A New Season

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This issue of *Alki* serves as both a record of our annual conference activities and a witness to the breadth of our conference offerings. The Wenatchee event presented several new challenges for the conference committee, including a first-in-recent-memory collaboration with the Pacific Northwest Library Association (PNLA), and an August time slot much different than our customary April annual event.

Hats off to Sandy Carlson, Susan Dewitz, Jacqueline Keith, Jan Zauha, Susan Hanson, Joy Neal, Lynn Red, Sue Anderson, Bruce Ziegman, Patience Rogge, Tim Mallory, Tamara Georgick, Kristy Coomes and the PNLA conference committee. You were wonderful to work with!

**Funding Approved to Expand WLA Workshop Opportunities**

At our October WLA board meeting, the board approved a special fund to take continuing education workshops and opportunities to more locations throughout the state. Our sound fiscal policies have always required that workshops break even or pay for themselves through attendance, which in practice has unintentionally resulted in most of our workshops being held in Bellevue, Ellensburg, Olympia, Seattle, Spokane, Tacoma, and Yakima, places where attendance is reliably high. This newly created fund will encourage successful workshops in the above locations as well as ten additional target cities: Anacortes, Bellingham, Bremerton, Everett, Port Angeles, Pullman, Tri-Cities, Vancouver, Walla Walla, and Wenatchee.

**Still Alki After All These Years**

Our journal will celebrate twenty years of publication in March 2005 and, thanks to those who came to the Wenatchee conference to support the continued practice of using our state’s motto as our journal’s name, *Alki* will still bear the Chinook-language moniker which means “bye and bye.” I enjoyed the debate and interchange that resulted from my suggestion to change the name, and really appreciate everyone who showed up to vote. The name change was never about the quality of the publication. I applaud all of you who work to compile, edit, and produce *Alki*. I am proud to receive each issue.

**Diversifying the WLA Board**

As part of our strategic plan, your board is taking on the challenge of diversifying WLA. A task force chaired by Jonathan Betz-Zall met in September to look at diversity as it applies to WLA and to the library world in general. We decided to focus on the WLA board. Our goal is to create measurable efforts to ensure that we reflect our membership and to allow the board to grow and improve by taking advantage of a wider range of issues and ways of conducting association business. We will begin the work of identifying next steps and creating opportunities for more members to get involved in the process. If you are interested in participating in this important goal, please contact Betz-Zall at 425-353-0727 or jbetzzall@cityu.edu.

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*WLA President John Sheller is manager of the 320th Street Branch of the King County Library System. Email: jsheller@wla.org.*
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As usual, *Alki* Editorial Committee members anchor this conference issue. The articles in this conference issue speak for themselves. Thanks to all who contributed.

Photographer Rose Ferri of Yakima worked our conference for the second straight year, circling back several times into each session, trying to photograph every speaker possible. We’re hoping Rose will be able to cover the Spokane conference for us next year, but she might be in Scotland at that time, documenting an archeological expedition. Conference photography is grueling, and she’s got the stamina and attention to detail it takes to produce good photos.

*Alki* has experienced some recent comings and goings. I want to welcome Maryan E. Reynolds Scholarship winner Linda Johns to the committee. Linda is already off to a good start, and we look for more good things from her. And while we say goodbye to outgoing *Alki* Committee members Nicole Campbell and Cheryl Farabee, we are pleased to welcome Lynn Barnes of Pend Oreille Library District and Rayette Sterling of Spokane Public Library. Thanks to Nicole and Cheryl. We are also very happy to report that David Wright of Seattle Public Library has agreed to regularly contribute the “I’d Rather Be Reading” column. Onward to 2005!

Finally, we are looking for the right person to serve a one year apprenticeship as assistant *Alki* editor beginning in July 2005, and then to assume full editorial responsibilities in July 2006. Editing *Alki* is fun, challenging, and rewarding. Apply, and help us carry on a twenty-year tradition of excellence.

While most of us find it hard to keep up with the latest technological trends, some libraries—out of necessity or due to inspiration—have “seized the nettle.” Two sessions at the WLA/PNLA Joint Conference, “Emerging Technology and Libraries” and “Bringing Library Content to the Palm of Users’ Hands,” emphasized ways in which some of the newer technologies are benefiting library users and staff today.

“Emerging Technology and Libraries” began with a little background on Seattle’s highly-publicized new Central Library which opened in May 2004. Seattle Public Library (SPL) staff knew that having the 412,000 square foot building would mean conducting more far-flung operations and welcoming more visitors, all without a corresponding increase in staff. So the library’s planners looked at other libraries’ use of innovative technologies and decided which of these might create more efficient operations at SPL.

SPL’s director of information technology, Marilyn Sheck, said that one technological tool library planners found attractive was radio frequency identification (RFID). They concluded that RFID tags, if used along with an automated materials handling system (AMHS), could make sorting and routing returned materials far more efficient not only for the Central Library but also for Seattle’s twenty-three neighborhood libraries. Tech Logic Corporation (www.tech-logic.com) was selected as the AMHS vendor. Less than a month after being activated, the AMHS had proven its worth by clearing the perennial shelving backlog in the entire twenty-four-library system.

SPL’s Tech Logic AMHS can sort all library materials except magazines and kits. Marilyn Sheck showed a film of the sorting process. Materials are dropped into one of four book drops at the Central Library and travel through a series of conveyor belts to the main sorting room located on the second floor. Sensors read the RFID tags. The system separates materials for the Central Library from those destined for the neighborhood libraries, with the latter being sorted into bins by destination. (Further manual sorting occurs at the neighborhood libraries.)

The AMHS “HiIQ” component then continues working on the materials to be reshelved at the Central Library. It squares and centers items on the conveyor belt. Next, a binding-detection device opens the book to determine the location of the binding and reorients the item (if needed) in preparation for automated shelving onto book carts. Uniformly located, items then move along by convey or to the book-cart area, where the items are deposited by air-driven placer arms—in shelf order, binding out—on one of twelve “smart” book carts. When a book cart is full, a staff member rolls it away and shelves the books in the public area of the library.

Since the Central Library opened on 23 May 2004, circulation has increased 57 percent. The AMHS sorts materials much faster than employees ever could, while eliminating a main cause of repetitive strain injury at the library. The system is currently monitored by employees in three shifts, although the number of shifts may be reduced in the future.

In consideration of privacy concerns, planners chose RFID tags with the smallest storage capacity. These simple tags, which contain no source of power, are compatible with most data bar codes and do not carry enough information to track usage of an item once it has been checked back in. To be read, the tags must be within eighteen inches of a RFID reader.

With a bar code-based AMHS, bar code labels need to be in the same location on all library materials (many of SPL’s bar code labels did not comply with this requirement). RFID labels, however, can be placed anywhere in the book. SPL staff converted regular bar codes for two million items to RFIDs, with all staff participating in the conversion task in one-hour shifts to avoid task burnout.

**Wireless Voice Communication**

In its new building, SPL has dispensed with cell phones for staff communication—also walkie-talkies, in-building wireless phones, speaker-phones, and pagers. Instead, staff use a two-ounce, pager-sized, no-hands communications badge originally designed for use in a hospital setting. A wireless network that runs on its own dedicated server supports use of this communications sys-

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**RFID-based Automated Materials Handling**

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tem for all staff at the Central Library. The badges, a product of Vocera Communications, are controlled with natural spoken language and can be used for a wide variety of communication functions.

Marilyn Sheek and communications consultant Ray Negrin gave a brief demonstration of the Vocera badge’s features. The two presenters showed they could have a private conversation with each other, conference with a group of people, leave voice mail messages, receive brief text messages, call external telephone numbers, and receive telephone calls—all with their badges. The badges are interchangeable, with staff needing only to “sign-off” or “sign-on” with any particular badge.

The badges are light enough to be worn about the neck, are convenient to use, and allow flexible staff interactions. SPL staff members can have mini-meetings without having to gather in the same location and can quickly locate each other in the Central Library’s “book spiral” (the multi-floor area where the nonfiction books are shelved). Or, if a patron is asking questions at one service point, the staff member there can immediately speak with the staff member most likely to be able to help, no matter where that person might be in the building.

Resource Scheduling and Control

Controlling public use of the Internet and networked printers is a ubiquitous need in libraries these days. Melinda Chesbro, director of information technology at Fort Vancouver Regional Library (FVRL), talked about FVRL’s experience with implementing Smart Access Management (SAM) from Comprise Technologies.

The library required a flexible and stable system that would reduce the amount of staff intervention required for scheduling Internet terminals and taking care of printers, and that would support the library’s printer and Internet policies. Chesbro reported that SAM is easy to use for patrons—who use SAM to make their own reservations for using the Internet and to pay for any printing beyond the ten pages per day limit—as well as for staff, who use SAM to enable visitor use of Internet terminals. SAM turns the computers off when the libraries close, controls the navigation depth on selected websites, and can filter Internet traffic in compliance with the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA).

SAM’s use has reduced patron printing by 160,000 prints per year (library staff members report most users leave after printing their ten free pages). SAM’s Internet, computer session, and print management package includes other features, too; for example, it could be used to control the number of photocopies made. However, implementing SAM has meant a lot of changes for staff to absorb in a short period of time, said Chesbro, who recommended a gradual implementation. She said that SAM’s filtering system at FVRL had to be switched three different times before it was right.

Personal Digital Assistants

Denise Koufogiannakis, speaker for the conference session called “Bringing Library Content to the Palm of Users’ Hands,” is the collections manager at the University of Alberta’s John W. Scott Health Sciences Library. Several years ago, Koufogiannakis observed that many students were using personal digital assistants (PDAs) in the library, so she decided to look into the possibility of serving information to the library’s patrons through these handheld devices.

Koufogiannakis began by exploring why people would want to use a PDA. What she discovered was that PDAs are portable, easy to use, relatively inexpensive, and can do more than just organize personal information. PDAs can hold substantial quantities of current information that can be updated easily from a computer network or desktop computer (typically the data is “beamed” through an infrared port on the PDA). PDAs can also hold quick reference information, e-books, and medical calculators (software for performing common computations in clinical practice). PDAs can communicate with printers that have infrared ports, and some can even be connected to a projector for classroom demonstrations. The PDA’s ability to synchronize with other computers allows uploads and downloads of a wide range of information. Finally, there exist PDA-friendly Web page formats such as RSS (Rich Site Summaries, also known as Really Simple Syndication) which feed current information to PDAs from the Internet.

The case for PDA services in the library was clear, and soon the health sciences library website for PDA users—the PDA Zone, www.library.ualberta.ca/pdazone—was born. The library decided to provide PDA services solely to people who already have the devices, and it was ready to offer these services (including one-hour training sessions) to patrons by fall of 2001.

Some of the information services offered through the PDA Zone website are licensed. Koufogiannakis discussed several licensing models and opined that the institutional site license was the best option. Three of these licensed services are NetLibrary (allows downloading of e-books to a PDA), PEPID (Portable Emergency and Primary-Care Information Database), and MD Consult.

PEPID is an online subscription service that offers “all-in-one” point-of-care medical reference tools.
which include a reference textbook, a drug handbook, and 140 medical calculators. PEPID is organized into versions for nurses, pharmacists, medical technicians, and other clinical specialties. The University of Alberta received PEPID under a one-year trial grant. Users gave enough positive feedback during the trial period that the library renewed PEPID for two more years. Over 600 people at the university now use PEPID.

