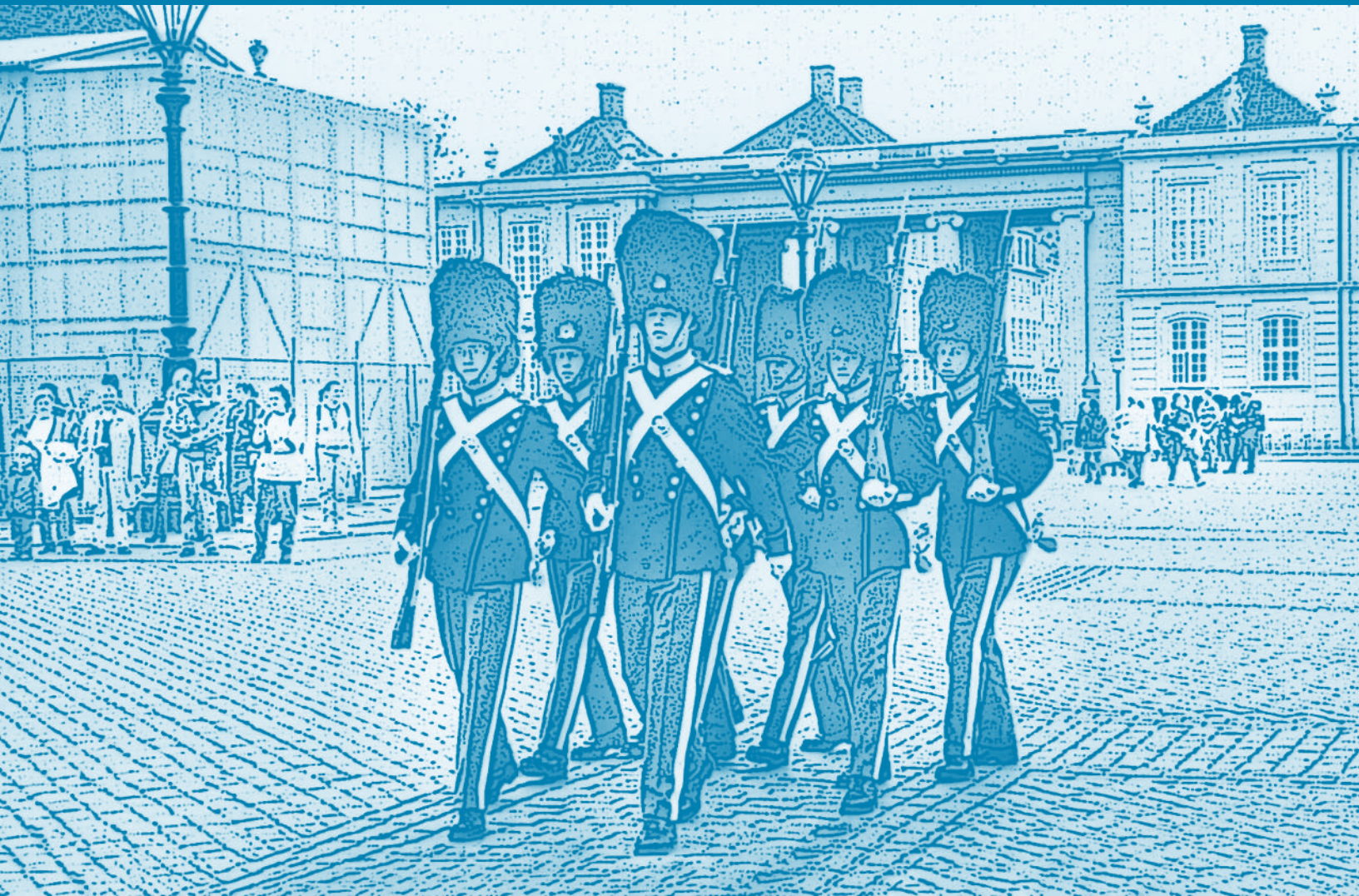


A1ki

The Washington Library Association Journal
March 2007 • Volume 23 Number 1



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A shared value across generations: Library Service for All Washington Residents

At the American Library Association's Midwinter Meeting in Seattle earlier this year, a tech-savvy friend described me as "using a cell phone the way the way my mother does." It's true, too. I just don't think to reach for the cell when I need a camera, speaker, note card, or alarm clock. While I started learning the MARC format shortly after birth and have been involved with library automation all my professional life, I don't have the same relationship with digital technology that library professionals entering the field these days do. The new crop of librarians has different expectations, based on their different experiences of the information world and libraries' place(s) in that world. That's a good thing for libraries' adaptation and future prospects.

But as the contents of this issue demonstrate, library people share values across the generations, values of service and community-building, of promoting inquiry, aiding intellectual development, and providing satisfying recreation. Our shared values are important. I also believe that we agree that adequate, innovative library service should be available to everyone in our state: library service for all students, elementary through community college and university, and especially, as a base, public library service for all community members.

It's important to remember that we have not yet achieved this goal. Many Washingtonians do not have access to a public library, and other public libraries are very minimally funded and staffed.

In an environment in which all public library funding is local funding, and in which many services and governmental functions compete for scarce resources, it is easy to slip into defense of one's turf, into worrying more about who's paying and how much rather than how we can unite to improve and extend library service. True, communities that expect to have library service should not expect it to be free. But many people who most need library services do not pay taxes, because they are children. Somehow, we need to find a way to balance those facts, and establish universal library service in Washington. I challenge the new generation of librarians and advocates to lead us in that effort.



Carolynne Myall

Library Legislative Day 2007

March 8, Library Legislative Day 2007, is still in the future as I write this column. But plans are well under way, and I know it will be a glorious event for Washington library advocates. LLD 2007 co-chairs are Jennifer Wiseman and Jodi Reng, with help from Tracie Clawson on local arrangements, legislative expertise supplied by our consultant Steve Duncan, and enthusiastic and knowledgeable advocacy provided by many of you. Library Legislative Day is our opportunity to tell legislators that libraries are important. Thank you to everyone who worked to make LLD 2007 a success.

Dues are due again

Aren't our new membership brochures spiffy? They are good-looking reminders to pay our dues, since Washington Library Association membership is for the calendar year. Check the label on the back of this issue to see if the WLA office has recorded your 2007 dues. If you have renewed, great; but if not—sign up now, by mail or online. To make a strong association, we need a strong, varied and numerous membership.

Annual conference in the Tri-Cities, April 18-21, 2007

Mike Cook and the 2007 Conference Committee have planned some great days of learning and networking for us at a beautiful

Carolynne Myall, head of Library Collection Services at Eastern Washington University, is president of the Washington Library Association. Please send her your ideas for the association at cmyall@mail.ewu.edu

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Alki

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

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The layout and cover for *Alki* was designed by Gerry Rasmussen Design. Gerry Rasmussen retired from state service as a graphic designer in 2003 after thirty-three years. He started his government career at the Washington State Library, working there from 1969 to 1981.

Cover photo by Gerry Rasmussen.



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On the cover:

This "Changing of the Guard" ceremony took place at Amalienborg Palace in København (that's Copenhagen for the non-Danish).

All of the guard photos used in this issue were taken on location by graphic designer Gerry Rasmussen.

From the Editor

This issue of *Alki* salutes some core members of the Washington Library Association who have recently retired, and introduces a contingent of promising new leaders.

There is vitality in the association's multi-generational milieu. In this issue, long-time member Tony Wilson shares some "seriously deep philosophy," plus a poem. At the beginning of her own career, library student Karen Jaskar talks to two other graduate students who are putting the profession on an iPod.

We expect your protests over the people we missed. Send a paragraph about the one we should have included to alkieditor@wla.org, and we will print it in the July issue.


Meanwhile, *Alki* is going through some changes of its own. The association has a distribution agreement with aggregator H.W. Wilson, and recently signed a similar one with EBSCO, which will soon make *Alki* widely available. So it's a good time to talk about the journal's role in the association.

WLA President Carolynne Myall has appointed a task force to discuss a variety of issues and draft a formal editorial policy for the board to consider. The task force is lucky to include Louise Saylor, the first *Alki* editor. Recently, I pulled Volume I, Issue I (March 1985) out of the archive box. The theme on the cover is simple: Intellectual Freedom.

To my mind, the main question for the task force is this: Since the association accepts legal responsibility for *Alki* and pays for its production, should it also control the content? I don't think so.

Political sensitivities naturally grow up around professional organizations, so it is important for the association to insulate *Alki* by guaranteeing its editorial independence. It takes a little courage, but an independent journal is more interesting and useful to members than a house organ. This is nothing new: The original *Alki* says the journal's purpose is to communicate "philosophical and substantive analyses of current and enduring issues."

So the association must continue to risk the possibility that an independent *Alki* could embarrass somebody, make a mistake — or get sued anyway. I'm not worried. The courts have given the press wide leeway to publish controversial points of view.

It is my hope that, when it comes to adopting an official *Alki* editorial policy, the association will hold itself to that highest Volume I, Number I standard. 

Margaret Thomas



Margaret Thomas

Letter to the Editor

I just finished reading the latest *Alki* issue on rural libraries and wanted to congratulate you and your contributors on a very wonderful collection of articles. I enjoyed the stories on the wheat fields of the Palouse to the wet climate of Orcas Island. I especially liked the articles about the "lone librarians" who wear numerous hats to keep their branches open, and are lucky to have volunteers to assist them in their activities. These people are very dedicated to their communities and feel a tremendous responsibility to their patrons.

Thank you for such a wonderful issue.

Sue Anderson, Librarian
Eastern Washington University Libraries,
Cheney

Changing of the Guard: A Dozen Who Make a Difference



Compiled by Brian Soneda

Libraries are filled with people who work hard every day, and we should appreciate these people. Others take the next step, and give the Washington Library Association and their profession the priceless gift of their expertise, knowledge and passion for libraries.

Alki interviewed twelve WLA members who are routinely worthy of commendation. As is fitting for an issue themed “Changing of the Guard,” half are recently retired (or very soon to be), and half are new to their professional stripes.

Some of the interviewees had as much fun putting these profiles together as did the writers. Kristy Coomes told *Alki* Editorial Committee member Theresa Kappus, “It’s hard to condense a career into a few words and really give a sense of how much fun I’ve had, how much I’ve learned, and how many people have made such a difference for me.”

