to attend the conference because it took that long for a building committee to address the subject. On the other hand,
many school librarians did attend with their districts’ blessings.

Everyone should be concerned about the condition of school libraries because of the effect libraries have on school levels of achievement. This effect has been demonstrated in educational research. An important example is a study conducted in 1992 by the Colorado State Library (Lance, 1994). Consider the summary of the findings of this study, shown in the box.

Recently an updated version of this study was conducted in Alaska. Keith Curry Lance found that of the library media predictors for which data was available, those demonstrating noteworthy direct and indirect effects on academic achievement were:

- Level of librarian staffing.
- Hours the library media center is open.
- Staff activities, especially delivering library/information literacy instruction to students, collaborating with teachers on instructional units and providing inservice training to staff.
- Library usage.
- Cooperative relationships with the public library.
- Ability to provide student access to online information, and
- Collection development policy addressing reconsideration requests (Goodman; see also Lance, 1999).

For the most part, decisions regarding the implementation of these predictors are now site-based management decisions.

Site-based management requires the librarian to be savvy, attend many meetings (instructional council, site council, and PTSA meetings), work on curriculum projects, and be on the building technology committee. This is challenging for a single librarian who keeps the library open before school, during lunch, and after school. A librarian who has support staff is in a better position to build influence.

However, there are some positive signs that school librarians are taking up the challenge to be players in site-based management. Last summer, thanks to Dr. Mike Eisenberg, Director of the University of Washington School of Library and Information Science, Washington school librarians spoke at the Smart Tools Academies for school administrators. Also, WLMA President Darwin Page has arranged for a joint WEA (Washington Education Association)-WLMA committee to work on contract language.

School librarians have begun to heed, and seriously consider, the “wake-up calls” published by leaders of the profession—for example, Dr. Gary Hartzell’s article entitled “The Invisible School Librarian” (Hartzell). Dr. Hartzell’s speeches, “The Price of Invisibility” and “Power is Not a Dirty Word: Building Influence for School Librarians,” were given at the 1998 ALA conference and at the WLMA conference in October 1998, to attentive audiences. Some districts have studied his 1994 book, Building Influence for the School Librarian.

The implementation of the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) and Association for Education Communications and Technology’s Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning, also known as IP2, concentrates on Information Literacy standards and collaboration with teachers. For this program, there are five-year implementation plans at the state and national level. Washington has correlated the EALRs (Essential Academic Learning Requirements) with the IP2 literacy standards. (This information is also posted on the WLMA Web page, http://www.wlma.org.) The IP2 slogan is “because student achievement is the bottom line.”

AASL is supporting federal legislation (SB 1262 and HR 3008) that will address the training and funding needs of school libraries nationwide. State professional library communities across the country must support these bills if they are to pass. In many ways, the success of our profession in light of site-based management depends on this national support.

I remember Dr. Eisenberg delivering the AASL President’s Keynote Address in Miami in 1994—“Thrive, Not Just Survive, in the Technological Jungle.” We could modify that title to “Thrive, Not Just Survive, with Site-Based Management.” Ultimately it will come down to each school librarian explaining to school boards, administrators, teachers, and parents that the quality of their school libraries directly affects student achievement.

As parents and community members, Alki readers can help by asking school principals about the staffing and funding of the local school libraries.

Summary of the 1992 Colorado Study Findings

- The size of a library media center’s staff and collection is the best school predictor of academic achievement. Students who score higher on norm-referenced tests tend to come from schools that have more library media staff and more books, periodicals, and videos.
- The instructional role of the library media specialist shapes the collection and, in turn, academic achievement. Students who score higher on norm-referenced tests tend to come from schools where an endowed library media specialist is involved not only in identifying materials suitable for school curriculum, but also in collaborating with teachers and others in developing curricula.
- The degree of collaboration between library media specialist and teachers is affected by the ratio of teachers to pupils. Collaboration of this type depends on the availability of both media specialist and teacher to engage in this important work. Specialists who play an instructional role tend to have teacher-colleagues whose workloads also permit such collaboration.
- Library media expenditures affect LMC staff and collection size and, in turn, academic achievement. Students who score higher on norm-referenced tests tend to come from schools which spend more on library media programs.
- Library media expenditures and staffing vary with total school expenditures and staffing.
- Among school and community predictors of academic achievement, the size of the LMC staff and collection is second only to the absence of at-risk conditions, particularly poverty and low educational attainment among adults.