MD Consult is a product with which users can search journals. Users can periodically download summaries to their PDA, and titles for lending are loaded onto expansion cards that can be inserted into a slot on the PDA. The price for the electronic subscription is comparable to paper, but relatively few titles are available in this format as yet.

Other kinds of resources accessed through the PDA Zone include tutorials, opportunities for health care providers to consult with librarians, and a website called AvantGo which contains current medical materials. The university also has a PDA users’ group called the Mobile Computer Users Group.

Finally, Koufogiannakis discussed collection issues. Books for PDAs come on small chips. These “books” are checked out frequently, but the selection is limited—the University of Alberta was able to buy only seventy-two medical titles, some of which are reference works. Cataloging for these titles had to be done manually, the packaging had to be particularly sturdy, and security always remains an issue. The packaged chips must be kept on reserve because some patrons like to keep them for their own private collections and other security measures like Tattle Tape® cannot be used. Other issues the University of Alberta encountered were:

- The state of the industry is still immature—publishers are slow to respond.
- Much content still depends on the one-user model.
- Many PDA books are on CD-ROM, and transferring them to the PDAs can be a problem.
- The benefits of use might not be great enough to justify the cost of purchasing these materials.

In the summer of 2002 the library conducted a needs assessment and services evaluation, and in January 2003 the library formed a focus group and conducted interviews. Based on these evaluations, PDA services were fine-tuned. Koufogiannakis is confident that the library will continue to support and improve services for PDA users in the future.

After seeing how PDAs, SAM, badges, RFIDs, and AMHS’s had been applied in library settings, people left the sessions pondering on how these technologies might have value for their own libraries.
While every place and its people have a local history, local history serves more than personal desire and individual nostalgia. Local and regional history satisfies the desire to connect to a place, and allows people to remember the stories every community has that are worth telling. For those interested in local history, the WLA/PNLA Joint Conference offered historical sessions with presenters displaying a variety of viewpoints. Walt Crowley offered us the perspective of a researcher, Richard Bear and Charles Hixson provided the perspective of the producer of historical content, and nature photographer John Marshall gave us a unique glimpse from the point of view of a recorder of historical content.

Online Encyclopedia of State History

For the 150th anniversary of Washington Territory’s creation, historian Walt Crowley launched a website to provide a single, authoritative, comprehensive online reference of the history of Washington state. (1, p.4) According to Crowley, who is a writer and journalist as well as an historical researcher, Washington HistoryLink is the first online encyclopedia of local and state history created expressly for the Internet. During his session “Researching Northwest History with Walt Crowley,” Crowley demonstrated the site (www.HistoryLink.org) and provided attendees insight into its creation and growth.

Crowley’s session was an enthusiastic exploration of a new and dynamically growing venture. The aim of this project is to provide a local history resource for journalists, public servants, private researchers, amateur historians, interested citizens, the general public, and students. While many historical societies, books, museums, and libraries have resources on Washington history, and some may even have websites, much of what is available is fragmented and dispersed. Washington HistoryLink seeks to be a single resource where everyone can go for information without paying a fee or having to travel to a specific place. Washington HistoryLink is supported by sponsors and contract fees, and is underwritten by associations. It has no advertisements or user fees.

Crowley’s brainchild, Washington HistoryLink began in 1997 with research material on Seattle and King County, material originally written and sourced to pass scholastic scrutiny. He began by trying to sort out the Northwest Index at Seattle Public Library. Currently there are 4,000 essays and features on his website, 75 percent of which focus on Seattle and King County, so the website has taken an enormous load off of the reference desk at Seattle Public Library.

Crowley broadened his coverage beyond King County by adding a second database of Washington state history. For a time he kept the two collections separate due to the size disparity between them. As the state history database grew, plans were made to merge the databases sometime in fall 2004. The state materials can be searched by region and county, and outside links are provided which are searchable by region and subject. He realized that people need chronologies to guide them through local history, and has embraced this organizing method as an integral feature of Washington HistoryLink. The timelines may be the most popular feature of the site’s cyberpedia.

Washington HistoryLink has no streaming video and there are no plans to include this format. According to Crowley, the site isn’t entertainment; it’s meant to be a reference source. And to encourage further research, visitors to the website can buy books at discount online from some of Washington HistoryLink’s partners. Often these books are from university presses such as the University of Washington Press and Washington State University Press. Libraries get a discount.

Tami Echavarria Robinson is coordinator of instructional services at Whitworth College Library. Photos on this page by Cameron Johnson.
The Oregon Newspaper Indexing Project

Part of the richness of having a joint conference with the Pacific Northwest Library Association is that it is likely to attract programs and people that WLA members would not otherwise hear. Such was the case with Richard Bear’s and Charles Hixson’s session on “The Oregon Newspaper Indexing Project.” The project anticipates creating a standard approach to digitizing Oregon newspaper indexes, leading to statewide collaboration and broader access to the history of Oregon through its newspapers.

The University of Oregon Library has the distinction of holding in its microfilm department the most comprehensive collection of historic in-state newspapers in the United States. (2) The Oregonian is one of the oldest continuously published newspapers on the West Coast and is one of only a few statewide newspapers currently published. It began publication in 1850, nine years prior to Oregon statehood, and is a rich resource for Oregon’s political, cultural, and social history. The indexing project intends to make available within two years an expansive online index to The Oregonian for anyone who wants to locate articles on virtually any aspect of Oregon life from 1850 to 1987. (3)

The project combines a University of Oregon print-based index—existing in a combination of bound volumes, cards, and microform records that have different subject headings used during different periods of time—with a card index from the Multnomah Public Library that is organized with yet another set of subject headings. Some of the materials lend themselves well to being scanned while others cannot be scanned effectively and must be retyped. The Oregon Newspaper Indexing Project leaders are stressing accuracy over speed in adding records, although speed is a factor in measuring accomplishment. (4)

The integrated, user-centered index to 137 years of The Oregonian will not only give users access to a vital historical record but will also provide a cost-effective retrospective indexing model for other newspapers. The project, supported by a Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant, intends to make the program software available to other libraries for their own newspaper indexing at the end of the project. The University of Oregon is considering hosting the completed newspaper index.

Washington and Idaho Landscape Photography

Most commonly, history is presented to us in textual material or in a documentary film format. But the presentation of “John Marshall, Washington Photographer” was an opportunity to gain insight into creating photographs that record place and time. Marshall is a nature/landscape photographer who is fond of extensive backcountry hiking. The combination of activities has allowed his photographer’s eye to record amazing Pacific Northwest places in perfect light. He has worked hard to find places and things that have not been photographed by many other photographers, and places that are very ordinary but look different at certain times of year or under certain lighting conditions.

John Marshall’s photographs of Mount Saint Helens’s eruption in 1980 were published in National Geographic, bringing national recognition to his work. His photographs have appeared in many nature and science publications, advertising campaigns, and books on the Pacific Northwest.

He has published many of his Pacific Northwest photographs in three books on Washington and one on Idaho. All of Marshall’s photography books tell a visual story that is accompanied by essays. Washington Apple Country, which tells the history of the billion-dollar fruit industry during its greatest time of change (5, dust jacket), is unusual in that it tells the story of a way of life in Washington state, the local history of a place to which many people here can relate.

As with all of his books, Marshall had difficulty getting Washington Apple Country published. Few people are willing to pay $40 or more for a nice coffee table book, so publishers look for books they can publish and sell in the $16 to $20 range, a retail price too low to cover the costs of producing a book of photographs. Since publishers considered Washington (Continued on page 12)
Booktalkers should prepare themselves the way actors prepare for a performance, said actress Melanie Workhoven and librarian Chapple Langemack at their WLA/PNLA Joint Conference session “Booktalking in Theory and Practice.” Any performance, Workhoven says, requires physical, mental, and material preparation. This advice applies no matter what the age of the audience. “Be aware, alert, and involved,” she adds.

Workhoven, as an author and acting coach, is experienced at helping introverts make the most of their group speaking. She is co-author with Peter Kahle, former president of the Pacific Northwest Writers Association, of Naked at the Podium: The Writer’s Guide to Successful Readings. Langemack, a veteran King County Library System booktalker, is author of The Booktalker’s Bible: How to Talk about the Books You Love to Any Audience.

Workhoven and Langemack gave these tips for making the booktalking performance go more smoothly:

- Think of your book selections as offering a banquet of books for listeners to choose from.
- Don’t waste words. Avoid phrases like “this book is about …”
- Don’t use evaluative language like “this is the best book I’ve read this month …”
- Don’t tell the whole story. Give the audience just a snapshot.
- Entice them in. Drive home the hook.
- Form a relationship with your audience in which you are offering the books to them.
- Breathe—and don’t be afraid to take a deep breath in the middle of your presentation to calm yourself down and collect your thoughts.

To help the audience breathe better, Workhoven and Langemack led librarians in voice warm-ups and some basic yoga relaxation moves. A few in the audience gave impromptu booktalks that Workhoven and Langemack used to demonstrate how to make small improvements that can make a huge difference. Remember, Workhoven says, “Energy persuades, but passion sells.” Talk about books you love, she said. Don’t try to fake it.—Linda Johns

Mel Glenn

It was a treat to hear Mel Glenn, author of The Taking of Room 114, at the 2004 Young Readers’ Choice Award breakfast at the WLA/PNLA Joint Conference. We felt grateful that Glenn was able to make the trip from Brooklyn through the forest fires of central Washington to speak in Wenatchee.

Mel took us back to when he began writing. In 1979, when he was teaching at Lincoln High School in Brooklyn, a fellow teacher shared with him a manuscript he was trying to get published. Mel wasn’t impressed. That evening when he told his wife about it, her response was, “Can you do better?” His answer came in the form of his first poem, written on 1 January 1980. He wrote his second poem on 2 January 1980.

“Writing is an act of courage,” he said. “You just have to keep doing it.”

For every ninety-nine manuscripts submitted, only one gets published. Glenn reminded us not to let the fear of rejection keep us from becoming a writer or from expressing creativity. He urged us all to find our inner writer. “If you wish to be a writer, write.” Some of you, he said, have a book inside. He instructed us to find our creative voice, and to help the children we serve find theirs.

Mel Glenn claims that he couldn’t have become a writer if he hadn’t been a teacher for thirty-four years. Inspired by the lives of his students, he uses free verse to depict a vivid picture of the world of teenagers. One of the functions of his writing is to dispel stereotypes, and his novels allow kids to see—through his characters—a clear image of themselves.
His philosophy of poetry and writing is simple: It should be fun! He confessed that he has the technological savvy of a carrot. “All you really need,” he said, “is a pencil and legal pad, and the world is yours.” We left this breakfast inspired to harness our own creativity, inspired to enrich the lives of the youth we serve, inspired to produce something great.—Kara Fennell

Gail Carson Levine

Abracadabra! The door opened to the world of Gail Carson Levine. She warmed up the audience with a story that illustrates the power of books and stories, the story of a child who had self-diagnosed her own bone cancer after reading Trudy Krisher’s book Kathy’s Hats to her younger brother.

Gail Carson Levine spoke about her writing, how she got started in it, and what inspires her. Initially, she was more interested in painting than in writing; but when she took a class on writing and illustrating children’s books, she discovered that she actually enjoyed writing the books more than illustrating them. What followed was nine years of writing books and being rejected by all the best publishers. When Ella Enchanted was finally accepted by two publishers in April 1996, Levine was judged an overnight success. The book was chosen as a Newbery Honor Book.