These twelve share, in part, because others shared with them. The cycle often continues long after careers end. (See the profile of Candace Morgan for more on that concept.)

More than one interview subject said words to the effect, “WHAT! You’re interviewing me and you’re not interviewing (Fill in the Blank)!” When you finish reading this article and are done applauding these twelve, feel free to email *Alki* Editor Margaret Thomas (alkieditor@wla.org) and tell her: “That article should have included (Fill in the Blank).” *Alki* will be happy to run your letters to the editor, and consider future profiles of worthy association members.

The following people contributed to this article: Brian Soneda, Rayette Sterling, Erin Krake, Erica Delavan, Theresa Kappus, Mary Wise and Margaret Thomas

Candace Morgan *Librarian for Life*

“Our work is not just a job; it’s a profession. It’s our responsibility to be a voice in our communities, our state, our country.”

These words were spoken by Candace Morgan, a retired librarian from the Fort Vancouver Regional Library System, who has spent forty years in all types of libraries. An expert on intellectual freedom, Morgan lives in the Portland area and spreads her knowledge and enthusiasm throughout the library profession.

She teaches several library science courses through Kansas-based Emporia State University, gives workshops and serves on panels.

Morgan is also vice-president of the American Library



Candace Morgan

Association's Freedom to Read Foundation, and is writing a book for the national association on intellectual freedom.

"Our country's founders had a vision of participatory democracy that is directly tied to the publicly funded library," Morgan says. "It is the library that makes it possible for people to access information, to live their own lives, and to make their own choices. It is our major mission to serve everyone," she says. It is an empowering mission: "Libraries help people accomplish their own goals."

Intellectual freedom is fundamental to the library's role. Morgan believes it is important to take this message out to people beyond the library world. She partners with—and in many cases, leads—non-library organizations, such as the Oregon American Civil Liberties Union. She also works with the press, politicians, attorneys, and advocacy organizations. She teaches a policy research course at Portland State University for budding public administrators, and is one of the instructors in a seminar on intellectual freedom for attorneys who represent libraries.

Morgan suggests that all librarians, as professionals, should be active in organizations that are broader than the library realm. Through our involvement, she believes we can communicate the library's role in our own communities. She tells us that librarianship, like many professions, doesn't end with retirement, either. "We remain a librarian for our entire life."



Will Stuivenga

A Statewide and National Perspective

Will Stuivenga found himself "fairly unemployable" coming out of college with a degree in music and a master's in music theory. His librarian wife persuaded him to consider a career in libraries. Hoping to find work as a music librarian, Stuivenga ended up as a reference and electronic resources librarian, and has never looked back.



Will Stuivenga

At Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Stuivenga was in charge of mediated online searching (remember DIALOG?). He then worked as the Internet trainer for Amigos Library Services in Dallas, traveling around a five-state region teaching HTML, Internet search engines, and other "cutting edge technology of the time."

In 1999, Stuivenga and his wife (both native Northwesterners) came back to the Pacific Northwest, where he worked as the computer systems manager for a library network in Oregon's Tillamook and Lincoln counties. Since 2004, he has served as the Statewide Database Licensing Project manager for the Washington State Library. He describes his work as inspiring and challenging. "Working to assist all libraries in the state, big or small, in providing better service to their users is especially rewarding."

Active in library associations, Stuivenga currently serves on the American Library Association's Membership Committee, is secretary for the Washington Library Association's Social Responsibilities Round Table interest group, and editor of the Washington Library Friends, Foundations, Trustees and Advocates newsletter. His goal is to eventually serve on the ALA Council. In his spare time, he is dean of the Olympia chapter of the American Guild of Organists.

Stuivenga attended the Pacific Northwest Library Association Leadership Institute last October. He says, "Talks provided by the mentor librarians were some of the most awe-inspiring expressions of the meaning and value of libraries... that I have ever had the privilege to experience."

Check out Stuivenga's favorite-books blog: tillabooks.blogspot.com, and another on his vintage tie collection: vintageties.blogspot.com.

Jan Ames

Advocate for the Disabled

Serving disabled patrons is an afterthought for many libraries. For Jan Ames, it was the cornerstone of her career. After working as a newspaper reporter, book editor, secretary, and a stay-at-home mom, Ames earned her master's in library science from the University of



Jan Ames

Washington in 1969. Her library career began as a part-time librarian with Seattle Public Library's Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (now the Washington Talking Book and Braille Library). She found it rewarding and spent her entire career there, ultimately becoming the director before she retired in 2002.

Ames regards her career fondly, noting many highlights that made her experience fulfilling. Foremost were the patrons she served, as well as the 400-plus volunteers who give time and energy to the organization. Improved technology also made a big difference in providing services

to people with disabilities. "Advances in technology enabled us to hire blind employees; that could have never happened when I started."

During her WTBBL tenure, Ames was active in the Washington Library Association, serving as secretary, a member of the Nominating Committee, and as co-chair of Legislative Day for several years. Today she keeps up with what is going on in the library community. She also stays active in "volunteer politics" by working on various campaigns, and serving on the board of the 46th Legislative District Democrats, and as a precinct committee officer. Ames believes this type of involvement helps libraries indirectly, since she has an active voice on issues that affect libraries and their patrons.

Her advice to new librarians? "No matter what field you're in, keep in mind people who are disabled. Too often, people with disabilities don't bother with the library because it's too difficult to access the services. We need to provide accessible services, then reach out to let them know that we're here to serve them."

Lisa Oldoski

It's About the People

Lisa Oldoski was always a library user, but not until her second year of college at the University of Washington-Tacoma did she consider working in one. Without a car, she spent a lot of time in the library and one day realized

people were getting paid to work there. She took a job there while still a student and subsequently spent hours researching and borrowing books on obscure topics, just because she could.

Oldoski earned her master's in library science from the University of Illinois in 2001. Although intent on being an academic librarian, her advisor convinced her to take a class on young adult literature. Reading the assigned *Weetzie Bat*, by Francesca Lia Block, changed her career plans. "I wanted to be the person to put that book into someone's hands," Oldoski says. And now, as the



Lisa Oldoski

young adult librarian at Puyallup Public Library, she is.

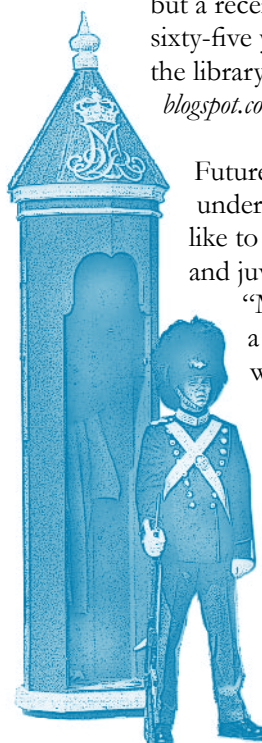
Under her enthusiastic leadership, Puyallup's teen program has grown from a once-a-month

meeting into a two-hour weekly program. There is a core group of about twenty teens, but a recent Anime Drawing event drew sixty-five young people to the library! (See the library's teen program blog: <http://pplteen.blogspot.com>)

Future plans include working with other underserved populations. "I would like to do work with homeless services and juvenile jail service," says Oldoski.

"Mostly I want to do things that have a positive effect on the community I work in."

As the only young-adult librarian in Pierce County, networking is essential and Oldoski finds her involvement in the Washington Library Association is a great way to meet other librarians and share ideas. Her advice to those considering a career is to work in a library before committing,



because no matter how much a person likes books, “It’s way more about people than it is about books.”

Susan Madden

For the Love of Libraries

Susan Madden is a familiar name to those involved in the Washington Library Association. She has served several stints on the association’s board over the years. Most recently she helped support the association’s



Susan Madden

Scholarship Fund with a jewelry booth at the 2006 WLA conference and at the American Library Association’s midwinter conference. Madden retired in 2000 after

twenty-seven years with the King County Library System, but she remains active in WLA: “For the love of libraries.”

Many things excite Madden about the future, including the ability to travel, and the prospect of mastering new technologies. “I have an iPod and have learned how to download books from the library. I have a cell phone! When I went to library school, computers were UNIVAC. My grandkids at three years old have more computer skills than I do. This new generation of information access is exciting.”

Madden also enjoys traditional pleasures, including reading; she is a fan of young-adult books and science fiction. She had always wanted to work in libraries. Her first library job was manning a bookmobile in Oregon’s Clackamas County. Driving around the Oregon Coast exposing people to books – what could be better than that? Whatever your interest or

curiosity there is a place in libraries for you, she says.

Her advice to new librarians:

- It is easier to get forgiveness than ask permission.
- Take a public speaking class.
- Constantly promote the library and library services.

“Librarianship takes intellect, drive and curiosity,” says Madden. “It requires a smattering of social work, teaching and knowledge. It is something to be proud of. The most interesting people are librarians.”

Deanna Sukkar

From Chef to Librarian

When a professional chef, who loves books and learning, chooses to leave the food industry, what does she become? A librarian, of course!

Deanna Sukkar, a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America, worked as a private chef for a series of wealthy clients on estates from New York to Arizona. Delicacies like Beluga caviar, gold leaf and truffles were on the menu, and duties included milking cows, and making cottage cheese and butter.

“Several years later (when my cholesterol hit 300), I packed up my knives and headed for Boston,” she writes in an email. “I ran a bed and breakfast for awhile, then opened up a whole foods delicatessen.”



Deanna Sukkar

Sukkar’s adventures included a year-long backpacking trip around the world. A couple of her short stories are published in the *Travelers’ Tales*, *Funny Women on the Road* book series.

India was one of her favorite places. “It is a country of such contrasts, beauty and history,” she writes. “Women in colorful saris against stark landscape, rotting street smells and perfumed incense, ancient temples filled with the music of Bollywood.”

Currently enrolled at the University of Washington Information School, Sukkar is a student reference librarian at Seattle Public Library, where she is working with a staff member on a podcast library tour. She also produces the ischool podcast *InfoSpeak*. (See “*Listening to the Future*,” on page 16).

Sukkar is currently doing research for an author who is writing a



book on a famous Northwest entrepreneur (whom she prefers not to name). Other professional experiences include creating a memorabilia archive for cruise company Holland America Line, and working as a volunteer cataloger at the Frye Art Museum in Seattle.