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Island Library of Lummi Island, Washington

by Buff LaPof

A little history: Lummi Island is situated in Northern Puget Sound in Whatcom County. About 800 people live here full-time. Our Island Library has come a long way since the 1940s, when we became a branch of the Whatcom Library System: from a few books on a shelf at the post office and the general store, to a bookmobile, to a small rental, and finally in 1992 to a home near the ferry landing that Friends of the Island Library (FOIL) converted to a permanent community library. Our mascot, Snap E Dragon the Literasaurous, says it best:

People who have never been to the Island Library before walk in and are immediately struck by the warm, cozy feeling of a home that also happens to be a library. The wonderful smell of something baking in the oven, the beautiful view of the water and Mount Baker, friendly faces, comfortable chairs and couches, and books, books, books. Could you have a more welcoming place to call a library?

On a small island that does not have a community center, our little library has become a home to a lot of people and organizations. Land trusts and conservancy groups, the cemetery district, and the community club boards all use the building for their meetings. A portable mammography machine has been set up here, English as a Second Language sessions have been taught here, and we’ve even hosted gatherings to support other non-profit organizations from the mainland. At our Spring Clean-Ups, all the groups that use the facility during the year come and do their part. The turnout for this event is always good, since we all take pride in the Library and the space it provides.

During the winter when nights are long and cold, the Friends of the Island Library hosts events for the community that run the gamut from lectures (geology to crop circles), slide shows (South Seas fishing to Alaska wildlife), literary nights in which Island authors (published and otherwise) treat us to their poetry and prose. These much-anticipated evenings are always followed by visiting and refreshments.

Our beautiful hand-built display case, the work of an Island craftsman, has showcased exhibits as varied as the people that live here and the world around us, from an Andy Warhol retrospective to the history of bookbinding. Islanders often loan pieces to complete exhibits. Everyone looks forward to seeing “what’s in the case.” We always try to have plenty of books on hand that go with the exhibit. After all, first and foremost, we are a library—a community library being all that we can be for our community.

Buff LaPof is Secretary of the Friends of the Island Library.

Mind the Gap!

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As the WLA 2000 Conference Committee gathered to sketch out the upcoming conference in Tacoma, the question on everyone's mind was the same: Who? Whose work best epitomizes the vast changes underway in the profession, and in society? Who could provide conference goers with a viable vision of what's ahead, and share ideas on what we must do to be ready for the future? Who? Who?

Everyone laughed when a member of the Tacoma Public Library staff first mentioned the legendary Ray Bradbury. Some wondered if he was still alive; others were skeptical of the success of any attempts to bring him to Tacoma. He's too expensive. He won't come. He doesn't do this sort of thing. The reality? He's not (expensive). He is (coming). He does do this sort of thing (he loves to speak in public). Contrary to Internet rumors and press reports following a stroke late last year, Ray Bradbury is very much alive and well and coming to Tacoma, to speak at the city's downtown First Baptist Church, on May 17th at 8 p.m. The event, sponsored by the Washington Library Association and the Tacoma Public Library, launches what is likely to be two mind-stimulating and energy-filled days of workshops, special programs, raucous comedy, award-winning authors, terrific food, and surprises.

Why Bradbury? To a generation growing up in the 1950s and 1960s, Ray Bradbury is known as the man who invented tomorrow. He touched the hearts of thousands with his magical tales of insightful aliens and futuristic worlds. Best known for such classics as Fahrenheit 451, Dandelion Wine, The Illustrated Man, Something Wicked This Way Comes, and The Martian Chronicles, Bradbury was instrumental in the blossoming of the science fiction genre. His work considers themes of racism, censorship, technology, nuclear war, humanistic values, and the importance of imagination. Much of what he imagined forty years ago we now accept as fact. His work was revolutionary. It remains so today.

The members of the conference planning committee believed Ray Bradbury was the best choice, not only to set the tone for the conference, but also to remind us and our public of how important books, learning, and libraries are in today's (and tomorrow's) world.

The first 500 people registering for the conference by the April 1, 2000 early registration deadline will receive a free ticket to the Bradbury lecture. The rest of the tickets will be distributed to patrons of the Tacoma Public Library.

Joining Bradbury for \textit{r/evolution} in Tacoma is award-winning writer Greg Bear, author of the recently released \textit{Darwin's Radio}. Bear has won both the prestigious Hugo and Nebula awards, and is considered today’s leading practitioner of hard science fiction—stories in which science and technology are integral to the tale. His work uses biology, physics, and mathematics, mixed with wonderful characters and a vision of our society and our future.