A number of Levine’s books are based on fairy tales, and her familiarity with the genre is obvious. She uses folk motifs to create new stories with the feel of traditional tales. Although most of her work is in the realm of fantasy, she has authored one story, Dave at Night, about a young boy growing up in an orphanage.

Why did Cinderella sit and sift ashes when she wasn’t scrubbing the floors for the wicked stepsisters? Why was there no spark of rebellion? Gail Carson Levine asked those questions and postulated an answer: What if Cinderella had been cursed with absolute obedience? In Ella Enchanted, Levine explores that possibility by borrowing a folk tale motif from Sleeping Beauty. After a misguided fairy curses Ella at birth with the need to be absolutely obedient, Ella’s mother advises her never to tell anyone of the curse. But the secret slips out anyway; and when her mother dies, Ella is left with having to obey a wicked stepmother. Levine’s Ella resists the curse by obeying the letter of her stepmother’s orders. When her stepmother says, “Come closer,” Ella moves only one baby step closer. The tale ends happily, but as all bad book reports say, “You will have to read Ella Enchanted to find out the rest.”

Levine said that writing brings back memories for her. “Maybe the best thing about writing is the self-knowledge it produces.” For example, Ella’s obedience in Ella Enchanted was a wake-up call to Levine not to say “yes” when she doesn’t want to. In this way, her writing has also taught her how important her parents were to her.

The Fairies of Neverland is a new book series for which Levine has written the first installment. This is a Disney project based loosely on James Barrie’s Peter Pan. Disney dictated only that Tinker Bell be a major character and that Peter not be in the story at all. As the first writer of the series, Levine was able to create the world of the Neverland fairies for other authors to follow.

The program was over too soon, as we were thoroughly entertained by excerpts that Levine read from her books and by the insights she gave us into her life in relationship to her writing.—Theresa Gemmer

Cataloging for Kids’ Subject Access

Do catalogers at the Library of Congress (LC) read everything? The answer is a definite “yes” for the ten full-time librarians who are part of the children’s literature team at LC. “We’re reading for content, not for recreation,” says Jane Gilchrist, who heads the children’s cataloging group. The group’s goal, she says, is to provide public services staff with the best possible subject access to children’s materials.

The children’s literature team has no subject specialists, unlike the other cataloging teams at the LC (where there are 350 catalogers on forty teams). Instead, each librarian in the children’s group handles a variety of materials. In one day, a librarian may read a young adult novel, three nonfiction books, another novel, and a picture book or two. It makes for a lot of reading—and it certainly makes for a varied day. The children’s literature team catalogs more than 10,000 entries each year, with a 6 percent increase in just the past year. The team’s turnaround time for creating a new record is about ten days.

New subject headings are submitted to weekly editorial meetings. Some recent subject-heading victories include the additions of “stories in rhyme,” “email,” “tooth fairy,” and “pigs.” (That’s right. Until recently, a patron or librarian looking for picture books featuring pigs would have to look under “swine.”)
Juvenile cataloging at LC covers all books through ninth-grade reading level, but the catalog records themselves don’t include recommended ages or reading levels. For fiction descriptions, the catalogers try to include the main character’s name, the age and gender of the characters, and a summary that doesn’t give away too much. Setting is included if it’s central to the story. If a work deals with a sensitive issue, the catalogers will try to weave mention of it into the summary. For nonfiction titles, the catalogers try to find what’s different about a particular title, a difficult task when cataloging about the hundredth book on dinosaurs.

“Think of it [the LC record] as a skeleton,” Gilchrist says. “You can continue to add information useful to your local patrons. Learn to trust your instincts.”

She gives library students these three guidelines for solid cataloging:

1. Use your common sense, be consistent and predictable, and proceed until apprehended.

References


It won’t surprise librarians to hear that libraries are not the first place most people go for health information. First they talk to friends and family and consult the Internet, says Gail Kouame, consumer health coordinator for the National Network of Libraries of Medicine, Pacific Northwest Region. “By the time the patron hits the library they’ve exhausted all these other avenues.”

When health-information seekers do show up, often they are sick, depressed, embarrassed, or misinformed. Many people find it difficult to process the technical information their doctor gives them on the examining table. At Kouame’s Seattle office, the conventional wisdom is: “You’re deaf when you’re naked.”

It is not uncommon for someone else to come to the library on the patient’s behalf—adding another link in the chain of communication. If the patron isn’t sure whether they’re looking for information about “multiple myeloma” or “malignant melanoma,” send them back to the source for an exact diagnosis, says Kouame: “Don’t guess.”

Once the patron knows what she is looking for, take her away from the public reference desk for a private conversation. But keep it short, not more than fifteen minutes, advises Kouame, who is a librarian: “We help people until they’re begging for mercy.”

Librarians should avoid the temptation to offer advice or share personal experiences, even if the patron asks something like, “What would you do if it was your son?” A standard response for the public librarian’s health-reference toolkit should be, “This is not my area of expertise,” or, more to the point, “I don’t know.” Kouame offers one exception to the just-the-facts rule. Faced with an obviously ill person, the librarian might suggest that they get medical help.

Public librarians on the job for more than a week have probably already been asked to answer a medical question. According to a U.S. National Library of Medicine pilot project, 6 to 20 percent of reference requests in public libraries are health-related. The project found that even when the number of medical questions was low, such questions tended to be among the most time-consuming.

A safe and efficient health reference formula? Start at MedlinePlus.gov, says Kouame, unless the subject is cancer; if so, start at cancer.gov, hosted by the National Cancer Institute.

MedlinePlus is a consumer website sponsored by the U.S. National Library of Medicine, the world’s largest medical library and part of the National Institutes of Health. MedlinePlus debuted in 1998 with twenty-two health-related topics. Today, the site offers information that is authoritative and up-to-date on 650 diseases and health conditions.

In 2002, the Web publication Yahoo! Internet Life included MedlinePlus on its list of “Seven Most Trusted Sites.” The same year, Consumer Reports published a list of respected health websites and called MedlinePlus “the best.” In addition to an index to information about health topics, the site offers drug information, a medical encyclopedia, a dictionary, health news, and directories to health professionals, hospitals, and clinics. The site accommodates user needs with links to interactive slide shows, a section called “Easy to Read,” audio access for the vision-impaired, and information in Spanish. Health topics are linked to preformulated searches, giving users easy access to PubMed, an otherwise daunting database of fourteen million articles from thousands of medical journals and magazines. Kouame’s other health website picks include:

- www.familydoctor.org—Produced by the American Academy of Family Physicians, this site provides practical information about the kinds of health concerns that typically come up at home, such as what to do when your nose bleeds. The site also features a collection of “health tools” such as calorie counters.

- www.eckerd.com—Eckerd, a drugstore company, offers free access to Clinical Pharmacology 2000, a Gold Standard multimedia database, which is usually available only by subscription. From the Eckerd site, choose “Drug Advisor” for prescription information by brand or generic name. The

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site includes information about herbals and drug interactions, and offers a Spanish-language version.

- **www.labtestsonline.org**—This site is produced through a collaboration of professional societies in the laboratory community. The information is peer-reviewed, noncommercial and patient-centered. The site can be searched by disease or the name of a test.

- **dirline.nlm.nih.gov**—Produced by the National Library of Medicine, this is a directory of more than 9,000 health-related organizations and other resources. Kouame says health associations often provide good consumer health information and many have local chapters.

Kouame says she’s never heard of a lawsuit being brought against a reference librarian for giving bad medical advice. Librarians avoid risk by guiding patrons directly to professionals through reputable medical resources.

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**Improving Access to Health Information**

Each year, the Pacific Northwest arm of the National Network of Libraries of Medicine funds and coordinates about ten projects aimed at improving community access to reliable health information. Awards range from $500 to $40,000, says Gail Kouame of the network’s Seattle office, which serves the five-state region.

To be eligible for funding, libraries and other community organizations must join the network, but applying for membership is free and simple, says Kouame. Nationwide, there are more than 5,400 network members and affiliates.

Kouame and her staff can help libraries and other interested organizations find local partners and plan projects. “We’re happy to review a proposal before it’s submitted,” she says. Awards are announced twice a year.

Among recent recipients is a partnership between the Sno-Isle Libraries and Whidbey General Hospital in Coupeville. “I see the need for patrons to be able to locate better health information,” says project coordinator Chari McRill of the Oak Harbor Library, which is the designated health reference center for the twenty-library Sno-Isle Libraries system.

The network awarded $27,000 for the project, which calls for the hospital to install two Internet-connected computers for patients and their families. The library is responsible for designing an interface that will dovetail with the library’s online health reference resources. Librarians also will teach health care professionals how to guide patients to online health information, and provide workshops for library staff and community groups.

A former medical librarian, McRill says the aim of the training is “to make them aware of the problems of searching on the Internet.” To illustrate the pitfalls, she points to a website that sells a so-called curative oil for back problems. “I try to show them how easy it is to find the worrisome websites.”

A guide to providing health information, forming community partnerships, and applying for project funding through the National Network is available at **nnlm.gov/libinfo/community/**. For more information, contact Kouame and her colleagues at 800-338-7657, or gmarie@u.washington.edu.
Leadership Is Where You Find It

We all think we know what leadership is. Some of us aspire to be leaders; others among us are just curious about what makes our leaders tick. I attended several sessions at the 2004 WLA/PNLA Joint Conference in beautiful Wenatchee to see how the various presenters answered the leadership question.

“Making the Transition to Administration” was perhaps my favorite session of the conference, and a good place to start my research. In low-key, conversational style, one past and two current administrators talked about their experiences moving up to administrative positions. David Pauli, now a reference librarian at Oregon’s Hillsboro Public Library, served very early in his career as library director of the public library in Ashland, Wisconsin. Because much of his director training came on the job, his advice to those considering a move into library administration was, “Ask for help.” Pauli noted that the city clerk in Ashland responded when asked for help not once but many times, and became a trusted ally.

Pauli became the library director of the Missoula Public Library, where he was instrumental in creating a new young-adult librarian position. Bette Ammon, the next speaker in this session, was hired for that position. She later became Missoula Public’s assistant director. Not long after that, Pauli left Missoula Public and Ammon went from somewhat reluctant in-house director candidate, to finalist for the job, to library director of the Missoula Public Library (after the selection committee’s first choice declined the job). The learning curve was huge, said Ammon. Echoing Pauli, Ammon spoke about on-the-job training. Ammon listed “managing her ex-coworkers” and “union negotiations” as the biggest challenges she faced as a newly-minted leader.

Ben Wakashige, the third speaker in “Making the Transition to Administration,” is the director of the library at Pacific University, a private, liberal arts university in Forest Grove, Oregon. He immediately had this to say about leadership: “You can’t pick it up from a textbook. Almost all training to be in administration is on-the-job training.” While most of Wakashige’s leadership experience has been in academic libraries, he also did a rewarding five-year stint as the state librarian of New Mexico.

Wakashige broadened the definition (and responsibilities) of leadership by touting the importance of involvement in professional organizations and in the community. “Be a soccer coach!” he advised. He also made a connection to Pauli’s “ask for help” comment: He said that a leader is available and giving when he or she is asked for help, and the best way to repay a valued mentor is to turn around and mentor the next generation of leaders.