When she entered the iSchool, Sukkar says she knew nothing about librarianship. "I had talked to librarians, and they all seemed to be so enthusiastic about their job and really loved what they did. I said, 'Okay, this is what I want to do.'"

Sukkar is currently co-chair of the Washington Library Association's Reference Interest Group, and is the association's ischool liaison. She expects to graduate from the iSchool this spring.

Sukkar would like to become a reference librarian in Washington, and continue her work with podcasting and perhaps videocasting. Among projects in the works, she hopes to produce audio content for the New York-based, peer-reviewed *Journal of Web Librarianship*, expected to debut this spring.

Tony Wilson

Teacher and Student

After teaching for nearly forty years, Tony Wilson is a student again. Since retiring as coordinator of the library technician program at Highline Community College last spring, he has learned to milk goats and make cheese, and is considering studies in "depth psychology," described by Pacifica Graduate Institute as the "interface between psyche, culture and nature."



Tony Wilson

"I thought that was a great sales pitch," laughs Wilson, in a telephone interview from his Federal Way home.

Meanwhile, Wilson is target shooting, and preparing to bow hunt for elk next fall. "It's awfully easy to lose all the time you used to spend at work just fiddling in the garage," he says. Other current interests include literature by Cormac McCarthy, poetry, watercolor, cooking and making Damascus steel. "To touch and change rock (flint knapping) or steel via my own flesh seems attractive after all these years of cognitive and social transactions," he says in an e-mail.

"What exactly does one do with a degree in depth psychology?" someone asked during a recent institute orientation, which Wilson and his wife Laurie attended in Santa Barbara, California. Become a "community intellectual," suggested the speaker.



Reflecting on professional accomplishments, Wilson mentions his tenure as president of WLA in the early '80s and says he plans to stay involved. Wilson is also proud that he converted some sixty credits of traditional courses into an online program at Highline. Recent graduates of his program attended online classes from Michigan and Alaska.

Looking back on his career, Wilson reflects on what he might have done differently.

"There's times I wish I'd been a little less ego-involved in the conflicts," he says. "Going to war with the boss is very costly, even if you win."

Sparse snowflakes
falling gently
like a long document
on dial-up.

A poem by Tony Wilson



Erin Krake

Erin Krake

The Best Job in Roslyn

The “Best Job in Roslyn.” That’s how the librarian job was advertised in 1998, and Erin Krake, then a new Roslyn resident, got the job. As the only library staff member, this one-woman show does it all, from story times, to collection development, to technical services, to library management. And if that weren’t enough, in December 2005, she also completed her master’s in library science through Clarion University in Pennsylvania, a program that specializes in small rural libraries.

In addition to serving the Roslyn community each day, Krake focuses on two long-term goals for the library. The first, establishing an online catalog, came to fruition recently after six years of work. The second is renovating the building in which the library is housed. Eventually she may want to become a manager in a small library system, or even a bookmobile driver.

While earning her MLS, Krake received the Washington Library Association’s Graduate Studies Scholarship. Currently, she serves as a member of the Alki Editorial Committee. “It’s a way I can give back

to the organization,” she says. “I also want to bring the rural library perspective to WLA through Alki.”

As a rural librarian, Krake says finding the motivation to stay involved in professional development activities is a challenge. “It’s easy to feel isolated, and we’re so busy.” She stays involved anyway and expresses great passion for her work.

“I love practically everything about it,” she says. After running the library for eight years, Krake agrees that it is indeed the “Best Job in Roslyn.”

Kristy Coomes

Connecting with Customers

Kristy Coomes had a new history degree from the University of Washington when Jeannette Privat of the United Control Corporation in Redmond hired her

as a library clerk and changed the direction of her life. “I decided to be a librarian because of people like Jeannette, and because of library users who have an amazing ability to create new surprises for us.”

In 1965, after getting her master’s in library science from UW, Coomes started working for the Washington State Library, where she stayed until her retirement in 1999. A

two-year leave of absence in 1969 took her to Washington, D.C., to serve as coordinator for the American Library Association’s Conference on Interlibrary Communications and Information Networks, which Coomes remembers as “a particularly exciting time because technology and all of its implications for changes in libraries were emerging with great force.”

Coomes is proudest of her part in establishing the Social Security Act program through the state library. “We literally brought millions of dollars to public libraries to establish or build outreach programs,” she says. “People who received library services, sometimes for the first time, benefited.” She is saddened



Kristy Coomes



We literally brought millions of dollars to public libraries to establish or build outreach programs.

Kristy Coomes

by the loss of outreach programs in many libraries today.

Coomes has missed only two Washington Library Association annual meetings. She especially enjoyed working with the association's Outreach programs to Meet Essential Needs interest group, remembering the energy, dedication and good-humored camaraderie of the group. Though retired, she stays involved, "Because

herself working with children for a long time, she also sees herself as a branch manager someday, "because I like to have a hand in everything." Recently, she was selected to participate in Sno-Isle Libraries leadership training.

In addition to her duties at Oak Harbor, Whalen is active in the Washington Library



Tomi Whalen

Association's Children's and Young Adult Services interest group, serving as newsletter editor. She is particularly happy about the newsletter's transition into an online format, providing a lot more flexibility for both editors and readers (www.wla.org/igs/cayas/news.html).

I think WLA benefits not only me as an individual, but libraries as a whole, and ultimately the people who use libraries."

Her advice for newcomers: "Libraries are all about serving people. When I hired new staff I looked closely at their experience, but the deciding factors were whether they had a positive outlook; they were willing to try something new; and whether they were really good in connecting with customers."

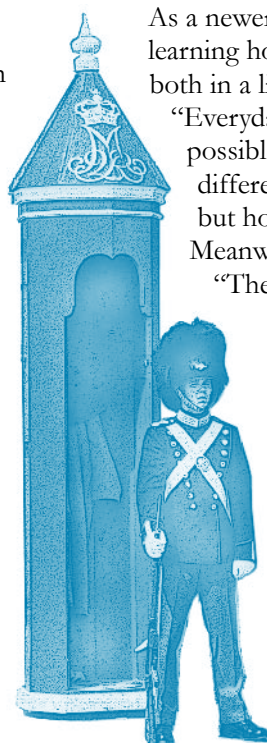
Tomi Whalen *Aspiring to Lead*

Enthusiasm for librarianship rings in Tomi Whalen's voice. In 2005, she earned her master's in library science through the distance program at the University of Washington's Information School. By then she had already spent fifteen years working at various small branches in the Kitsap County system. At UW, her interest in serving diverse communities grew as she worked on the iSchool's Diversity Committee and with her mentor, Liz Hawkins, at Everett Public Library's Evergreen Branch.

Whalen took a job as children's librarian at the Oak Harbor Library in 2005. She offers a variety of programs for children and families, and provides reference services to anyone who walks in the door. She continues her focus on diverse populations through outreach programming to new immigrant families in the community. While Whalen sees

As a newer librarian, Whalen is interested in learning how to make a lasting difference, both in a library system and nationwide.

"Everyday we're working to give the best possible service, and we're making a difference in the lives of individuals... but how can we go beyond that?" Meanwhile, Whalen says she loves her job. "There's a new challenge every day."



Jennifer Wiseman

Impacting the Public Realm

Jennifer Wiseman works in community relations and administration for the King County Library System. When she began as an intern, she didn't realize there was so much behind the scenes work to support the library.

A frequent visitor to the Duvall Library in her youth, Wiseman attended the University of Washington intent on a journalism degree. As a student, she signed on as an intern at the King County Library System. "My internship in KCLS' Community Relations department in 2002 inspired me to utilize my communication skills in a nonprofit environment," says Wiseman, who commutes forty-five minutes to work from her mountain home in Hyak. "I fell in love with the public sector and have been working at KCLS ever since."



Jennifer Wiseman

Wiseman considers her involvement in the Washington Library Association to be a career highlight. She was communications co-chair for the 2006 WLA conference in Tacoma, has become a core planner for the annual Library Legislative Day in Olympia, and serves as the association's communications coordinator, overseeing Alki and the website. "My interactions with the library community through WLA have strengthened my enthusiasm for raising awareness about the value of libraries to the media, elected officials and stakeholders, who can impact the success of all libraries."

Wiseman is currently pursuing a master's in public administration at UW's Evans School of Public Affairs, which she sees as a "very exciting and challenging endeavor, which will ultimately be invaluable in shaping my career as a leader who will impact the public realm."

Wiseman believes libraries play a vital role as a social equalizer by providing free and open access to information. "Working at the King County Library System has solidified my interest in public affairs," she says. "I hope to continue sharing the message about the value of libraries with elected officials and stakeholders who can impact our success."

Mary Ross

Mentor and Mentored

Mary Ross retires this year from Seattle Public Library, with twenty-eight years of service. From Los Angeles County to Seattle, she has worked in children's programming and collection development, teen and adult services and as a branch manager. In 1999, she became manager of the staff training and develop-

ment program at SPL. She has developed an extensive Internet reference training program, taught classes in Internet reference through the University of Washington, and designed reference training programs for the Seattle Public Library staff. She says time spent in many branches and service areas was good background for her work in staff development.




Mary Ross

Ross became more involved in professional organizations after taking the staff training position. She wanted to network, expand her range of skills and find opportunities for her library to get involved with other library associations. Ross helped found the Washington Library Trainers interest group. As the association's continuing education coordinator, she is responsible for pre-conference programs at the next two WLA conferences.

Ross is also on the board of the Continuing Library Education Network, an American Library Association roundtable. She believes people can be both mentors and mentored throughout their careers. She says it is important to provide next-generation staff with development programs geared to new ways of learning.

After her retirement in February, Ross plans to continue her state and national work with library associations. She sees retirement as another opportunity to mentor, and plans to start her own staff development consulting business, and design training programs for libraries.

As for retirement, she says, "I just feel that a whole world of opportunity and learning is opening up to me." 



The American Library Association comes to Seattle: **Federal Agency Library Closures** **Top Agenda**

By Jonathan Betz-Zall

The closure of several major elements of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's library network was the hottest topic at the American Library Association's annual business meeting, held in Seattle in January.