The visionary author is featured in a 7:30 a.m. breakfast program on Thursday, May 18, entitled “Whose Future Is It, Anyway?,” along with other members of the Northwest science fiction community. This program should be a highlight of the conference, since Greg Bear explores libraries and information science throughout his writing. Bear anticipated the move to digital libraries, and invented LitVid—a mix of text and image delivered over “the Net.” In other novels, he depicts libraries that are part of city memory—a construct of mental reality containing all knowledge, including design templates to create people, fantasy living space, and city memory crèches where children are educated.

Libraries as virtual as well as real spaces is an issue that Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor, architect, and author Dr. William Mitchell will explore in his keynote conference address on Thursday evening. In his latest book, \textit{E-Topia: Urban Life, Jim, But Not As We Know It}, Mitchell argues that traditional urban spaces cannot coexist with cyberspace—cities and the services they provide must be redesigned to incorporate the changes brought by technology and connectivity. “The resulting new urban spaces,” says Mitchell, “will be char-

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acterized by live/work dwellings, twenty-four-hour neighborhoods, loose-knit, far-flung configurations of electronically mediated meeting places, flexible, decentralized production, marketing and distribution systems, and electronically summoned and delivered services.” urban places will become “e-topias—lean, green cities that work smarter, not harder.”

susan odencrantz, tacoma public library’s acting director and chair of this year’s conference, believes mitchell will help place the tremendous changes which libraries are undergoing in a broader context. “we live in a world of information. every day we are confronted with new technologies that impact how that information is created, accessed, and delivered. it’s not just libraries that are changing. the world is changing. how we confront this convergence of information and technology ultimately determines whether we survive, perish, or thrive. if, as mitchell contends in his book, the city is dead, are libraries, as we know them dead as well? what steps do we need to take to continue to be vital institutions? where do we go from here?” where do we go from here? may well be the rallying cry of this year’s conference.

we live in evolutionary times. the wla 2000 conference committee actively pursued themes and programs that explore technological advances and their impact on libraries. here are some highlights:

- mary ross, seattle public library’s internet trainer, explores new trends in web searching tools and techniques in “evolution in cyberspace: the changing world of search tools.”
- there is hardly a library in the state that does not have a presence on the internet. mike gordon, an executive editor for microsoft’s msn sidewalk project, discussed how librarians can make their sites user-friendly in “writing for the web,” and provides advice on creating engaging and informative copy that attracts users and encourages them to return to your site.
- the american library association’s position on filtering software has been the focus of considerable national attention, receiving both kudos and condemnation. steve herb, chair of ala’s intellectual freedom committee, discusses the association’s latest “filtering policy and guidelines” in “youth and the internet: where ala is going.” with challenges to internet access policies brewing in yakima, fort vancouver, and tacoma, this workshop is especially timely and appropriate.
- staff from three libraries that tested the touted pharos software for scheduling internet usage report on their experiences. does it work? is it worth the hefty price tag? does it save wear and tear on library staff? “managing internet access: the pharos experiment” (almost sounds like a 1950s sci-fi flick, doesn’t it?) will provide some answers.
- one of the challenges of providing information to patrons electronically is measuring resources’ use and effectiveness. jeanne crisp of the washington state library will guide a panel of library professionals in a discussion of statistical guidelines and requirements, resources, and tools that capture web and computer use, and interpretation of data.
- digital reference is the focus of a friday afternoon workshop with dr. joseph janes of the university of washington’s school of library and information science. dr. janes will discuss his research using networked information resources as reference tools.
- anyone responsible for library websites can learn about the latest web editing and graphics software for transforming a ho-hum web site into one that sizzles and sparks in a day-long preconference program, “adding life to your web site.” the workshop ($50 for wla members) will be taught by staff from ivery-seright. international, one of seattle’s largest one-stop digital imaging centers.

while technology dominates the conference, there are many other wonderful programs to attend, as well. cayas has done a terrific job of planning programs to keep library workers informed of emerging trends in children’s and young adult services, and of must-read books for children and teens. this year, the popular cayas breakfast on friday morning features author arnold adoff. an accomplished poet, biographer, and anthologist as well as a respected educator, arnold adoff is recognized as one of the first—and finest—champions of multiculturalism in american literature for children and young adults. he is the author of many books, including i am the darker brother, slow dance heartbreak blues, hard to be six, and chocolate dreams.

other conference programs of special interest to persons working with kids and teens include:

- “giving it all you’ve got: working with tomorrow’s adults today, even if your idea of hip music is the beatles,” gay ducey of the oakland public library discusses how to create a teen-friendly place without driving everybody else out of the library.
- “making the connection: programming for esl and new immigrant children and their families.” spokane public library’s jennifer meyer and susan hales, coordinator of the federal evenstart program, will explore ways libraries can work with other organizations to meet the needs of new immigrant and refugee populations.
- are you intrigued by such urban legends as “the choking doberman,” “the hook,” “the mexican pet,” and “the beehive hairdo”? evie wilson-lingbloom and carol dahl of the sno-isle regional library will share their experiences in “storytelling teenage folklore.” this program will explain that storytelling, particularly in a classroom setting, is an exciting alternative to more traditional book-talk programs, and one that evokes participation from the shyest and most reluctant students.

with such a collection of challenging programs, the wla 2000 conference committee took steps to ensure that conference goers had plenty of opportunity to step back and smell the chocolate. the annual president’s reception on thursday evening will tempt attendees with sumptuous desserts (the event is not called “death by chocolate” by accident), and will provide another opportunity to discover new products and resources in the exhibits area. it’s also an opportunity to meet and mingle with many of the region’s authors and illustrators at the conference’s informal “festival of washington authors.” the event will have its own bookstore, hosted by the university book store.

another program plug: want to learn how to create exciting author readings and signings at your library? be sure to attend
“Readers and Writers Together” on Thursday morning. This program will feature Marcia Lane Purcell from Random House and Kim Foster of Seattle’s Sasqutch Books.

Immediately following the President’s Reception, members of one of the zaniest comedy troupes in America—the unforgettable Firesign Theatre—will bring their irreverent sense of humor to r/evolution. How irreverent? Their just-received program note says it all: “The Firesign Theatre’s David Ossman, with George (Porgie) Tirebiter and Friends, speaking in a r/evolutionary manner on the r/efreshing topic: ‘What is R/eated?’” Well, yes. Exactly.

Recognizing the notoriety of rush hour traffic on Interstate 5, conference planners kept planning long after the last workshop was scheduled. Rather than face a frustrating commute back home, attendees can choose from a number of informal discovery tours of a re-energized Tacoma, including shopping at Antique Row, visiting the local art museum and nearby State History Museum, surveying the work in downtown art galleries, or visiting the Tacoma Public Library’s exhibition of handmade books created by craftpersons from throughout the region.

Complete conference details and registration information can be found at the r/evolution Web site www.wla.org/wla2000/wla2000.htm, or at www.tpl.lib.wa.us/wla2000. TTown will never be the same.

Come Hear “60 in 90” in Tacoma!

By Konny Thompson, Foley Center, Gonzaga University

If anyone out there knows what “60 in 90” means, it is probably because you have attended this program before. And well you may have, as the program is simultaneously older than dirt and fresher than sea air. It has been a mainstay of the WLA Annual Conference for more years than anyone likes to admit to organizing it, yet each year brings new participants, new books, and a surprising amount of informational fun.

For neophytes to the program, the “60” refers to sixty books included in booktalks, and the “90” refers to the number of minutes we have to cover them. That averages about 90 seconds per book. The booktalkers are stalwart members of WLA who can give loads of pertinent information, very quickly. The titles are all small press and self-published books, mostly regional, which the publishers have sent to us for this program. The items may be cookbooks, travel, history, novels, poems—the range is virtually limitless.

The rationale for this program lies in the likelihood that many small press items will be covered in the traditional reviewing media. These presses offer a haven for unpublished or infrequently published authors that large publishing houses may tend to ignore, and for points of view that may not be lucrative enough for the large houses to bother with. Due to small advertising budgets and few mainstream reviews, the output of these publishers is often difficult to keep track of; and their products may be difficult to locate for purchase. “60 in 90” offers the chance to see the items during the program, and also to examine the items and the related catalogs on the “60 in 90” display table during the conference.

If you would like to join the ranks of hardy reader/speakers who contribute to the program, contact Konny Thompson (509-323-6546 or thompson@its.gonzaga.edu) or Sydney Chambers (509-323-6537 or chambers@its.gonzaga.edu). The program is currently scheduled for May 18, 1:45-3:15, but be sure to check the final schedule for exact information. We hope to see you there!

At The Frog ‘n’ Filter (continued from page 15)

Well, I never.

Look here. I happen to know for a fact that “The Complete Works of Emily Dickinson” should contain considerably more than SIX poems.