A final comment from Pauli about what it takes to be a good library director: “You need to be an extrovert.” This comment got nods of agreement from the other panelists. While none of the three panelists was a gab-your-ear-off, in-your-face type at all, clearly all three were comfortable, skilled communicators who like people.

I left “Making the Transition to Administration” with some good answers to the “What is leadership?” question, but not the answer. The next session that addressed the leadership issue was “Leadership—State of the Art Leadership Toolkit.” Pat Cavill, noted library consultant and past president of the Canadian Library Association, stated, “Leaders are both confident and modest,” and, “Leaders provide direction: That’s different from providing answers.”

While much of Cavill’s advice was sound and rang true, this session felt more static, demonstrating the difference between a session structured by a competent PowerPoint presentation and one bound together by a thread of lively discussion among three colleagues and a roomful of involved attendees (the Pauli/Ammon/Wakashige program). I did note that a unifying theme between the two sessions was mentor-
The leadership toolkit gave me a few more answers, but I thought the best answer to the question “What is leadership?” came not at a session but as part of the Lake Chelan dinner cruise on Thursday evening. Due to a delay in readying the vessel, Lady of the Lake, for departure, we got off our buses and found ourselves lakeside with time to kill. Some of us convinced one of the bus drivers to take us into the town of Chelan to “see the sights.” At the last minute, the expected forty-five-minute delay vanished—the driver stopped at the grocery store and said, “You have five minutes to get back to the bus. If you are not back and on board in five minutes, you will be left behind.”

We sat, stunned, for a few seconds, but only for a very few seconds. Then Jan Sanders, director of Spokane Public Library, jumped up and shouted, “Okay, listen up!” She proceeded to command those of us on the bus who wanted “beverages” to pass money to her. State Librarian Jan Walsh jumped in as money collector and co-organizer of what turned out to be a crack commando mission involving eight or nine librarians, complete with a cadence-boosting “Let’s go, let’s go, let’s go!”

As the commandos left the bus, I turned to my coworker from the Mid-Columbia Library District, Harold Hayes, and told him, “You are attending probably the best leadership workshop ever.” The commandos returned on time and people got their beverages. As it turned out, though, the cruise ship rules mandated that what got drunk would have to get drunk before boarding the vessel.

Sobriety enforced, leadership defined.

Just to make sure I was on the right track, I decided to ask a handful of library directors and other leaders in the Washington library world how they define leadership. See the sidebar for their responses.

Neel Parikh, director of Pierce County Library System (PCLS):
“A leader has a vision for the future that staff see and wish to pursue. A leader implies followers…My favorite example of this is a comment from a union member not long after I came to PCLS. He said, ‘Neel, we all feel like we are going somewhere. You might be leading us into a sand bank, but we feel like we are going somewhere…and this is good!’”

Mike Eisenberg, dean of the Information School at the University of Washington:
“Leadership is the art and science of making dreams come true (kind of like a fairy godmother).”

Bill Ptacek, director of King County Library System:
“Leadership is the awareness of what needs to be done, the decisiveness to get it done, and the responsibility for what was done.”

Jan Sanders, director of Spokane Public Library:
“Being a leader means having the class to let someone else have the defining ‘say,’ giving others a chance to shine, and letting those who need the experience have the first chance. In other words, leading means being able to take a second seat. Leaders, by definition, need people who will follow them. And we follow only if we choose to. You don’t lead by ‘herding’ others, but by guiding, showing and encouraging.” (See also the commando mission.)

John Sheller, president of the Washington Library Association:
“Leadership is the art and science of communicating a goal or vision to a group of people in ways that encourage them to achieve it with you. Choosing the right goal involves the science; communicating effectively is the art. I would also include responsibility in any discussion of leadership, both in terms of ensuring necessary tasks are accomplished and also taking ownership of problems or mistakes while working to correct them.”

Dean Marney, director of North Central Regional Library:
“Leadership means you’re working the rear end—either kissing one or covering yours.” (Dean decided to really deliver on my request for “snappy and thought-provoking.”)
The LBR’s Real Value

When the Alki editor asked me to do a guest column on the Library Bill of Rights (LBR), I didn’t give the matter much thought before agreeing. It seemed like a pretty easy assignment. After all, I already know what the LBR is. Doesn’t every librarian? It is a document that has been adopted by the American Library Association (ALA) to provide an interpretation for librarians of First Amendment constitutional principles. It champions intellectual freedom by affirming the public’s right to seek unimpeded access to information in the library. These are praiseworthy sentiments with which most of us would agree, but the more I thought about it, the more I wondered how someone might go about assessing the real value of the LBR for librarians. This would make an interesting research project for someone, but if it has been done I’m not aware of it. What I would like to try instead is to imagine how the LBR might contribute in a practical way to the high principles of intellectual freedom that it advocates.

It’s probably not surprising that, as a longtime educator of librarians, my first thought is about the power of the LBR as an educational tool in the classroom. How does one begin to explain what intellectual freedom means to our profession? The topic is problematic, filled with ambiguity and subtlety, but the LBR offers a concise statement that represents a distillation of the thinking of many librarians who have addressed the matter over a period of many years. It would make an interesting assignment to ask students who have discussed intellectual freedom, but have not yet encountered the LBR, to draw up a statement of intellectual freedom principles for libraries. When these hypothetical students then discussed similarities and differences between their efforts and the “real thing,” they would acquire a richer appreciation of what intellectual freedom is all about. At the same time they would have a better idea of the challenges met by those librarians who have created, revised, and explained the LBR.

Similarly, when a public librarian sets out to educate her governing board about intellectual freedom, or a school librarian brings up the subject with his principal, the LBR can be a great help in focusing the discussion. Of course, the librarian will make it clear that the LBR is not a list of rules that specifies what the library can and cannot do. Those decisions are the responsibility of the governing authority in consultation with the librarian and will depend on the information needs of the specific community. But an examination of the LBR proves valuable as a means of identifying and promoting open discussion of potentially sensitive issues. Even if your board decides that it is in the best interests of the community to limit access in some way, such as requiring restricted library cards for children, a discussion that includes relevant interpretations of the LBR may help to create a policy that accomplishes what the board sets out to do without introducing unexpected additional problems.

Or consider the classic case of the librarian who is confronted by an outraged mother whose 12-year-old daughter has brought home something like Judy Blume’s Forever from the branch library. Now, I doubt that Mom will be totally mollified when you show her the LBR and explain that it represents ideals of intellectual freedom that the library strives to meet. But experience has indicated that such a discussion may go some way, even a long way, toward achieving a resolution that avoids a formal challenge, with all the complications that such a challenge entails.

These examples may suggest the LBR only has value when we’re dealing with “civilians.” Not so. Sometimes we librarians get so wrapped up in budgets, bond issues, virtual reference, escalating serial costs, staff management—all the other professional issues that have to be tackled to keep the library up and running—that we do not pay as much attention as we might like to to the idea of intellectual freedom. Workshops or staff seminars to discuss issues articulated in the LBR and its interpretations help remind us that much of our day-to-day activity is intimately associated with those principles of free access to information.

One of the criticisms that outsiders make of the LBR is that it dictates dogma to libraries and librarians. This kind of mistake often seems to be made by individuals who are working together to challenge library access to materials whose ideas they find offensive, such as works for young adults that sympathetically discuss being gay. When the library resists their efforts to have such materials removed, the would-be censors conclude that the ALA has drawn rules that govern what libraries can do and that librarians who infringe on those rules will be punished. They may even go so far as to conclude that the LBR somehow forbids censorship of any kind, even when it is sanctioned by

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state or national law. What they seem to fail to understand is that the LBR is far from being a “law” that librarians must obey.

The LBR is a set of guidelines to help libraries be as effective as possible in providing clients with freedom of access to the information that libraries collect and disseminate. Since it was first introduced before World War II, the LBR has been reexamined and refined by generations of librarians who have served on committees to review its content and who have ratified changes through their elected representatives to the council that makes decisions about ALA policy. Librarians and governing authorities of libraries throughout the country are free to interpret the LBR in terms of what they consider to be the mission of their own library or library system. Public libraries serve the entire community and depend on funding from the entire community, so their policies tend to conform more broadly to LBR principles advocating service to all than do other types of libraries with a more narrowly defined clientele. But those policies do not arise from LBR coercion. They are decided on and adopted by the local community.

By the scenarios discussed earlier, I’ve tried to suggest that the LBR is an instrument, a tool that speaks to everyone who is associated with a library, including librarians and other library staff, governors of libraries, those who use libraries, and those who help pay for libraries. The document encourages all of us to consider the extent of the library’s responsibility for assuring free access to ideas expressed in materials that the library provides. It is true that the LBR advocates access to a very broad range of information for all sorts of library clients as an ideal principle, but the decisions that librarians arrive at in their execution of that responsibility are not made by the ALA and they are not dictated by the LBR.

As I see it, when a group attempts to censor certain kinds of material within a community public library system, their objective is to replace the judgment of the librarian, a public official who has been hired by the community to make professional decisions for the community, with the judgment of a narrowly focused political pressure group. In our example above, this group claims to speak with the voice of the community—though without its endorsement—about the suitability of young adult books about gay lifestyles. I suspect that their resentment of the LBR stems at least in part from the document’s potent advocacy for the decisions that have been made by the librarian—a librarian who, unlike an unauthorized and self-appointed citizen surrogate, has been trained for and is dedicated to making those decisions on the basis of the needs of the whole community.

It has not been my intention here to suggest that libraries and librarians could never have gotten where they are without the LBR. But as a statement of advocacy for widespread access to information it has been an extraordinarily useful instrument to explain and support the best judgment of the librarians who have the responsibility for decisions that formulate and implement their libraries’ policies. At first glance, its content may seem doctrinaire to some. I cannot speak to the motives of its founders or those who have worked to revise and explain its principles. But as an observer who has spent many years pondering the role and the significance of intellectual freedom for libraries and librarians, and as a teacher who has tried in the classroom to present an objective introduction and assessment of intellectual freedom issues, I must conclude that the LBR represents a remarkable achievement. In my opinion, it serves effectively as a tool to expedite and improve the quality and range of information services presented by libraries everywhere.
Raise your hand if you have discussed the potential impact on your library of the Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (USA PATRIOT) Act. Raise two hands if you have in place current confidentiality policies and procedures known by all staff.

If you’ve neither discussed the Act’s impact nor produced updated confidentiality policies for your library, then I hope this article will convince you to do so, and sooner rather than later. If you’ve had these discussions and have the confidentiality policies, then this article will still tell you the story of Whatcom County Library System’s experience this summer when the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) visited one of our branches asking for circulation records, how this incident was reported in Western Washington University’s weekly student newspaper and was then picked up at light-speed by Library Journal in New York, and how the whole thing resolved.

The Incident

An FBI agent visited the Deming branch of Whatcom County Library System (WCLS) and asked library staff to provide the names of all persons who’d borrowed a copy of Bin Laden: The Man Who Declared War on America by Yossef Bodansky. Library staff told this agent they would follow library policy and relay the request to library management.

WCLS management consulted legal counsel, who then called the local FBI office for further information. The FBI said there was a handwritten note in the margin of the library’s copy of the book (which the FBI had confiscated) that said, “If the things I’m doing is considered a crime, then let history be a witness that I am a criminal. Hostility toward America is a religious duty and we hope to be rewarded by God.” The library district’s attorney told the agent that the library would not release the names of the book’s borrowers without a subpoena or court order.