ALA's "business" meeting traditionally avoids informational programming in favor of committee meetings and decision-making. But a number of Washington library workers got a taste of what the association is all about, especially at the exhibits and council meetings.

Cuts to the EPA library network, first reported last year by an employee whistleblower organization, threaten to cripple the entire system, which is heavily used by the public and the agency's scientific staff. ALA's Washington, D.C., office lobbied hard and got the attention of the Democratic Party leadership even before the November elections changed the political climate. As a result, EPA sent several high-ranking officials to Seattle to mend fences with librarians, and largely succeeded. Mike Flynn, director of the Office of Information Analysis and Access to Environmental Information, stated emphatically that no materials were being lost, that much was being digitized and that the closures were based on library staff analysis of how best to meet the challenges of delivering more information faster, increasing reliance on electronic resources and coping with limited resources and space.

According to an ALA press release, the U.S. Government Accountability Office, an investigative arm of Congress, is looking into the EPA's efforts to reorganize and recycle materials and shut down some of its libraries.

Jonathan Betz-Zall is the Washington Library Association's representative to the American Library Association Council.

ALKI • March 2007



The American Library Association met at the Washington State Convention and Trade Center in Seattle.

President sets national agenda

Every ALA president sets a theme for his or her term. Current President Leslie Burger is working on a National Agenda for Libraries to clarify and codify ALA's positions on a wide variety of issues in discussions with policy makers and funders at national, state and local levels. She has also established an Emerging Leaders program to identify library leaders of the future. At the midwinter meeting, 110 young library professionals, including seven from Washington state, enjoyed a day of leadership development and project planning, putting them on the fast track to ALA leadership. Each was assigned to a problem-solving workgroup that will operate for six months and report at the ALA annual conference in Washington, D.C., set for June 21-27. More information is available at <http://wikis.ala.org/emergingleaders>.

Meanwhile ALA President-Elect Lorienne Roy is gathering examples of library anniversary events that will occur during her presidential

year, June 27, 2007, to July 2, 2008. These could include library openings, closings, renovations, foundings, first conferences, and births or deaths of people important in library history. She would like to highlight centennial anniversaries. You can share them with her online at www.lorienergy.com.

Association champions intellectual freedom

ALA continues to struggle with the government over implementation of the USA PATRIOT Act. To find out if it is under surveillance by the federal government, the association has filed a Freedom of Information Act request. ALA is also planning a national conference on privacy, tentatively titled "Taking Back American Values."

ALA Council always considers a number of resolutions. This year they adopted one supporting the rights of immigrants to use libraries, and one affirming the role of libraries in supporting local government electronic initiatives and providing information during emergencies. The council defeated resolutions calling for an end to funding for the Iraq War, and one calling for the impeachment of President George W. Bush. The latter was proposed by a group of Seattle librarians who got the Social Responsibilities Round Table to introduce it on their behalf. A resolution calling for complete disaffiliation with the Boy Scouts of America because of its anti-gay bias was referred to the Association for Library Service to Children.

More than 12,000 people, including exhibitors and day visitors, attended the meeting. 



Photos:

Top: Kirsten Edwards of the King County Library System's Duvall branch at the Washington Library Association's booth.

Middle: Participants in the American Library Association's midwinter meeting take a break.

Bottom: Doing the Seattle Thing.

Photos by Troy Christenson, JFK Library, Eastern Washington University.

Mail Order Library Delivers for Rural Readers

By Dan Howard

The mail order library is a luxury that folks around here have become accustomed to and few would give up easily. With a service district of 15,000 square miles and five counties, the North Central Regional Library is the largest library system in the state and about as rural as it gets. From Oroville on the Canadian border to Mattawa on the Columbia River, the library system operates twenty-eight branches in what are mostly small communities. The mail order library helps extend the library's reach to folks living in the expanses between towns. The Mail Order Department allows the library's collection to be delivered and returned via the U.S. Postal Service, postage paid.

Introduced in 1968, the mail order library was the first of its kind and is one of the few non-restrictive mail order systems remaining. Some libraries still mail library materials to homebound patrons, but when postage rates increased dramatically in the 1990s, many discontinued or placed limits on mail order services.

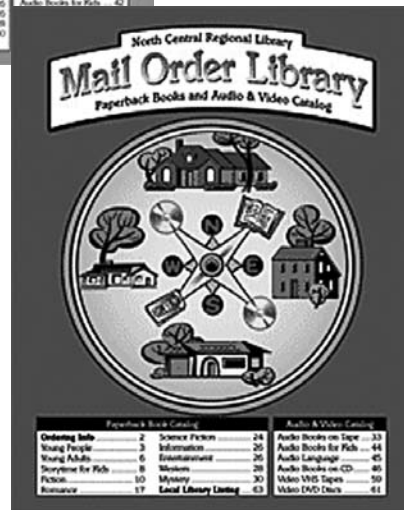
Here's how it works: The mail order library publishes a paper catalog three times a year. The catalogs are mailed to all rural residents in the library's service district. The catalog is packed with pictures and descriptions of popular paperbacks, audiobooks and DVDs. Customers use postage paid order forms to request items they want. Materials are mailed to patrons in brightly colored canvas bags within one or two days – return postage included.

Moses Lake resident and long-time patron Carol Spurrier loves the mail order library. “It saves so much time,” she says. “It is especially appreciated in the winter, when it is hard to get to the library. It has been a blessing to me.”

The mail order library has not changed much over the years. While the paper catalog remains popular, more people browse the catalog on our Web site and order by email now. VHS and audio cassette tapes have given way to CDs and DVDs.

In recent years, usage of the mail order library declined. NCRL responded with aggressive marketing measures. In 2006, NCRL received a library marketing grant with the goal of boosting the circulation of mail order materials. The marketing grant was administered by the Washington State Library and provided free marketing consultation services last summer.

The project resulted in new insights about our customers, refinements in our service, and a new “Get it by Mail” logo and slogan. Promotional activities targeted people with limited mobility and parents with school age children. The marketing campaign had immediate and positive results and circulation increased dramatically. 



Dan Howard is director of public services at the North Central Regional Library system, headquartered in Wenatchee.

Listening to the future: InfoSpeak Brings the Information World to the iPod Generation

By Karen Jaskar



Infospeak Director Michael Wood and Producer Deanna Sukkar in the digital audio workstation at the University of Washington's Odegaard Library.

By now you've heard the term podcasting everywhere. Chosen by the New Oxford American Dictionary as the 2005 Word of the Year, this new Internet phenomenon allows audio files to be loaded onto portable media players and reopened anytime, anywhere.¹ With more than 22 million Americans owning iPods or MP3 players in 2005, adherents of the new technology continue to reshape libraries with their demands for digital books, music and video available for immediate download.² Now a growing number of information professionals are seeing the chance to reshape the public in turn; bringing the issues, controversies and insights of the library world to a whole new group of listeners.

Enter *InfoSpeak*. This student-created, student-run podcast covering the information scene has librarians applauding and the public tuning in. Whether discussing the global reach of Google, the credibility gap of the World Wide Web, or the viability of traditional library schools, *InfoSpeak* blends the latest trends of the information field with the latest trend in media access. The result is a sleek, professional, engaging audio production that belies its neophyte roots and humble backing.

Karen Jaskar expects to graduate with a master's in library science from the University of Washington Information School this month. She is currently a reference assistant at the UW Tacoma Library.

Beginning as an independent study project at the Information School at the University of Washington, *InfoSpeak* originated in the mind of library student Michael Wood. Envisioned as a modern lyceum for the Internet age, Wood wanted to bring the iSchool classroom debates and his love of public libraries to the attention of the National Public Radio crowd. While a traditional radio broadcast remained out of reach, starting a podcast required only an internet connection, a microphone and some software to edit and distribute the results. Excited by his vision for the show, Wood decided to self-fund the project and approached fellow iSchooler Deanna Sukkar as a potential producer. Sukkar recalls, "Michael came to me with the idea for the show and said 'How would you like to produce the podcast?' And I said, 'This sounds great! What's a podcast?'"

With enthusiasm substituting for experience, Wood and Sukkar began to assemble their *InfoSpeak* team. Bringing in classmate Adam Hindman for first-rate Web design, while leaning on the veteran sound editing of communication student Jyotsna Natarajan, the addition of original music by composers Jim Skewes and Ben Hunter brought the show into focus, and the sound, look and feel of *InfoSpeak* was set. Now all that remained was the content.

Knowing the first show was crucial to the success of their undertaking, Wood contacted iSchool professor and noted Google pundit Joe Janes for their maiden interview. Regularly sought by media outlets such as MSNBC and the New York Times for his insight into the brave new world of Internet searching, Janes is a gifted speaker and proved a blessing for the beginning podcasters. In a 22-minute tour-de-force covering Google's partnership with the Library of Congress, Maori chants from New Zealand, scrapbooking in Japan and the cave paintings at Altamira, Janes' lively insights led to the creation of an

important *InfoSpeak* feature. An invention of Sukkar's, the "Info Expedition" allows users to roam through links from the show's webpage to various topics covered in the interview, and emphasizes the team's philosophy of interactivity and a full information experience for their listeners. As Wood says of this value-added service, "It's making the case for librarianship itself, and both Deanna and I love this aspect of outreach."

Listing the program on Apple's iTunes portal and notifying information profession listservs, Sukkar and Wood marketed the first show and waited for reaction. As reviews trickled in, links to *InfoSpeak* began appearing on the American Library Association and Association of College and Research Libraries sites, and mentions by such high-profile library bloggers as the University of Texas iSchool Dean Andrew Dillon, and Jessamyn West of librarian.net, gave new credibility to their efforts.³ Listeners from Ethiopia to Israel, Uganda to China and Columbia to Morocco tuned into the show. It appeared that *InfoSpeak* had found its audience, but would the team make it to a second show?

While the mysteries of sound editing, cold calling interview subjects and dealing with the legal intricacies of photo and biography clearance had been mastered, the time invested in preparing the debut proved taxing in the midst of full-time graduate careers. Although Wood's independent study had come to an end, he and Sukkar knew the show could go further in fulfilling their original vision. Deciding to continue, they began their search for the next topic to bring their listeners back.