Lotsa death in there, there is, an’ negative outlook an’ such. We just got somethin’ in you might be interested in, though—“Great Poetry for Tender Minds.” It sorta substitutes more acceptable words, without losin’ the meanin’ like.

“Because I Could Not Stop For Barney, He Kindly Stopped For Me”?

Makes you feel all warm an’ cuddly, don’t it? The first hundred customers gets the dolly, too. The kiddies love it.

“The Owl and the Teletubby”...? I don’t think so. Look, I only bought this software because I wanted what was best for my children.

Kept ‘em off all them lingerie pages, didn’t it? Lingerie’s our specialty. Got the industry record for excludin’ lingerie. MASSIVE research project, that was.
The title of this column remains for me, and I hope for many Alki readers, a statement of core sentiments. It seems as though I have always read, enjoyed the feel of the book, the look of the cover. Even if I ever become willing to take a long soak in the bathtub with a “book” that has been downloaded, I would feel cheated on what, I feel, is the complete reading experience.

I always would “rather be reading,” than nearly anything else (especially since one can read AND eat chocolate at the same time). Shortly after I learned to read, I passed from Dick and Jane’s fun times with Spot to Grimm’s fairy tales. There were many more of those stories; the illustrations were ever so much more interesting; and, while they too followed a pattern, the plots were more involving. Foreshadowing an adult preference (or addiction), I also devoured the Nancy Drew series.

When my farm chores were not completed in a timely manner, I could be curled away in the corner of a spare upstairs bedroom or, if desperate to finish a book and it were summer, I would be hiding in the attic with the wasps’ nests. Indeed, who would want to bring in firewood, getting those stickers in hands and arms, or to churn butter, when you could be reading?

I found other literature that informed and enriched, even though it was not within a hardback cover. I could be curled away in the corner of a spare upstairs bedroom or, if desperate to finish a book and it were summer, I would be hiding in the attic with the wasps’ nests. Indeed, who would want to bring in firewood, getting those stickers in hands and arms, or to churn butter, when you could be reading?

I found other literature that informed and enriched, even though it was not within a hardback cover. Luckily, my childhood coincided with the weekly and monthly periodicals, such as Collier’s, that carried a rich selection of short stories by future literary lights. (They were trying to make money so that they could write the great American novel, and I was trying to expand my horizons: a fair trade.) I could not wait to visit relatives who subscribed to the magazines that we did not, so I could consume them. (Quite a charming guest! But, at least I was quiet and out-of-the-way.)

The market is full of books exploring an author’s enjoyment of books and reading. Each can evoke a long-forgotten memory or a flash of recognition for a reader. I was given books last year by two of my favorite readers: my daughter-in-law and a friend. Even though this column is not supposed to be a review column, I have been moved to bring these titles to your attention.

The first, Ex Libris: Confessions of a Common Reader, by Anne Fadiman, is a compilation of essays that range from discussion about the strategy of combining personal libraries when two avid readers marry, to the wonder of what one learns from reading, to a humorous recitation of a family outing. The latter chapter was particularly comforting to my personal editorial inclinations (or, as one might observe, my anal-retentive tendencies). Each family member relayed how he or she was beyond reading and into proofreading. While the family swapped tales of the typographical errors and erroneous words found in their lives, father Clifton Fadiman (of “Information, Please” fame) admitted that, before he lost his sight, he would correct restaurant menus and “improve” library books!

If you have read the Library of Congress publication, Civilization, you may have read some of these essays already. Still, with all essays together, the book is well worth a second reading.

The second title is A History of Reading, by Alberto Manguel. Manguel begins with a very personal chapter on the history of his reading. The remaining text explores the history of books and of reading, connected by unusual and thought-provoking threads. Chapter headings provide a clue to the scope: “Reading Shadows,” “Being Read To,” “Metaphors of Reading,” and “Reading the Future.”

Full disclosure: I have not finished this book. I intend to savor it throughout the year. But, based on the glowing reviews and what I have read since Christmas, I can recommend it for your To-Be-Read stack.

Living on an Oregon family farm during World War II, I was not going to know about other cultures, even most of the ways-of-life in America. From reading—after I moved on from Grimm’s—I was better prepared to meet and understand others, as an adult. We probably do not need any further evidence of the value of reading; still, when books such as these explore the nature of books and of reading, the community of readers is enriched.

Titles cited:

V. Louise Saylor, retired as Dean of Libraries, Eastern Washington University, is Chair of the Alki Committee.
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