After researching the quote, the library district’s attorney wrote a letter to the FBI agent reporting that the writing in the margin was a near-direct quote of a statement made by Osama bin Laden in a 1998 interview. Still, a grand jury subpoena for the appropriate circulation records was served to the library district’s attorney.

At a special meeting of the WCLS Board of Trustees, the library district’s attorney clarified the issues and discussed options with the board in executive session. The board passed a resolution to proceed with a motion to quash the subpoena, based on the following rationale:

- The subpoena infringes upon constitutionally protected rights. A library is a cornerstone of First Amendment rights and is an institution built on the concept of free expression of ideas; free exchange of information is a fundamental First Amendment right of the library, the patron, and the public.
- There is no substantial connection between the information sought and the subject of the grand jury proceedings—there must be an adequate foundation for inquiry. Even assuming that the subject of the grand jury’s investigation is related to the government’s interest in preventing terrorism, the information sought does not advance or relate to that goal.
- Libraries have the right to disseminate information freely, confidentially, and without the chilling effect of possible disclosure.
- The Supreme Court has recognized several times that individuals have a fundamental First Amendment right to receive information, free of the chilling effects of regulation of that right.
- Washington state statute has long protected from public disclosure any records that would indicate a person’s reading choices.
- The information requested by the FBI is not readily available to the library district because the computer records contain only the names of the current book borrower and a maximum of one previous borrower, and only if that previous borrower had checked out the book within the past ninety days. System backups that contain the records are maintained by another library, Bellingham Public Library, and it would be a substantial burden for the library district to produce those backups. (WCLS and the Bellingham Public Library have shared a common database and circulation system for over a decade.)

Eventually, the library district’s attorney received notice that the subpoena had been withdrawn, and that the library’s motion to quash was now moot. The reason given for this action was that the circulation data is maintained on a system that is housed under the control of the City of Bellingham.
In September 2003, the WCLS Board of Trustees had passed a resolution to support amendment of the USA PATRIOT Act and to reaffirm the role of the public library as a foundation of democracy in Whatcom County. (The text of this resolution is available on WCLS’s website under “Privacy.”) Both the City of Bellingham and Whatcom County have also passed resolutions reasserting the constitutional rights of citizens in the face of the USA PATRIOT Act.

Since that time, the Bellingham Public Library and WCLS have examined and revised their circulation records retention policy and are documenting ownership of the records and procedures should another such incident take place.

Public Reaction

During Banned Books Week, a panel discussion at Village Books, an independent Bellingham bookstore, featured a video on Denver’s Tattered Cover Bookstore First Amendment case, in which the Colorado Supreme Court had ruled that on First Amendment grounds the store could refuse to tell police investigators who had bought a certain book. WCLS attorney Deborra Garrett and WCLS director Joan Airoldi were part of a panel discussion on the topic of confidentiality of library records. The panel discussion included WCLS’s subpoena.

A WWU journalism student was in the audience and wrote her interpretation of the event, which appeared in an online version of the student publication Western Front. Before that day was over, someone from Library Journal had called from New York to ask about details of the case for their own publication.

Since then, the issue has spread in ways that I cannot imagine and can only trace through the large number of email responses from several states and Canada. Most of these applaud the WCLS board’s stand, but a few raised questions that library boards might want to address with library policy:

I wonder how a public agency, funded by public funds could consider their user records private….it’s not free speech, it’s not a private transaction. It’s a public transaction paid for by money that isn’t yours.

and,

In the controversy over the FBI requesting patron information for a book, I agree that it’s a violation of privacy policies that should never be allowed. However, I do have to wonder: If someone had written ‘I molest small children’ in a book, would the library’s response be the same? If not, why?

Also, two caring and budget-conscious readers, one in Colorado and one at tincture.com, have sent messages stating that they are sending WCLS some copies to replace the confiscated book.

Sobering Thoughts

WCLS has learned much through this experience. Our board has decided that the story should be told so that others may learn from our experience.

While the process was under investigation, the board and staff treated as a gag order the FBI’s request that we not disclose the subpoena. It was a horrible feeling and a difficult time. Had this been a USA PATRIOT Act subpoena, the gag order would have been mandatory, and all the usual legal protections would have been moot. Going through this experience has reinforced for the board and staff the unchecked power of the USA PATRIOT Act. Deborra Garrett says, “It’s not that privacy rights can never be invaded, but that if the government seeks to invade them, the government has to show that it’s absolutely necessary to do that.”

The book Refuge of a Scoundrel: The Patriot Act in Libraries points out that there is an element of human dignity in being able to confront one’s accusers. The book says we must protect our freedom of speech not only to ensure personal self-expression, but also because dissent and peaceful change bring political stability to our society. Openness and accountability can produce a fuller factual record and expose faulty assumptions. (4, p.72)

Among the ironies of this story is that The 9/11 Commission Report contains the very quote written in the margin of the book checked out at the Deming Library. That same report also describes an agenda of opportunity in which the United Nations equates literacy with freedom, and states that “The United States should rebuild the scholarship, exchange, and library programs that reach out to young people and offer them knowledge and hope.” A wonderful image, and one to preserve in any country.

Challenge for the Future

This experience illustrates in harsh terms the importance of protecting our basic values, our bedrock constitutional rights. Write letters, write policies, draft resolutions. The libraries of the future are in our hands and will be shaped by our action or inaction. I cannot help but think that the WCLS board stands taller after reading the email from a reader in Oregon who stated, “I wish more in our society would display the common sense that you folks demonstrate, before our freedoms are completely surrendered.” Or the email: “George Orwell is Rolling in His Grave; FBI Demands Library Records.” Think about it.

References

Volunteers in Outreach and Elsewhere

Community outreach and volunteers seem like a natural fit for public libraries, but not all libraries in Washington see it that way. With library budget problems, time constraints, and staff issues in the way, many libraries limit both outreach and volunteers and are unlikely to unite the two. The largest and the smallest library systems seem the best at making this connection.

This was made clear at two separate sessions of the WLA/PNLA Joint Conference in Wenatchee in August. The first, “Outreach for the Rural Library,” certainly mentioned volunteers, but its main thrust was bookmobiles, books by mail, and home service delivered by staff. The second program, “Connecting to Your Community Through Volunteers,” offered lots of tips on how to use volunteers in libraries. It would have been more useful if tips had been provided on how to convince library boards and staff that it’s worthwhile to wedge into a tight budget enough money to pay for the cost of integrating volunteers into the library.

Evidence of what reduced budgeting can do to outreach services is painfully visible at Seattle Public Library. After absorbing more than $3.5 million in funding cuts in the last few years, the library board is eliminating from its 2005 budget all mobile services. Cutting bookmobile service to retirement homes, child care centers and residents who are homebound obviously will impact sharply the most vulnerable in the city. Ironically, this is happening while Seattle is still celebrating renovations at many branches and the opening of its dazzling new central library. But operating budgets and capital budgets are not the same, and the city is demanding draconian operational cuts from its library—$2.1 million.

Deborah Jacobs, Seattle’s city librarian, seems determined to offer at least some level of service to the homebound, maybe through the mail. Could volunteers play a role? “We will work closely with our labor union and with staff, not to replace staff with volunteers, but to find efficiencies,” she said.

Throughout the state, volunteer coordinators recruit, train, and manage these “free” service providers. They know it’s crucial for the library board and staff to buy into the idea that volunteers can offer real, cost-effective support. Unfortunately, problems arise when staff are not committed to making volunteerism work.

Staff Working for Volunteers

This certainly is not the case at San Juan Island Library District, where the commitment to volunteers is robust. In many ways, San Juan’s small paid staff works for and supports the volunteer staff, rather than the other way round. Such an arrangement has always been part of the vision for library service on the island.

Kathy Babbitt, San Juan’s volunteer coordinator, said that the staff was all volunteer when the island’s first library—a private one—was founded in 1922. Community members ran it for sixty years with a retired librarian as the only (modestly) paid staffer. After the public library district was created on San Juan in 1982, a few professionals were hired, but volunteers continued to be the heart of the library. Today there are more than a hundred volunteers giving time to the library, which serves a population of 5,600 in winter and four times that in summer.

Here are tasks that volunteers perform regularly at San Juan:
• Circulation and shelving
• Cataloging 200 newspapers and magazines
• Keeping the library open seven days a week
• Mending 500 books a year
• Processing new books every Friday
• Helping with the summer reading program (teens do this)
• Reading to preschoolers and children after school
• Serving as reading buddies to elementary school students
• Offering home services
• Arranging six art exhibits a year

Obviously, using volunteers works at San Juan. Granted, the island’s strong sense of community and tradition make this library unique. Still, it is a real example of volunteerism working superbly in a small community.

At the other extreme—demonstrating successful volunteerism at a very large, well-financed library sys-
tem—is King County Library System (KCLS). Its board and administration also have the vision for using volunteers in many ways, particularly in outreach services. And they have the financing and staff support to back up that vision.

Because King County’s forty-five branches serve urban, richly diverse communities, there are many special needs the library stretches to meet by using volunteers in many innovative programs. One area where volunteers make an enormous contribution at KCLS is in offering computer classes. Other programs where volunteers play a key role are study zones (a homework and study assistance program for K-12 students at community libraries), adult literacy programs, teens tutoring citizenship classes, many children’s projects, the Traveling Library Center which visits seniors and others who can’t come to the library, and a slew of special projects.

**Outreach Without Volunteers**

Farther up Puget Sound, Everett Public Library, a medium-sized city library which is a state pioneer in using bookmobiles, strictly uses staff for its outreach service. Volunteers do not play a role.

Theresa Gemmer of Everett’s outreach department said that staff continue to provide all services beyond the walls of the library—to home and commercial childcare centers, preschools, nursing homes, adult family homes, convalescent centers, senior apartments and mobile home parks, and homebound individuals. The library’s first 1924 “book wagon” is being restored and some day soon will be used by staff to tour the streets of Everett on special occasions.

County residents living outside the Everett city limits must turn to Sno-Isle Libraries for their library services including outreach services—also provided by staff, not volunteers.

Bonnie Gerken, with Sno-Isle’s outreach services, said library cross-training is important at her library so that staff members can cover for each other. Substitutes are also trained. Sno-Isle’s bookmobile is only twenty-five feet long and is easy to drive, but being a Sno-Isle outreach employee does require enough physical strength to handle boxes of books and the service’s fold-up aluminum carts.

One of Gerken’s favorite promotional materials is a monthly calendar for patrons that reminds them of delivery dates. Rain or shine, the bookmobile and four cargo vans strive to go out.

Even though Sno-Isle does not currently use volunteers for outreach service, it wants to expand library services throughout Island and Snohomish Counties. As part of its long-range plan, the board is considering new services through kiosks, express stops, or mini-libraries as a way to reach the unserved, underserved, or high-traffic areas.

When asked what she did about lost or unreturned items, Gerken smiled. “Try to find them, but just absorb the loss if they don’t turn up.” She explained that there are many circumstances that affect the disappearance of outreach materials. People move in and out of senior facilities, for example. For their jail service, the library just donates uncataloged paperbacks. This saves both the library and the jail from needing to keep track of the books.