Having read about an original program called the "Living Library" at the Malmö Library in Sweden, in which patrons could "check out" human beings, Sukkar and Wood decided to base their entire second show on coverage and reaction to this new idea. With Wood phoning the reference desk in Malmö for an interview with the program's creator, Sukkar took on a new role as intrepid field reporter and headed down to the bustle of Pike Place

Market for street reaction to the idea. By taking the controversial ideas and issues of the library world and making them accessible to the general listener, the show began to hit its stride. Sukkar notes, "We want to have *InfoSpeak* as a bridge between the public and information professionals. We want the podcast to make people more aware of what libraries do and what amazing services librarians have to offer."


The next two issues of *InfoSpeak* would feature the mano e mano pairing of Dean Emeritus of the iSchool Mike Eisenberg against outgoing ALA President Michael Gorman in back-to-back episodes, as the two men fiercely debated the future of traditional library school programs versus the new Information degree.

Rounding out the slate of shows for 2006, Syracuse University Professor David Lankes discusses his co-invention of the "Credibility Commons" and the reliability of information on the Internet. While the academic themes of their recent shows proved compelling for the two library students, their thoughts returned to the Living Library show and its potential to guide the future direction of a library advocacy podcast.



With graduation approaching, Wood and Sukkar continue to plan for the show's next incarnation. Along with upgrades to their Web site, shorter and snappier interviews and hopes to find a professional home for their efforts, producer Sukkar describes the possibilities, "I think we can keep the professional quality we have now and get better. We'll be focusing our interviews and making them shorter. We want to incorporate more Web 2.0 features so the show is more interactive and relevant to what patrons need in 2007. Perhaps concentrate on less scholarly topics for ones that will engage our public listeners more."

Indeed, the true potential of a podcast like *InfoSpeak* may lie in the much-hoped-for sponsorship that would give the show permanent backing and a built-in audience. As the man whose vision inspired *InfoSpeak*, Wood has no question that the podcast could help any library organization reach its patrons in a whole new way.

"Information professionals are out there everyday serving up the accumulated wisdom of humankind, and they do this so well, and in many cases so invisibly, that they get taken for granted," he says. Decision makers need to know the value of what they do and that's the niche we help to fill." 

- 1 Wordsmiths hail podcast success. (2005, December 7). BBC News. Retrieved January 13, 2007, from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/technology/4504256.stm>
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West, J. (2006, January 15). Joe Janes and the iSchool podcast. Message posted to librarian.net, archived at www.librarian.net/stax/1609



Stars may align in Olympia: **Association Builds Legislative Support**

By Steve Duncan

Funding, tax policy and proposed changes to open government laws are some of the issues that dominate the Washington Library Association's state legislative agenda this session.

It is an ambitious agenda, and too early to know if we will be successful on all fronts, but we remain optimistic. We are pleased that we have not seen any serious attempts this session to restrict intellectual freedom in the form of censorship, Internet filtering or harmful-to-minors legislation.

We have requested state funding for the Community College Digital Resources Project and the Washington State Heritage Building. We have also worked to increase the profile of the library community through the newly created state Department of Early Learning.

Tax policy issues have been prominent with the courts' recent decisions on Initiative 747 and the one percent limitation. Legislative action or inaction on this issue will determine the outcome of our on-going efforts to enact multi-year levy-lid lift overrides legislation.

There is plenty of talk about how this Legislature will enact sweeping reforms on a wide variety of issues. I doubt that will happen. Historically change occurs at an incremental pace. The majority of issues on WLA's legislative agenda have been around for at least a couple sessions. It has given us time to educate legislators and build support. We believe this is the session where the stars will line up in our favor. We will know by April 22, when the Legislature adjourns.

Democrats have overwhelming majorities in both the House and Senate. The state is flush, with close to a \$2 billion surplus. And the governor is in full stride as she enters her third year.

Experienced leadership, plenty of votes, and lots of money have resulted in an ambitious legislative agenda focusing on education, health care, jobs and the environment – bread and butter stuff, or as House Speaker Frank Chopp (D-Seattle) likes to call them “kitchen table” issues.


So far this session, we have seen a couple thousand bills addressing

a few hundred topics. When all is said and done, close to 3,000 bills will have been introduced, but only 400 or so will make it to the governor's desk. And it will all happen within the 105-day constitutional limit. Hopefully.

The pressure on today's legislators is enormous. Things move faster and issues are more complex than ever before. Thinking time is at a premium. Visualize their day: On average, it is filled with four to six hours of hearings and floor time. Then there are meetings with constituents, fellow legislators and lobbyists. Plus, they must respond to calls, letters and emails. And they get hundreds of emails each day. Hundreds.

Before they adjourn they will have reached agreement on a \$29.9 billion budget, the primary purpose of a long session. But the budget won't be the only thing they work on. Far from it.

There have been bills introduced this session on every topic, from pawnbrokers to flood control, the Sonics to underground storage tanks, horseracing to Christmas tree growers. It seems if you can imagine it, there's probably a bill addressing it.

Every bill has a sponsor and a constituency. And quite often bills have opponents. It creates a competitive environment. Not so much a “for or against” situation, it is usually a competition for attention, for time. Many good public policy initiatives will fail because they never capture the attention of a critical mass of legislators – or they just run out of time. 

Steve Duncan is the legislative lobbyist for the Washington Library Association.

Heritage Center Proposal Awaits Budget Approval

By Jan Walsh

The Washington State Heritage Center, a world-class destination housing the state library, archives, and the Capital Museum, would again make libraries visible on the Capitol Campus in Olympia. Envision busloads of children and teachers coming to the capital to view the history and heritage of the state in one location, in a building that features colorful state-of-the-art exhibits. Imagine a center that features a library as a draw for visitors from throughout the state and beyond, who will hear and see the story of Washington.

The proposed Heritage Center is one of the Washington Library Association's legislative priorities this year, and Gov. Chris Gregoire has included \$112 million for the building in her budget for the Office of the Secretary of State. That doesn't mean the matter is settled. Ultimately, the House and Senate will propose their own budgets, and differences will have to be reconciled. Also to be resolved is the fate of the General Administration Building, which is just a few feet from the proposed Heritage Center site. While the Heritage Center architect has proposed demolishing the old building, the governor's budget also includes money for renovating that facility.

If approved, the Heritage Center will be a symbol, not only of the rich heritage of the State of Washington, but of the promise of a future for the Washington State Library. Its prominent location on the Capitol Campus will be a visible symbol of the promise to provide information, through libraries and archives, to the citizens of this state.

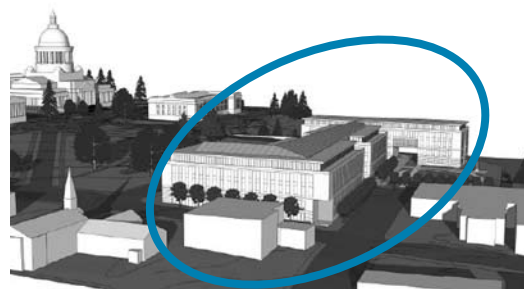
The center will bring together the collections of the library, archives and museum in one location, ending a time when the collections were dispersed and well hidden throughout the Olympia area. Both the Capital Museum and the state library are currently located off campus, and the state archives are underground.

The Heritage Center could be the first major building constructed on the Capitol Campus since the 1950s, and its pre-design envisions the use of materials that blend with the look and feel of the campus architecture. The pre-design proposed that the center be built into the bluff overlooking Capitol Lake, providing a gateway to the north Capitol Campus, with a plaza inviting visitors to enter.

The first governor of the Washington Territory, Isaac Stevens, recognized the importance of a library for early settlers, purchasing the books himself. The Territorial Library, now the Washington State Library, has been on the Capitol Campus since territorial days, but was moved in November 2001, when then Gov. Gary Locke proposed


closing the library and taking over the building.

The library is currently housed in a leased office building in Tumwater. Much of the collection is in off-site storage, and very little of it is easily accessible to the public. The Pritchard Building, designed and built for the Washington State Library in 1959, housed the Senate while the Legislative Building was being repaired. It now houses a cafeteria and legislative committee staff.



One view of the preferred alternative for the Heritage Center (circled) . Art from the Washington State Department of General Administration.

The Heritage Center will better meet the needs of the state library, with ample collection space designed to bring all the library collections together in one building. It will preserve the state's rare collections, and embrace technology to highlight innovative digital collections and information. Secretary of State Sam Reed has been a tireless advocate for the Heritage Center, both with the Legislature and the media. His visits to every major newspaper have inspired positive editorials.

With a landmark Heritage Center as a home for the state library, all Washington libraries will benefit from higher visibility. 

Jan Walsh is the Washington State Librarian

Conference Features Public Radio Celebrity

“Washington Connects” is the theme of the 2007 Washington Library Association Conference to be held at the Three Rivers Convention Center in the Tri-Cities, April 18-21. The Tri-Cities – Richland, Pasco and Kennewick – boast a variety of wineries, golf courses and 300 days of sunshine a year!

Conference Highlights:

Diane Rehm of National Public Radio will give the keynote address, an informal



Diane Rehm

Walt Crawford and **Sarah Houghton-Jan** will co-present an animated discussion of the merits of libraries’ use of Web-based services versus traditional library services at the Keynote Breakfast, sponsored by Proquest. Crawford is an analyst for the OCLC (Online



Walt Crawford

conversation with the audience at the banquet dinner, Thursday, April 19. Since 1995, the award-winning Diane Rehm Show on NPR has been distributed to stations nationwide.



Sarah Houghton-Jan

Computer Library Center) and an award-winning author. Houghton-Jan is information and Web services manager at the San Mateo County Library in Northern California.



Columbia River cable stay bridge. Photo courtesy of the Tri-Cities Visitor and Convention Bureau.



Leslie Burger,

American Library Association

president and director of the Princeton Public Library, will speak at the ALA Business Breakfast.

She is recognized as an accomplished speaker, writer and consultant on staff development, planning and evaluation, organizational development and the future of libraries.

Deb Caletti, young adult author and National Book Award finalist for her second book, *Honey Baby, Sweetheart*, will be the featured speaker at the CAYAS Breakfast. She will discuss how her early love for reading led to a serious book addiction and to her life as a writer. Her fourth book, *The Nature of Jade*, is scheduled for release this year. This event is sponsored by the WLA interest group Children and Young Adult Services.