Jefferson County on the Olympia Peninsula is another example of a small library system that has good outreach services. The library, centered in Port Hadlock, seven miles south of Port Townsend, welcomes volunteers—though not in outreach.

The system’s bookmobile operates throughout the east side of the county and contracts with Timberland and North Olympic Libraries to provide service for the west side. Monthly home library service is also offered by staff for county residents who are unable to visit the library due to advanced age, disability, or illness.

Director Ray Serebrin said that the library serves two distinct groups: lower income families who have lived in the area for many generations, and upper-income folks who have moved to the area to retire. Bookmobile service, important to both groups, is enhanced by remote book drops and an on-board inventory of more than 3,000 items.
Outreach by Mail

In the heart of Washington, the public library district that covers the largest rural territory—North Central Regional Library (NCRL)—does not use bookmobile service at all for its outreach. It instead relies on books by mail, handled solely by staff.

There is an enormous advantage to using mail order to reach rural patrons in five counties, NCRL’s Marilyn Neumiller told session attendees. Some NCRL patrons have no phone or electricity, which means they cannot access the library’s online catalog. The library has responded by printing a paper catalog of new materials three times yearly and sending it to rural mailbox holders. The catalog highlights popular material new to the library, and is classified by age and genre. Mail order is available 24/7 through this printed catalog or through the library’s website. The program has been in place since the 1960s. Neumiller said that the major downside to the program is that staff members do not personally contact patrons.

Materials can be ordered by phone, email, letter, or postage-paid postcards. On a typical day, the library processes 400 to 600 orders, puts them in cloth mailing bags, and stacks the bags in a pickup to take to the post office.

Some session attendees were amazed to learn that mail service is cost-effective, although internal library changes may be needed in the future to keep it so. As operating and postal costs grow, courier service to branch libraries may have to substitute for some items that are presently mailed to patrons’ homes. Patrons might then have to pick up the item at the nearest branch library. Although volunteers are not used for mail orders, both staff and volunteers provide on-site library service to Head Start programs, nursing homes, senior retirement centers, youth detention facilities, and jails.

Conclusions

The role that volunteers play at all public libraries could expand dramatically in the next years if government budgets continue to tighten. Although no single blueprint emerged at the Wenatchee conference for using community members to augment library staffing, there was strong interest in volunteerism and how it is already benefiting many of Washington’s libraries.
Why should reference librarians know the difference between trial court records and superior court records? Answer: Because law libraries don’t carry records for trial court proceedings.

Can you find U.S. Supreme Court decisions from the nineteenth century online? Answer: Supreme Court decisions are online dating back to 1789.

What is the federally regulated speed of ketchup, and where can I find the regulations? Answer: Try looking at 21 CFR 155.194 (Title 21 of the Code of Federal Regulations).

Over fifty people were provided with the answers to these and other pressing questions during the consecutive morning and afternoon sessions of the “Legal Reference for Non-Law Librarians” workshop at the WLA/PNLA Joint Conference. Presenters Cheryl Nyberg, Peggy Jarrett, and Ann Hemmens of the Gallagher Law Library at the University of Washington made a virtually seamless team, overcoming an uncooperative Internet connection and technology setup and successfully engaging a roomful of librarians who’d had minimal previous exposure to detailed legal reference issues.

Cheryl Nyberg began by explaining the sources of legal authority, which start at the federal level with the U.S. Constitution and run down through federal and state statutes, court opinions, treaties, and local ordinances. She then reviewed the distinctions and complications surrounding jurisdictional authority, which sometimes comes from the federal level, sometimes from the state and local level, and frequently is determined jointly.

Shireen Deboo is a 2004 graduate of the MLIS program at the University of Washington Information School.

Obviously, this framework makes researching legal questions a challenge, so Nyberg focused on strategies that can help ensure that one obtains good information. It helps to know which issues are affected by which level of government. For example, most issues related to banking, copyright and patents, immigration, and interstate commerce are likely to be under federal jurisdiction. Most family law issues, insurance, real estate, and vehicle questions fall under state jurisdictions. Finally, some issues fall under both federal and state jurisdictions, such as felony crimes, environmental disputes, and tax questions.

Nyberg advised that, when researching a particular court case, librarians should begin with the information the patron supplies during the reference interview. Does the patron know the jurisdiction of the case? Was this a state court case or a federal court case? Did the case happen several years ago or recently? Asking specific questions about the details of the case can help narrow the search.

Nyberg acknowledged that reading laws can seem like reading a foreign language, and walked attendees through the basics of the U.S. Code and the Code of Federal Regulations.

Once Nyberg provided an overview of the legal research landscape, Peggy Jarrett and Ann Hemmens stepped in to share more information about resources for conducting reference and research on legal topics. Federal and state statutes can be found online, as can some information from the court system. In addition, there are excellent secondary sources that provide background explanations, overviews, definitions, and analysis of legal issues. Jarrett and Hemmens focused on the free Internet sources that would be most useful to general reference librarians, sources like “Nolo: Law for All” (www.nolo.com).

Attendees walked out of the session knowing how to research a bill as well. We were reminded again to first of all determine the applicable jurisdiction and bill status. These facts determine where to search for the bill language. For example, patrons may be inquiring about legislation that is only proposed, and not yet in force. Bills can be searched for through chronological publications of legislative sessions, or sometimes by means of a subject index. Once a bill is codified into law, it can be searched for in the statutes for the particular jurisdiction. For example, in Washington state, we have the
Most librarians will have noticed that local, state, and federal
government agencies are more and more frequently relying on the
Internet as a means of delivering services and information to citi-
zens. In “The E-Government Boom Years” session at the WLA/
PNLA Joint Conference, Cass Hartnett, a U.S. documents librarian
at the University of Washington Libraries, and Bruce Godfrey, a
geographic information systems (GIS) specialist in the government
documents department of the University of Idaho Libraries, talked
in detail about the shape of this new government Internet space.

Hartnett talked about how the public has come to expect readily
available online forms, reports, and directories. Through their Inter-
net connections, “every library is now a government documents
depository,” she said. Politicians use the Internet too, blogging to get their message
across. She said that while government is
also becoming more “observable” through
community access television, webcasts,
C-SPAN, and meeting minutes posted on
the Web, this transparency does not reach
the unconnected. “E-Gov screams digital
divide,” Hartnett said.

Godfrey discussed the growing use by
government of the Internet, then followed
with details of the Interactive Numeric and
Spatial Information Data Engine (INSIDE)
Idaho Project which is bringing together
Idaho geospatial data and making it acces-
sible.

In May 2004, the Pew Internet and American Life Project
published a study called “How Americans Get in Touch with Gov-
ernment.” This study concluded that “those who use the Internet
contact the government three times more often than those who
don’t; and our communities need to provide multiple channels for
citizens to reach government agencies and solve problems.” Other
countries are also considering the implementation and implications
of e-government. Cited was an international conference titled “E-
Government and Transitional Countries, Proceedings of the Tenth
Annual Network of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration
in Central and Eastern Europe (NISPAcee) Conference (2002).”

The presenters gave specific examples of government informa-
tion resources available to citizens via the Internet:

1) Regulations.gov—www.regulations.gov—gives
direct access to federal regulations that are cur-
thently being drafted, finalized, or changed.
Although GPOAccess provides access to the Fed-
eral Register, Regulations.gov not only provides
access but also permits citizens to join the regula-
tory process by making comments on proposals.
This site is easy to search by the issuing agency or
by keyword.

2) Statistical Abstract of the United States—
www.census.gov/prod/www/statistical-
abstract-03.html—covers data on economic and
social conditions in the U.S.

3) FedStats.gov provides
statistics from 100 U.S.
federal agencies. Browse
“Topic Links A-Z” or
“Agencies by Subject”—
www.fedstats.gov

Godfrey used the Uni-
versity of Idaho’s INSIDE
Idaho Project to demon-
strate how government
libraries are organizing
scientific information and
making it accessible via
a single access point on
the Internet. INSIDE is a
project whose goal is to create a data clearinghouse
for geospatial data on Idaho gathered from various
remote sensing, mapping, and surveying sources.
(Geospatial data identifies the geographic location
and characteristics of boundaries and features, natural
or manmade, on Earth.)

The project has made geographic resources such as
satellite images, geographic data, numeric data,
atlases, and interactive GIS resources both available
and searchable. This data was scattered in various
places and was recorded in various formats. Research-
ers seeking data on a particular geographic feature of
Idaho had to search in many different places, often
finding out only with difficulty if the needed data even
existed. A library seemed like the appropriate place to
bring the data together and make it findable. Project
members catalog each resource and include metadata

Martha Parsons is a library specialist at the Washington State University
Energy Library in Olympia.
which describes the “content, quality, condition, and other appropriate characteristics of the data” and which serves to help users locate and interpret the retrieved data.

The project has been furthered by two grants, a 1999 National Leadership Grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services and an additional 1999 Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) “Don’t Duck Metadata” grant provided by the U.S. Geological Survey which stipulated creation of FGDC-compliant metadata.

The project has required the cooperation and partnerships between the University of Idaho and many Idaho state agencies, federal agencies, and local communities. Users are students, faculty, researchers, GIS professionals, state and local governments, and representatives from business and industry. The project is now an important state portal and a node on the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI), a federal effort to help organizations produce and share geographic data.

See the project website at inside.uidaho.edu. Other important geospatial websites Godfrey cited were www.geodata.gov and www.geo-one-stop.gov.

Deboo (Continued from page 24)

Revised Code of Washington (RCW), while the federal version of encoded law is the U.S. Code.

One of the most valuable elements of the two-session workshop was information about what cannot be provided to patrons seeking legal information. Librarians—even most law librarians—are not practicing attorneys, and need to be aware of the kind of information they can provide. Jarrett indicated, for example, that Gallagher librarians do not provide legal definitions over the phone. While sources can be provided for locating appropriate attorneys, librarians do not advise patrons on selecting lawyers. And while court rulings posted online are almost always accurate and sufficient for research and reference purposes, those relying on information for their own legal protection should expect to use a print source or to consult a lawyer.

For those who were unable to attend the legal reference workshops in Wenatchee, visiting the Gallagher Law Library website lib.law.washington.edu is an excellent starting point for legal research. Staff librarians at Gallagher have designed the site to work as a pathfinder for almost any legal research question. Other law libraries in Washington include those for King, Pierce, Snohomish, and Spokane counties, and the Washington State Law Library.

Join WLA.

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

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

WLA ... A resource for Washington libraries and the people that make them great!
Online real-time candidate forums, pioneered in Washington state by a Seattle television station and the League of Women Voters of Washington (LWVWA), were demonstrated at a Grassroots!-sponsored session, “Civic Participation and Online Honesty,” on Friday afternoon at the WLA/PNLA Joint Conference.

Dale Steinke, news and operations manager at Belo Interactive, and Judy Hedden, LWVWA’s online voter projects director, told about an online forum with eight candidates for Tacoma City Council that served to test the online candidate forum concept during the October 2003 election season.

Online in Real Time

The public submitted questions to the forum moderator both in advance and during the 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. forum at the KING5 website, which hosts the forum software. The software, based on Internet chat, is similar to that used for “virtual reference.” That evening, all eight candidates showed up at a University of Washington–Tacoma computer lab and answered moderator-selected questions in real time. Forty to fifty citizens logged in from home during the real-time portion of the forum.