Leslie Burger

Join **Chris Painchaud** for a lively discussion of fundraising basics for libraries at the WLFTTA Breakfast. Painchaud is director of library sales at eTapestry, an Indiana-base distributor of Web-based fundraising software, and has provided fundraising solutions for nonprofit organizations for many years. This event is sponsored by the WLA interest group Washington Library Friends, Foundations, Trustees, and Advocates.

Arrive early on Wednesday and take advantage of a variety of half-day or full-day pre-conference workshops. For the Thursday and Friday programs, a color-coded key in



Deb Caletti

the conference program provides at-a-glance information about the many offerings. From professional development and advocacy, to youth services, there is something for everyone!

Cap the week's events on Friday with an evening of laughs with comedian **Brad Upton** at the Ice Harbor Brewing Company. On Saturday, an exciting jet boat trip is planned on the Hanford Reach, the last free flowing stretch of the Columbia River.

Check out conference information and stay up to date on developments at www.wla.org/conferences/wla2007. Not able to register online? There is still time to mail in your registration form. Registrations also will be accepted at the conference, but space is limited for special events. For more registration information, call Lori Portugal at (509) 734-7446.

Conference organizers hope to see you all in the sunny Tri-Cities! 📖

Poulsbo Librarian Heads to Honduras

Paul Christensen received a Fulbright Scholar grant to lecture and do research as part of a new information science and librarianship program at Universidad Pedagogica Nacional Francisco Morazán in Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

Christensen is a teacher-librarian at North Kitsap High School in Poulsbo, Washington. The master's program is the first of its kind in Honduras. Christensen said he is expected to teach in Spanish.

Through the Fulbright Scholar program, about 800 U.S. professionals will travel abroad to some 150 countries for the 2006-2007 academic year (February through October), according to a press release. The program is aimed at building mutual understanding between the people of the United States and other countries. Award recipients are selected on the basis of academic or professional achievement.

Christensen is a long-time member of the Washington Library Association and the Washington Library Media Association. 📖



Paul Christensen

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Libraries Share Coalition's Interest in Open Government

By Patience Rogge

A glance at the back cover of *Alki* will reveal that the Washington Coalition for Open Government ranks among the Washington Library Association's nonprofit members. What intersection of interests could these two seemingly disparate organizations share? the reader may ask.

The answer lies in the library community's dedication to the principle of ensuring that information is accessible to all, and the coalition's dedication to fostering access to government information. Its mission statement reads: "The Washington Coalition for Open Government is dedicated to promoting and defending the people's right to know in matters of public interest and in the conduct of the public's business. It strives to preserve and protect Washington's Open Government Laws by representing the public in matters where open government issues are raised, are threatened, or deserve broader exposure."

Washington's Open Government laws are those that relate to government records and public meetings, and are an outgrowth of a citizen movement during the late 1960s that resulted in the passage of the public disclosure initiative (I-276) in 1972. Kristopher Passey, editor and publisher of the *Marysville Globe* and the *Arlington Times*, writes, "When government blocks access to information about its workings, the very spirit of accessible information that undergirds libraries is indelibly harmed, corruption flourishes and open societies slam shut." Last year, the Washington Library Friends, Foundations,

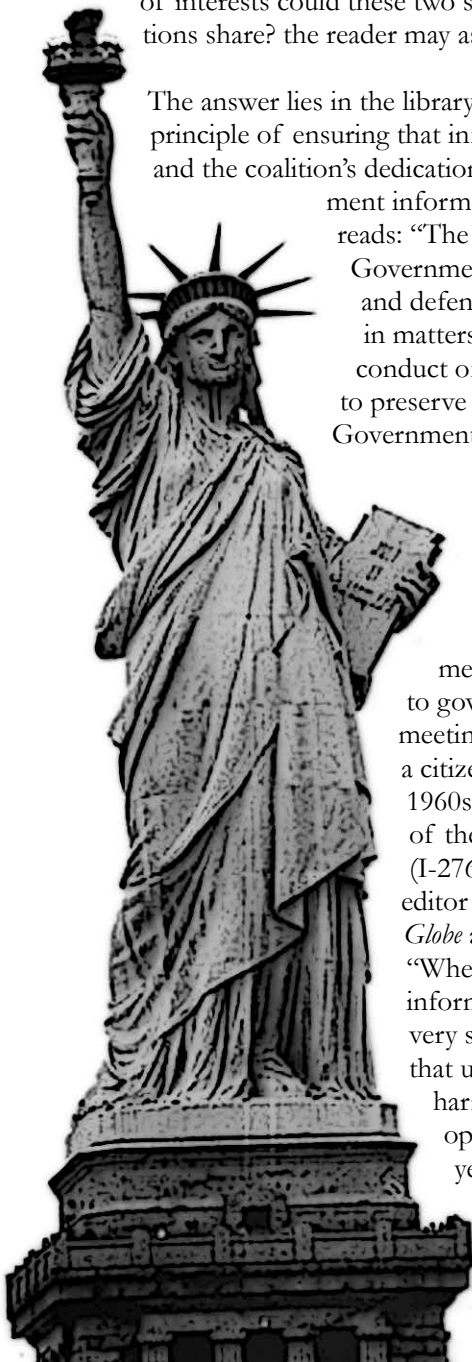
Trustees, and Advocates interest group gave Passey an award for his support of the Sno-Isle Library District.

History of the coalition

Founded five years ago, the coalition is a broad-based, non-partisan, nonprofit organization. Founding board members included representatives of the print and broadcast media, a former state librarian, leaders of the state American Civil Liberties Union, the state auditor, and a retired former chief justice of the state Supreme Court. The National Freedom of Information Coalition provided a start-up grant and similar organizations in other states served as models.

As one of its first acts, the coalition sent a letter to every member of the state judiciary outlining problems in our courts – closed proceedings, difficulty accessing court records, and the unwarranted sealing of cases and files. To date, the coalition has presented eleven public forums and five programs for lawyers who deal with the state's access laws. WCOG has cultivated an alliance with Washington State University's Citizen Access project, and sponsored research that points up the need for educating the public on its right to know what government is doing – forty percent of those surveyed were unaware of any law providing citizens that access.

Since its founding, the coalition's Legal Committee has actively pursued cases where it can file as a friend of the court or initiate legal action on behalf of the public's right to know. In 2004, the coalition partnered with the Western Washington chapter of the



Patience Rogge served eleven years as trustee of the Jefferson County Rural Library District and is an honorary life member of the Washington Library Association.

Society of Professional Journalists in updating and publishing *Access: A Guide to Government Information*, and has distributed hundreds of copies throughout the state. WCOG's Web site (www.washingtoncog.org) was established to serve as a resource for people seeking information about Washington's open meetings and public records laws. The coalition has professional staff support and an active volunteer committee structure that drives its activities.

In 2004, then WLA President John Sheller joined the coalition. The coalition's executive director asked if WLA would be interested in a position on the WCOG board. Since Sheller was soon to be embroiled in fighting tax limitation Initiative 864, I was eventually chosen to fill the post and the association joined the coalition. In my role as liaison, I have endeavored to keep library issues on WCOG's radar by informing the board of such issues as the closing of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's libraries, and the need to capture and preserve electronic records as proposed by the state library. As a member of both the outreach and fundraising committees, I have promoted WCOG by writing grant proposals and publicity materials, as well as organizing the proposed Open Government Leadership Institute.

“When government blocks access to information about its workings, the very spirit of accessible information that undergirds libraries is indelibly harmed.”

*Kristopher Passey,
newspaper publisher*

At WLA conferences in Spokane and Tacoma, I staffed a WCOG booth in the exhibit halls, and plan to be present again in the exhibits area at the association's 2007 conference in the Tri-Cities. On April 18, WCOG will cosponsor a pre-conference program titled, “Power to the people: Preserving open government,” with the association's

Intellectual Freedom Interest Group. Three of the four panelists who will participate are WCOG members, including State Archivist Jerry Handfield, coalition president.

Coalition activities

Open public forums: Because public officials at all levels of government often err on questions of open meetings and public records, not through intent but through ignorance, and because the public is not fully aware of its rights, the coalition has presented a series of open public forums aimed at educating elected and appointed officials, journalists, educators, students and the general public. The free forums are conducted by a panel of experts in various venues around the state.

Public advocacy: The coalition responds to requests from individuals and organizations who seek assistance in gaining access to public

records or meetings. The Web site serves as a point of contact, and provides news and information.

“Friends of Court” briefs: The coalition regularly submits Amicus Curiae briefs in cases deemed critical to providing a legal environment conducive to open government.

Development of public policy: Coalition members are available to provide expert testimony when laws and regulations regarding open access are under consideration.

Continuing legal education seminars: The coalition offers continuing legal education for attorneys and others covering open government and ethics.

Sunshine Week: In 2006, the coalition participated in the nationwide observance of the successful teleforum, “Are We Safer in the Dark – A Sunshine Week National Dialogue on Open Government & Secrecy.” Sunshine Week in 2007 is this month and the theme is “Closed Doors; Open Democracies?” All over the country volunteers will work together at the state level to host events around a Web cast scheduled for March 12. In Washington state, the coalition will present a panel discussion organized by former state Rep. Toby Nixon (R-Kirkland) in Olympia. The American Society of Newspaper Editors leads Sunshine Week with funding from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation of Miami.

James Madison Award: Each year, the coalition presents an award to an outstanding advocate for open government. The award honors the fourth president of the United States, James Madison, known as the Father of the Constitution. In 1822, Madison wrote, “A popular government without popular information or the means of acquiring it is but a prologue to a farce or tragedy or perhaps both.” Past recipients have included retired state Supreme Court Chief Justice James Andersen and Rowland Thompson, executive director of Allied Daily Newspapers of Washington.

See *OPEN GOVERNMENT* on page 24

Open Government

Continued from page 23

Open Government Leadership Institute:

In 2009, the coalition will present an institute designed to develop leaders in agencies at all levels of government. Selected participants will be connected with mentors whom they can turn to when questions arise in the conduct of their meetings, or when public records are requested.

National Freedom of Information Coalition Conference:

The WCOG will host the annual NFIC conference in Seattle, May 11-13. This event will attract participants from all over the United States and should prove to be of interest to the library community. More information will be available at the WCOG booth at the WLA conference in April.