An online forum is fast paced: In an hour, all eight city council candidates answered the same thirteen questions. Candidates had no access to a spell-checker within the forum software, although one chose to type her answers into a word-processing program before pasting each answer into the forum software’s response window.

In this text-based Q and A format, candidates aren’t judged by their charisma, personality, or speaking ability, but by the quality of their answers (and by their typing ability, though a candidate or two chose to have their answers keyed in by a volunteer). The quality of the answers varies; some of the candidates’ answers seem unrehearsed while others seem more rote.

Afterward, participants described the forum as “electric” and “exciting.” The candidates even asked for a second hour. In the weeks after the forum, about 400 people accessed the forum transcript on KING’s website. Typically, in-person city-council forums attract only a small fraction of the 440 to 450 people who either participated in the online forum or read the transcript later.

A transcript of the forum remains as a record at forms.king5.com/w3talk/presentation/forumtranscript.html.

Lessons Learned

Because of the promise shown during the Tacoma forum, the project team plans more forums in the future. LWV of Seattle usually does a traditional candidate forum for its city council race but will now adopt the online forum too, hoping to provide a wider and different audience. Also, more online candidate forums have been scheduled for fall 2004 on Washington state ballot initiatives and statewide offices.

Hedden and Steinke said they discussed the possibility of adding a device pioneered by Amazon.com, the customer review (“Was this review helpful to you?”). They decided, however, that such a feature could allow political partisanship to bias the result.

They also discussed having some candidates participate remotely, perhaps with a Web cam or other means to verify the candidate’s identity. Although candidates need not be in the same physical location, certain functions—verification of candidates’ identity, timekeeping, and technical support—must be present wherever a candidate participates. Otherwise, the integrity of the process is compromised.
Online Forum Tools

Q: From where did the idea for this come?

Judy: The League of Women Voters created a type of online forum in 1996 with special software that allowed candidates to log on, receive a question from the league, and take a week to post an answer. While we had some exciting debates between candidates, it was difficult to get many to participate. We also didn’t get much traffic from the public. We didn’t repeat the effort but felt that it had potential.

I brought up the idea again in 2003, except this time with an eye to using existing technology that was already familiar to Internet users and especially to young people. Since the league didn’t have the software or money or capability to develop the software, I turned to Dale Steinke, a news professional with whom I had worked in the past. He had already developed a chat tool to enable the public to ask questions of experts.

Q: Why did KING5.com create this tool?

Dale: To give the public the opportunity to interact with newsmakers in real-time. We’ve hosted medical experts, earthquake preparedness professionals, and even the zookeepers of Hansa, the first elephant born at Woodland Park Zoo. We made it moderated to keep forums on track and to screen out inappropriate questions and comments. Judy’s idea of using the tool for political candidates was a natural fit.

Q: How can I conduct a forum?

Dale: If it’s an issue of widespread interest, I’d be happy to explore options for KING5.com to help. If you want to do it on your own, a quick Google search for “moderated chat software” will turn up dozens of leads for ready-made moderated chat code, hosted sites, and downloadable software.

Q: What challenges does KING5’s system pose?

Judy: We need to set some standards. Issues that still need resolution are the differing abilities of candidates to type their answers (although this is somewhat parallel to good people who just don’t speak well in public), the lack of a spell-checker, the lack of a timing system in the software, and the issue of remote participation without a way to verify the identity of the candidate or ballot issue representative. The other issue is how many trained moderators are available who feel comfortable using the software.

For more information, see an article about the forum tool on the KING5 website: forms.king5.com/w3talk/presentation/forumstory.html.

—Dale Steinke and Judy Hedden

They noted that people with limited English-speaking ability could have problems understanding the forum exchanges, and translation programs don’t work very well. As it stands, a candidate would have to provide his or her own translator or risk being misunderstood by non-English-speaking voters. It is a difficult and unresolved issue.

Steinke and Hedden emphasized that the online forum format could be used for purposes other than political forums, such as for virtual focus groups or virtual talk shows. Such projects could promote community involvement and lead to stronger communities.

These online political forums serve as a model of collaboration for public institutions like university libraries, non-profits like the LWV, and for-profit companies like KING5.com to promote the public interest through new forms of political discourse, which ultimately encourage an informed populace. Each partner brought a particular strength to bear. The results are encouraging.
The success of the just-completed WLA/PNLA Joint Conference was not a foregone conclusion. The origin and successful completion of this first-in-recent-memory joint conference tell a story of events precipitated by organizational leadership taking advantage of a fortunate confluence of circumstances.

PNLA had previously approached WLA more than once about having a joint conference. Both WLA and PNLA had past histories of holding joint conferences with other associations. WLA has had a regular joint conference with the Oregon Library Association, while PNLA has made an effort over the years, beginning in 1957, to hold periodic joint conferences with member state and provincial associations (such as Alaska’s and Hawaii’s library associations) as well as with the Mountain Plains Library Association. (1)

But WLA had not previously found such a venture with PNLA to be logistically feasible. A big obstacle had been the dates on which each association’s conference has traditionally been held. WLA’s practice was to hold a conference in the spring. This was not a good time for PNLA members because most PNLA members were involved with their own state or provincial associations. PNLA’s traditional dates (in August) were problematic for WLA because a conference in late summer would shift conference revenue to the next fiscal year and leave WLA with a fiscal year that had no conference revenue. This was a strong deterrent, particularly whenever money has been tight. (2)

It was the Public Library Association (PLA) conference’s coming to Seattle in 2004 that finally helped bring WLA and PNLA together. The PLA conference was a huge opportunity for Pacific Northwest public librarians to attend a national conference. Having a national conference come to Washington state meant that the national conference would be the “big draw” for the year. Meanwhile, on the Canadian side of the border, the Canadian Library Association (CLA) had joined with the British Columbia Library Association (BCLA) to present a joint conference in June 2004 in Victoria, British Columbia which would be the “big draw” to the north. The budgetary effects of these two national conferences were a cause of concern to both PNLA and WLA.

WLA’s leadership mulled this over and concluded that it would be inadvisable for WLA to plan a state association conference a mere two months after a national conference that would involve many of WLA’s own members. (3) Many libraries might require their staff to choose between the PLA conference and the WLA conference, and many of the vendors might not be able to show up at both conferences. It seemed like an opportune time to hold a joint conference with PNLA during their traditional conference time in August. An August conference scheduled six months after the national conference would be in another fiscal year for many libraries. That would make it easier for those who wished to attend both conferences to find the funds to do so.

A joint conference would give PNLA a larger program venue and the advantage of a larger conference that would attract more vendors. PNLA’s conference, although occurring a mere two months after the CLA/BCLA conference, would be held in the United States. WLA would have the advantage of a multi-state, multi-province experience at their conference. Pooling the resources of the two associations would have economic advantages as well. As part of a joint conference, WLA could expect larger conference attendance, attract more prominent speakers, have more complex programs, and attract more interesting vendors. (4) Sandy Carlson, recently retired from Kitsap Regional Library, had extensive involvement with both WLA and PNLA governance and convinced the boards of both associations that this was the time to try the joint effort. She assured them that she would take on the responsibility of co-chairing that position with Joy Neal of North Central Regional Library.

Carlson took charge of the many details that had to be worked out between the two associations. The letter of agreement took into account the disparity in size between the associations (WLA has about 1,000 members, PNLA about 330) and equitably prorated both the seed money and the distribution of any profit. (2) Compromises were worked out, conference traditions were respected, and activities and programs planned accordingly. The rest is history. It was a win-win situation for both library associations. We had a great conference!

References

Tami Echavarria Robinson is coordinator of instructional services at Whitworth College Library.
2004 WLA Awards

WLAs annual awards luncheon was held at the WLA/PNLA Joint Conference in Wenatchee on 13 August. The awards committee members were Jan Walsh, Gina Rice, Jeanne Steffener, and Sharon Hammer. Communiqué photos are by Rose Ferri unless otherwise indicated.

Theresa Gemmer of Everett Public Library was presented the WLA Merit Award for Outstanding Performance in a Special Area. Theresa has not only conducted an ambitious outreach program—with daily bookmobile service, deliveries to the housebound, starter bags for new babies, and a weekly informal preschoolers’ play group—Theresa also has presented programs to conferences on both the state and national level. As such, she is the epitome of her title, Outreach Coordinator.

Martha Parsons received the WALE Employee of the Year Award. Her accomplishments and contributions to the library field include the establishment and revamping of the WLA website, making it more functional, responsive, and a useful resource for WLA members. Her influence is also seen through her work on the Congress on Professional Education (COPE) III Steering Committee, affecting how support staff and libraries as a whole will function in the coming years. Her leadership in the annual WALE conference has ensured its success, making it a “must attend” event. In her day job, Martha works at the Washington State University Energy Library in Olympia.

Susan B. Madden won the WLA Emeritus Award. She is retired from the King County Library System but still retains honorary status in the area of her career focus, young adult services. Susan until recently represented WLA on the ALA Council, and she continues to serve on committees to promote organization membership. She is well-known for her conference speeches and was instrumental in establishing the time-honored tradition of the Society Gaius Julius Solinus Washingtonius, WLA’s informal humor society.

Candace Morgan Receives William O. Douglas Award

Candace Morgan, recently retired from Fort Vancouver Regional Library (FVRL), has received the 2004 William O. Douglas Award, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Washington’s highest annual honor. The William O. Douglas Award is given for outstanding, consistent, and sustained contributions to civil liberties. During her twenty-one years as an associate director of FVRL, Morgan made intellectual freedom the cornerstone of her work. She has served as the chair of the ALA’s Intellectual Freedom Committee and as president of the Freedom to Read Foundation, an organization dedicated to promoting First Amendment free-
Marilyn Allen received the WLFFTA Distinguished Service Award (Trustee Award #1). A former trustee of the Richland Public Library, Marilyn has the reputation of being a mover and a shaker, filling leadership roles in working with both the library board and the Richland City Council. She has guided the library’s long-range planning committee, actively participates in the Friends of the library, and continues to serve as a volunteer consultant to the library’s marketing committee. Her good-natured enthusiasm and infectious personality are inspirational.

Three groups shared the WLFFTA Distinguished Service Award (Trustee Award #2): Camas Library Board of Trustees, the Friends of the Camas Public Library, and the Camas Library Foundation. For fifteen years these groups worked tirelessly, both individually and together, to keep the dream alive for an expanded library. These volunteers pounded the pavement, attended public meetings, distributed flyers door-to-door, got on the phone, held fund-raisers, and did anything they could to make the dream a reality. Their dream came true in May 2003 when the City of Camas opened a renovated and expanded library.

Eleanor Farris won the WLFFTA Distinguished Service Award (Friends/Foundation Award #1). A retired president of the Friends of the Parkland/Spanaway Library, Eleanor has been for twenty-eight years a staunch supporter of enhanced library services in her community. In her retirement she continues as an active Friends member and a tireless advocate for children. She is well-known for her efforts in raising funds through book sales, raffles, and calendar sales to support library issues, and she also successfully campaigned in 1986 for the passage of the $28 million bond issue for the Pierce County Library System.

Morgan frequently lectures and conducts workshops around the country on intellectual freedom issues. She has been a leader in extending free speech principles to cyberspace. Her dispassionate testimony as an ACLU and ALA witness in the lawsuit challenging the Children’s Internet Protection Act (U.S. v. ALA et al.) proved her mettle on the national stage. During the testimony, Morgan was unfappable, giving measured, thoughtful responses even when government attorneys asked inflammatory questions and attempted to embarrass her with explicit pornography.