Cost survey and directory: The WCOG has recently received a grant for a one-year pilot project to survey a sample of government agencies within Washington to determine costs charged by the agencies for public

records requested by citizens. The coalition will distribute survey results through its Web site and as part of a print publication. The coalition will also compile a directory of public information officers (each agency is supposed to designate one) with contact information and specific instructions on how to file a request for public records. The directory will be posted on the coalition's Web site and updated periodically.

Citizen's Network Listserv: The coalition is building a network of citizens who support open government laws and practices. If you are interested in being on the email list, send your name, address, phone, and email address to info@washingtoncog.org. Listserv participants will be notified about threats to open government and opportunities to strengthen it.

Membership in WCOG is open to everyone at \$25 annually for an individual. Benefits of membership include access to a members-only listserv and reduced admission to coalition events. For more information and to download a membership application, go to www.washingtoncog.org, or stop by the coalition's booth at the upcoming WLA conference and enter a drawing to win a free one-year membership.



Up Front

Continued from page 2

new conference facility in the Tri-Cities. Library luminaries Leslie Burger, Sarah Houghton-Jan, and Walt Crawford are among the presenters. Session topics cover most specialties, and range from net neutrality, to teen services, to romance fiction, to technical services trends. There's also the WLA president's party. You're invited! If you haven't already done so, please register for the conference now, by mail or online.

Thank you, WLA

I was appointed *Alki* editor in summer 1998. Since then, I have spent four years as editor, two as vice president, and two as president. April 21 is going to be a shock to my system: I'll have to think about something besides WLA!

What an honor it has been to work with all of you. I'm grateful to everyone who has helped me, and especially to our coordinator, Gail Willis. Serving as WLA president has been the most challenging, overwhelming and stimulating experience in my thirty-four years in libraries. Thank you for trusting me with this office.

My advice: If the WLA Nominating Committee calls to ask you to run, if an incoming president emails you to serve on a committee, if your interest group votes to elect you chair, say yes. Say yes to the chance to grow professionally through interaction with a dedicated, distinctive, opinionated, and fun bunch of people. You will be surprised at how fast the time will pass.

And now I am looking forward to seeing all of you at a terrific annual conference in the Tri-Cities.



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How my library moved out from under me and why I'm not sad:

Bibliographic Musings and the Metaphysics of Libraries (Part One)

By Tony Wilson

During eighteen years running a technical services department, I felt confident about the intrinsic worth of what I was trying to do – help build, organize and set up retrieval for a collection with character, completeness and depth in the context of a comprehensive community college. It was like building one huge book, carefully constructed and indexed to meet the needs of our users. Over the last forty years, when I taught either library users or potential library employees, I taught the same tools I was using to build the library: Dewey, Library of Congress Subject Headings, a nod to Library of Congress Classification in case they went to a university, *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, Second Edition*, and the vagaries of author and title entries.

Things have changed

Although not a total view of how libraries should evolve, the following comments discuss several areas undergoing change and some books that inform the issues. Readers with an already post-literate mentality should view a copy of *Always a River, Sometimes a Library*, by Rick Anderson.¹ Assuming we can keep our infrastructure free of snoops and censors, the future should be bright.


Library usage

Library usage courses used to start with finding books. They should now start with using Google and its alternatives and only eventually get to finding and selecting books, if appropriate. In short-answer reference, there are no longer questions that cannot be answered online. Typing `define:jihad` or `define:postmodern` into Google leads to a much richer sense of these terms than would a longer time in reference books. (A quick book reference finds that *jihad* is a holy war and that postmodern refers to a school of architecture.)


I am indebted to William Wisner, who wrote *Whither the Postmodern Library*, for clarifying many issues that had been bothering me these last few years, notwithstanding the fact that I am totally contrary to his conclusions and relish many of the very things he decries. Online sources provide a good grasp of his major points. The flavor of his thought can be seen in the following quotations from a *Library Journal* article.²

The past, which traditionalists like myself are always mourning, was a time when libraries were easier to use, in which patrons retrieved

materials of unquestionably high authority, and which actively involved reference librarians in the search process when problems arose. The library enjoyed the esteem, even the veneration, of its users. (From the abstract.)



With a laptop, I can now read any but the latest [New Yorker] issues in a tent on a mountain in the dark.



Wisner writes:

The only relevant question [about information technology] is whether such highly interactive, mesmerizing media can be controlled before they warp the woof out of the social fabric for good – subverting not just the values of librarianship but of our culture as a whole. American society has passed from a culture based on narrative structures to a culture based on video images. And libraries today, reflecting that society, vie with each other to offer an Alice's Restaurant of infotainment possibilities.

Wisner is a delight to read, despite the traditionalist suspicion of images.

Books

I buy, borrow and read more books than ever, but I've come to see books as a format for particular kinds of activity – a sustained, linear experience where I submit to the

Tony Wilson is a retired librarian who lives in Federal Way.

author's sequencing. For much of my information need, on the other hand, I prefer to set my own sequencing, prioritizing and evaluating. For that, the Web is much better.

Serials

Serials were the next thing to teach after book retrieval when I started. Now their online presence predominates. While I have recently used the long runs of bound journals at the University of Washington, and hope they never go away, most of my usage has shifted. Even if I'm using a recipe from the current *Food and Wine*, I go to the online version and print a copy to put next to the stove. I was anxious about my library discarding its back run of *The New Yorker* until a friend gave me the full set on CDs. With a laptop, I can now read any but the latest issues in a tent on a mountain in the dark.



Tony Wilson at his retirement party

learning to use Library of Congress subject headings became irrelevant (and once LCSH went to annual editions, it became unusable by anyone outside of LC-sized departments where one could specialize). Classification, from a user's point of view, has never been something to understand but something that leads to happy accidents (planned serendipity?). Librarians at one point complained that automated catalogs reduced serendipity. Now AquaBrowser, a catalog search tool that allows patrons to search a visual map or "word cloud" of associations, makes serendipity explicit. The Web, I believe, did for serendipity what the mouse did for solitaire.

So, what is it that people miss when they claim to miss the card catalog? I've suggested before that they miss a sort of spiritual ritual – touching the oak drawer front, thumbing for words through slightly

The card catalog

People still claim to miss the card catalog. Having written a card catalog, I know the electronic version is superior in every measurable way. There is a sense in which, like the March of Dimes, librarianship solved its own problem. With a Machine Readable Catalog record and Cataloging in Publication information, we no longer need the back half of our local jobs. Of course we, too, like the March of Dimes after curing polio, will expand our mission. Once what was then the Washington Library Network made keyword searches available,

(pre-) yellowed cards, scribing arcane symbols on little scraps of paper with a golf pencil, and heading off to the stacks in solitude, but no longer alone. Now I see one more aspect: Card catalogs were a huge effort. We still assign all the content components but no longer type headings with two-colored ribbons, file above the rod, double check and drop the cards. So I am now convinced that the card catalog was a concretization of love, albeit a dangerous, dry, silent, librarian kind of love, but love nevertheless. That oak thing represented a love of the books, a love of the seeker, and a love of the connection between the seeker and the sought.

As a user, I don't so easily feel that AquaBrowser or Amazon loves either me or the books. Amazon's suggestions may be getting to where they emulate love, or are at least useful. There is hope, however, for a return of love via the catalog – the catalog as social software, not a catalog controlled by the librarian, but one built by the user. LibraryThing, an online service to help people catalog their books, and its several analogues are ready to compete with LC in size and create a user community for each holding. Or, maybe the love can come from the librarians.

The librarian

I've always been fond of the stereotypical image of the librarian, her repressed sexuality, her bun and glasses, and her sensible shoes. I leave my librarian female on purpose. It fits the stereotype and Melvil Dewey's predilections. There are male librarian stereotypes as well, but outside of Italian novelist Umberto Eco's 14th century librarian, Malachi, the male is the less interesting: an aging scholar or scientist who is no longer productive and is assigned to take care of the materials he presumably knows and loves. He should be a grouch but still able to launch a young petitioner who gets on his good side.

As spy movies have shown, take the librarian out of the library and she's quite competent with an AK-47 or whatever else is needed. But, in her shush-and-glue role in the library, she is not an action expert or a subject

See *BIBLIOGRAPHIC MUSINGS* on page 28

Bibliographic Musings

Continued from page 27

expert; she is an expert on doorways. Ask her and she will open a door to a larger world.

Sometimes I think of her as a mythical creature on the banks of a dark river. In response to your question she will launch you on a raft to an unknown destination with no guarantee to anyone that you will return. The bun and the glasses keep her the right distance from your adventure. This image is a far cry from the Beaver Cleaver level of librarianship envisioned in William Wisner's complaints. My librarian can do her job better and more dangerously with her AquaBrowser and Google than she ever could with the oak drawers and the *Readers' Guide*. Should she deny access to Wikipedia and only provide the properly vetted answers of *Britannica*, her library would become a vehicle of oppression. This brings me to the goodness of the library.

The goodness of the library

In a culture with modernist assumptions, science gives us the truth about the world, and Freudian analysis covers anything else. In such a world, literacy is an unmitigated good and, except for letting a few trip on *Catcher in the Rye*, or something, what the library provides is purely supportive of the greater good. I suggest we are now living in a culture pervaded by postmodern assumptions. Even though people in general may not have read Derrida or Foucault; neither had they read Freud or the enlightenment philosophers in the modern era.

The modern library was all good in that it served the depletion of ignorance. Truth could be transmitted to the ignorant much like the U.S. Department of Agriculture could teach women to can their

beans without poisoning themselves. "Be all you can be, read" makes some sense under modern or frontier cultural assumptions. In a postmodern culture, we are aware that almost any assertion of truth implies a worldview or a particular perspective, and is a claim on the legitimacy of power.

From a library perspective, the postmodern view is wonderful. We can expose many of the multiple viewpoints. Any question, even the most innocuous, becomes the doorway to a journey where the questioner has the existential responsibility of interpretation. At some point I had a dozen or so pages of printouts from the Stumpers reference listserv on the meaning of *D* in D-Day. One asks, not until you find the answer, but until the question goes away.

References

1. *Always a River, Sometimes a Library*, Rick Anderson, College of DuPage Press, 2006.
2. "Librarianship enters the twilight," *Library Journal*. New York: Jan 2001. Vol.126, Iss. 1; p 68.

Part two of Wilson's musing on librarianship will appear in the July issue of ALKI. In the last of this two-part series, he covers literacy, the future of libraries, and "seriously deep philosophy."

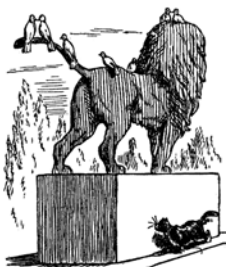


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When “Sixteen Going on Seventeen” Becomes Eighteen, Nineteen and Twenty

By Angelina Benedetti

The theme of this issue of *Alki* is “Changing of the Guard,” which leads me to ask who the guard is? I had always considered myself a member of the reserves, not yet called up to fight, but training, readying, waiting for the day to take my place in the ranks.

There is a birthday card I like to give. On it, a nun is blowing bubbles and the caption reads, “What age would you be if you didn’t know how old you are?” This question is my favorite party chit-chat starter.

My own answer is always the same.



Angelina Benedetti

I am eternally sixteen (going on seventeen).

Like that song in the Sound of Music? Liesl and Rolf, singing in the rain? Until recently, this was also how I saw my career, as someone who was still fresh, still bubbling with enthusiasm, still innocent. Now I am worried my inner clock is out of sync with the years that are passing, that somehow, without noticing, I left the reserves to join the frontline.

“I am sixteen, going on seventeen.

Innocent as a rose. Bachelor dandies, drinkers of brandies. What do I know of those?”

I suppose graduate school first took some of the gloss off of my dewy (or was it Dewey?) exterior. Like many of my cohort, I worked two and sometimes three jobs, picking up as many reference desk and credit hours as I could. In those two years, I learned to hold my beer (mostly) and navigate the waters of workplace politics (mostly by

keeping my head down). Come graduation, I knew just enough to get a job.

“Totally unprepared am I, to face a world of men. Timid and shy and scared am I, of things beyond my ken.”

My friends know that “timid and shy and scared” just does not describe me, which was the problem in my first few years as a librarian. I was thrilled to find a Teen Services job where I could indulge my love of angsty teen lit, booktalk until I was hoarse and build an army of teen volunteers. I took risks. I believed that if I did my job well, no one would be able to find fault with me. I believed that if I was right enough about an issue, someone higher up would listen and agree. I believed that my energy and enthusiasm would never wane and that I could keep up the pace I set for myself without consequence.

“I need someone older and wiser, telling me what to do. You are seventeen going on eighteen. I’ll depend on you.”

In those first few years, I would have made even more mistakes (“gained more experience”) if I had not been open to the counsel of the colleagues and friends who had been there, and done that. They taught me who and how to trust. They opened doors and windows I could not otherwise see. They modeled professionalism and decorum. Whenever I asked how I might pay back their kindness, they told me someday it would be

Angelina Benedetti manages the Selection and Order departments for the King County Library System.

my turn to be kind to someone else. It would be thanks enough to embrace the opportunity when it came.

Now, ten years into my career, I am finding many opportunities to embrace. Amen for that. There are countless talented individuals entering our profession who deserve our collective attention.

Yet, my inner sixteen-year-old cannot for the life-of-her remember when “charge in, crash around and conquer” made way for “compromise, collaborate and connect,” not to mention “caution.” When did I become that person who thinks twice? Who cares more about kindness than justice? Who would rather lose the battle than the war?

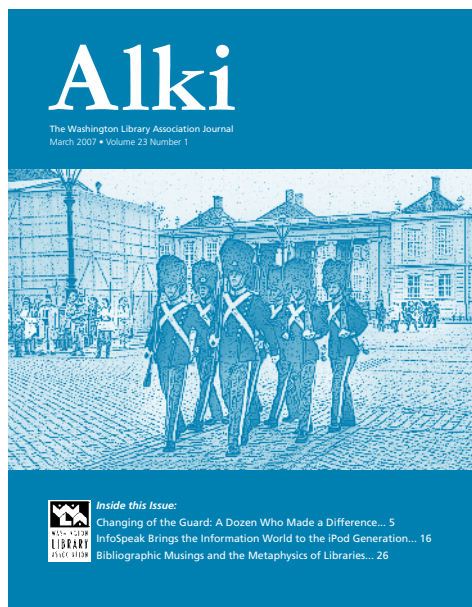
When is it exactly that I figured out it is never a good idea to skip breakfast? Or to send an email when you are mad? When did I learn there are some parties you should not drink at? That it is not always about me.

Like Liesl, while I was dancing in that gazebo, enjoying myself, the clouds burst open. No longer wet behind the ears, I am now just wet. Like her, I am finding it is fun to dance in the rain.

At the end of the song, Liesl was more experienced (having gotten herself kissed by that cute Rolf). She was older and wiser. Her example gives me the courage to let that part of me that will always be sixteen grow up a little, at least in my professional life, to join the ranks and take up the fight. Those countless talented newcomers need the reserve space I once occupied.

“I am seventeen, going on eighteen. I’ll take care of you.”

Eventually, anyway. 📖



Instructions to Contributors

The Washington Library Association Journal is published three times a year (March, July and December). **Deadlines** for submission are January 15 for the March issue, May 15 for the July issue, and October 15 for the December issue.

Each issue centers on a theme selected by the *Alki* Editorial Committee. **Themes** for upcoming issues are announced on the WLA Web site and listserv or in the editor’s columns. Articles should be in-depth examinations of issues of importance to Washington libraries. All works should be original. Unsolicited contributions and off-theme articles are encouraged. **Submissions are edited.** The editor and the *Alki* committee make the final decision on any submitted material.

Article text should be submitted as **digital files** in .doc or .rtf format. However, we can accept some alternatives: text transmitted as an email message, in email attachments, or on a Zip disk, or CD-ROM. Artwork and photos should be transmitted as .tiff, .jpeg or .eps files. *Alki* printing requires high-resolution art and image files, preferably 300 dots per inch. Please include informative captions with artwork. We recommend that you contact the editor before submitting artwork. Artwork will be returned on request.

Typical article lengths range from one to three *Alki* pages, including artwork. A three-page article with artwork contains no more than 2,500 words.

News items about personnel changes, professional organizations, awards, grants, elections, and facility moves or construction are included in the “Communiqué” column as space permits.

Columns are regular features about library service or operations. Columns are typically pre-assigned to a designated person. Anyone interested in submitting material for a specific column should contact the editor. Columns include: “Who’s on First,” with a focus on intellectual freedom; “Solinus,” a humorous feature; and “I’d Rather Be Reading,” for book reviews.

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More Than Words Can Say...

By David Wright

Remember when you first stepped into the world of books and how fascinating and seductive it was to discover that seemingly endless realm held so improbably between the covers? Lately I've found that same wide-eyed enthusiasm reborn in a new direction as I've joined increasing numbers of readers being drawn into the mesmerizing universe of graphic novels. As I eagerly take up the latest hot new release or discover masterworks unknown to me, it almost feels as though I'm learning to turn pages all over again. I urge any hold-outs who haven't dipped into the graphic renaissance – much of it centered right here in the Northwest – to take this marvelous medium seriously and surrender to its charms now. Here are some good starting places.

One sure bet from my home town are the delightfully candid recollections of Lynda Barry, a true original whose vivid recall of the experiences and revelations of youth are rendered with a disarmingly naïve style in *One Hundred Demons*. Barry lays it all bare, from cutting remarks to earth-shattering traumas, from the funny smells in other people's homes to the truly bizarre behavior of boyfriends, in what she has termed 'autobifictionalography.' If only James Frey had thought of that!

Another graphic memoir that is gaining new converts to the medium is Alison Bechdel's fascinating *Fun Home*. Bechdel's relationship with her father was complex, but it was only much later that she came to realize how complex when she came out of the closet to her parents, and was treated to some startling revelations about the demanding, distant lord of her household. A very different story, Craig Thompson's *Blankets* is a big-hearted, morally-sophisticated memoir of the author's

growing up into and beyond his staunchly Christian household.

But the most memorable graphic memoir I've read comes from France. When he was nine years old, *David B's* older brother exhibited signs of grand mal epilepsy. *Epileptic* depicts the harrowing progress of the disease, his parents' forlorn and increasingly outlandish attempts to cure it through science, pseudo-science and spiritualism, and David's own retreat into a fantasy world that ultimately gives rise to the surreal, totemic art of this book. Wildly inventive and yet grounded in the real pain of two extraordinary childhoods, this is a tremendously powerful and evocative account that carries the reader well beyond the communicative power of words and into the sleep of reason and the land of dreams.

French cartoonist Guy Delisle's work took him to North Korea, where he stayed for a couple of months under the ever-watchful eye of the state. His *Pyongyang* plays against the grim reality of totalitarianism with black humor, prankish observations, and wide-eyed wonder at his strange surroundings, but by the end of the book it is clear that the best thing about North Korea for Delisle is that he can finally leave it. Graphic Journalist Joe Sacco has done ground-breaking frontline reportage in the Middle East and the Balkans, and in *The Fixer* he returns to Sarajevo to follow up on the country's 'progress' in the aftermath of war, and the questionable livelihood of Neven, the 'fixer' who feeds contacts and information to reporters in a web of half-truths and lies that work their way into the fabric of history. Unlike Neven's questionable revelations, Sacco's potent thoughtful observations have an air of unassailable truth about them.

You may have noticed that none of these 'graphic novels' is actually a novel. Indeed, the widely varied styles and stories that have found expression in this medium can seem daunting to the newcomer. Ivan Brunetti's *An Anthology of Graphic Fiction, Cartoons, & True Stories* is a fine introduction to some of the best innovators of the format, past and present, from the deadpan humor of Charles Schultz to the sweaty-palmed surrealism of Charles Burns. Paul Gravett's *Graphic Novels: Everything You Need to Know* samples and explicates a wide range of graphic genres and themes, while Byron Preiss's *Year's Best Graphic Novels and Manga* offers a peek at some of the best recent output. So slow down your speeding, prosaic eyes and let the delightful interplay of text and image draw you in, and just see if you don't find yourself seduced into a new literary addiction. 📖



David Wright

David Wright is a readers' services librarian with the Seattle Public Library and chairs the Readers' Advisors of Puget Sound.

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