Two New IGs Are Born
During the conference Lisa Oldoski and Susan Veltfort collected enough petition signatures to qualify two new WLA interest groups. Both new interest groups have been formally accepted by the WLA Board. Oldoski circulated a petition on behalf of NextGen, which aims to “provide a space for new librarians, to form a community, and to meet established members of the library community for mentorship.”

Veltfort’s petition supported formation of IGLU, the Interest Group for Libraries and Unions, which hopes to offer “a forum to explore the role of both active and developing unions of library workers, to explore the extent of the presence and role of unions among library workers in Washington state, and to serve as a resource for both active and developing unions of library workers in Washington state.”
**Library Day 2005**

“Eggs?”

“That’s right, fresh-from-the-farm eggs. We are bringing them to our senator,” explained library trustee Lethene Parks to the airport security screener on that cold day last winter. Parks was heading to Olympia for Library Day, armed with a dozen fresh eggs—not to throw, but as a little reminder of home for her senator toiling away in Olympia far from the comforts of his home in rural Eastern Washington.

In her book *The Golden Rule of Schmoozing*, Aye Jaye tells the story of the successful salesperson giving directions to a customer’s home to a new salesperson. “Then you walk up a flight of stairs and press the doorbell with your elbow.” The new salesperson asks, “Why do I have to ring the doorbell with my elbow?” The older and wiser salesperson answers, “What? You’re going there empty-handed?”

With help from WLA, you too won’t be empty-handed when you visit your legislators on Library Day on Thursday, 17 February 2005.

It’s not too early to begin making your plans for Library Day. No one can predict with certainty which legislative issues will be steaming on the front burner—perhaps election of library district trustees, maybe state funding for databases, or maybe some brand-new and unexpected opportunity or threat.

What is certain is that your presence in Olympia will make a difference. In person, you can visit your legislators where they are working; or, as they are fond of saying, where they are “working for you.”

**Did someone say “chicken”?** Are you feeling a little shy about participating? Armed with gifts and facts, WLA will help you feel comfortably bold and persuasive. There is strength in numbers on Library Day: You won’t be alone. Remember: There are only ninety-eight representatives and forty-nine senators.

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**Kirk Kirkland** won the WLFFTA Distinguished Service Award (Friends/Foundation Award #2). As president of the Friends of the Washington State Library, when the library was threatened with elimination, Kirk took up the cause and worked with others to reorganize the Friends. The group then mounted an effective campaign supporting the State Library during the 2003 legislative session by lobbying legislators, writing letters, and much more, culminating in minimized cuts both in the library’s budget and in staff positions.

Two groups shared a WLFFTA Distinguished Service Award (Friends/Foundation Award #2): the Golf Family Foundation and the Friends of LaCenter Community Library. These groups pursued a spectacular and noble vision: rescuing a 1906 medical clinic building from destruction, moving it to a new site, fully restoring it to authentic historical detail, and giving it new life as a library. Local businesses throughout Cowlitz and Clark counties and other foundations also contributed materials and services to help make this dream come true.

**Linda Ernst** received the CAYAS Award for Visionary Library Service to Youth. Linda, of King County Library System, played a seminal role in serving and advocating for babies and young children in libraries. She has written two fine how-to guides for serving the library’s youngest patrons (*Lapsit Services for the Very Young I and II*), and recently presented two CAYAS workshops on early learning. Linda’s visionary work as a librarian, writer, and mentor has resonated throughout the state and beyond.
WLA President John Sheller was given an honorary “Golden Handcuffs” award for work outside the association that nevertheless benefited libraries. John was honored for his selfless work in opposing the I-864 signature gathering campaign. If this initiative had qualified and passed, libraries throughout the state would have suffered severe budget cuts.

Three deserving librarians received the 2004 President’s Award, given at the discretion of the WLA president. In February of 2004, Nancy Pearl—recently retired from Seattle Public Library’s Washington Center for the Book—donated countless hours, a large chunk of office space, and 500 autographs to WLA to help make our merchandise sales at the PLA conference an overwhelming success. She is a true master of marketing, and an example to all of us who seek to tell the library story.

Why should you travel to Olympia to talk with your legislators about library issues?
• Libraries need you to speak out for them.
• Legislators need to learn what libraries do for citizens of Washington state.
• Legislators need to understand how libraries can help them.

By 17 February 2005, WLA’s Legislative Planning Committee and the association’s legislative consultant, Steve Duncan, will have identified crucial issues and will provide background and talking points for Library Day participants.

The rallying point will be at 9:00 A.M. at the Masonic Center in Tumwater. There will be coffee and pastries and lots of free parking. A bus will shuttle supporters to the newly renovated and reopened Capitol building. Everyone will receive a box lunch to tide them over until later in the afternoon when the Friends of the Washington State Library will host a reception downtown.

Catherine Lord of King County Library System was honored for her contributions to the field of intellectual freedom. Those concerned over the accelerated pace of our retirement cycle, and wondering where our next intellectual freedom champions will come from, need look no further than Washington state’s own Catherine Lord. Catherine is gaining national attention for her “Defending Access with Confidence” workshops for library boards and staff members.

KCLS’s Susan Madden was the final President’s Award recipient. Susan has been an inspiration and mentor to countless new young adult services librarians and new members of our profession. She has also been a tireless hawker of WLA’s Maryan E. Reynolds Scholarship buttons, ribbons, baubles, and beads, and continues to be an inspiration to us all to “Give Till It Helps!”
The best way for library supporters to get out of trouble with the IRS or any other government agency is to not stumble into trouble in the first place. That friendly advice was offered by Washington State Auditor Brian Sonntag at an all-day forum for library supporters in Ellensburg October 23.

Sonntag told the sixty attendees from across the state that many problems arise when good operating agreements are not in place between a library and its Friends group or a library and its foundation. A comprehensive written arrangement offers protection and guidance for both the library and its supporters.

“Spell out the obligations of both parties,” he recommended. These should include simple rules stating how books and other materials will be given or sold to Friends, details of Friends’ book sales, and a strong system of internal controls of gifts and cash. “It’s not public dollars until the money is presented to the library by the Friends,” he said.

Although the state auditor’s office is not looking to go after Friends groups for violating gray areas in the law, it is still important that libraries and their supporters agree on procedures and understand their legal obligations, Sonntag said. Once an agreement is in place, public libraries and their Friends are encouraged to run it by the state auditor’s office to see that it meets legal requirements.

He said that library funds should not be commingled with money that Friends make from sales of books and other merchandise. Some Friends groups affix secure boxes near book sale areas with slots into which cash and checks for the book sale purchases can be slipped. This honor system works well at many libraries.

As a public asset, libraries must be accountable, said Sonntag, although in his opinion that principle is not reflected in the recent state Supreme Court ruling on the open records law. The court ruled that, in responding to citizens’ requests for agency records, public agencies (including libraries) can determine when a request is “too broad.”

In Sonntag’s opinion, the court’s decision damages the public’s right to information about operations of its own government. “The state legislature must respond to this weakening of the open records law and, at the very least, the language used in the law should be defined.” He also called on libraries and other public agencies to keep a good index of all their records. Such indexes can then be used by citizens to conduct narrowly-focused searches.

This third biennial Friends Forum, which featured several speakers in addition to Sonntag, was co-sponsored by the Washington Library Friends, Foundations, and Trustees Association and the WLA Grassroots! Interest Group.
Librarians I Have Loved

Lately I’ve been getting to know some intriguing members of our profession very well. Allow me to introduce you.

Cassandra Mitchell is librarian of the small town of Sechelt, British Columbia. While perhaps less well-known than the prim and plucky Miss Helma Zukas just down the coast in Bellehaven, Miss Mitchell is smart, compassionate, resourceful, sexy, a trained professional with a deep commitment to her community, and a love of books, which, she writes, “are my work, my comfort, my joy.” This is in a personal ad answered by RCMP Staff Sergeant Karl Alberg, who observes her well-rounded character in acute detail. “He noticed that as she shelved the books, she pulled some slightly farther out, and then, unthinking, ran her fingers along the spines as if playing a harp.” Small wonder Alberg becomes her love interest and fellow crime-solver in nine evocative psychological mysteries by L.R. (Lauralie) Wright, beginning with The Suspect, winner of the 1985 Edgar award for best novel. Readers with an MLS will find special poignancy in A Touch of Panic, in which Cassandra is stalked by that most exasperating of villains, a pompous, predatory professor of library science. Sadly, Wright died recently, but her masterful mysteries should live on with fans of P.D. James, Ruth Rendell, and mainstream fiction readers as well.

Dorcas Mather is head of Rhode Island’s Squanto Library and droll narrator of Jincy Willett’s cunningly titled Winner of the National Book Award in which she offers her uproariously trenchant views on readers and books, most notably a tell-all crime story written by her twin sister, Abigail. Abigail Mather is sensual, fleshy, impulsive, and free-spirited, while Dorcas is bookish, angular, self-contained, and sensuous only toward books. “When I was twelve, and An American Tragedy was my favorite summer book, (Abigail) thrilled to Forever Amber…” Yet the odd pair are linked by mutual love and the descriptive attention of the superlatively creepy Conrad Lowe, with tragicomic results. Although Dorcas seems at first glance the stereotypic spinster librarian, her keen perceptions, vulnerabilities, and devastating wit make this a compelling, hilarious, and irresistible read.

Myrtle Rusk, the academic librarian heroine of Michael Griffith’s Bibliophilia, has been pressed into service by the head librarian at LSU to prowl the stacks in search of clandestine coitus and to curtail all such free exchange of bodily fluids on library property. Not surprisingly, Myrtle resents being placed in the role of “…deputy sheriff of nookie…a sexless functionary…that joy-spurning old biddy, the Puritan at the Circulation Desk.” It is fair to say that the library itself resents it as well, for one can feel the life force pulsing through the aisles, yearning to break free of its hide-bound restraints in small transgressions and grand flagrances, just as Griffith’s prose rolls and bubbles with savory expressions. When the library director’s vampish daughter sets her sights on Seti, a pious, charmingly befuddled Egyptian exchange student studying water management, Myrtle must somehow find a way to dam or channel the inevitable deluge.

Then there are librarians’ librarians, such as Alexander Short, the brilliant young hero of Alex Kurzweil’s The Grand Complication who sublimes his personal insecurities and shortcomings into the exhilarating chase after elusive knowledge and whose relentless skill at unlocking puzzles and finding arcane answers just opens up more questions. Or William of Baskerville, that daring champion of free thought from Umberto Eco’s The Name of the Rose who must puzzle through that cruel perversion of learning—a library ingeniously designed to confound its users. Who of us has not shared his frustration from time to time?

There are many other heroic librarians, a subject for some future installment perhaps, but one in particular, well-known to readers of this column, whom I’d like to mention. She does not appear in any novels—although I could be wrong about that—but her contagious enthusiasm, kindness, wit, and preternatural erudition have rallied and inspired library workers across the land. It is a comfort to know that as she rises to the next level of her vocation, she isn’t going anywhere. In fact there she is, on my bookshelf, bemusedly constraining the steady ire of an Incredible Hulk action figure with one raised, shushing finger. Thank you, Nancy.

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